

## Richard Paul and the Philosophical Foundations of Critical Thinking

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### Abstract

The late Richard Paul was arguably the most well-known and influential person in the history of the critical thinking movement. This reflection on and tribute to his work focuses on Paul's genius in applying his knowledge of important works in the history of philosophy to the development of a robust conception of critical thinking, one that has wide appeal, not only to philosophers, but to faculties across academe. I also discuss the debt so many of us who teach critical thinking owe to his amazing scholarly and organizational skills, e.g., the 36 years of the Conference on Critical Thinking and Educational Reform, his in-service work for hundreds of faculties, his distribution of over one million "Thinkers Guides," and his successful efforts to make critical thinking the core concept in education.

**Keywords:** critical thinking, critical thinking across the curriculum, critical thinking and the history of philosophy, Deductive Reconstruction, Foundation for Critical Thinking, Richard Paul, weak-sense critical thinking, strong-sense critical thinking.

### I. Introduction

Writing about Richard Paul's contributions to what is called "The Critical Thinking Movement" is both an honor and a challenge. It is an honor because, I would argue, no other person involved in the movement has had a greater influence on so many people and in so many areas central to critical thinking than Richard Paul. It is a challenge because there is no way in a short paper to do justice to even part of Paul's influence and contributions.

Michael Scriven has correctly described Richard as "one of the most influential *evangelists* of the Critical Thinking Movement" (Paul, 2011, p. 22). As all good evangelists, Richard inspired many of us, perhaps thousands, to devote a good portion of our academic lives to thinking critically about critical thinking: What exactly is it? What necessary conditions separate it from other kinds of thinking? How can we best teach it? And how can one honestly assess whether students have learned it in any significant

way? In my own case, Richard Paul was the inspiration for much of what I, as a philosophy professor, tried to accomplish in my thirty-seven years at Baker University. So, it is a great honor to be asked to reflect on at least some of his work. Part of what follows is a description of how I began my narrative with Richard Paul and critical thinking, followed by a short discussion of what I take to be one of Paul's most important contributions to the field of critical thinking and, finally, a discussion of a couple of areas where we once disagreed but where I have since changed my mind.

### II. History

In 1983, I had just completed my dissertation titled *The Philosophical Foundations of Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex*. What impressed me most in reading de Beauvoir's famous book was how she, as a person educated in the history of philosophy, was able to apply her knowledge of the major philosophers to the question of why women as a class were and remain second-class persons. I could see that she

had obviously done her homework, drawing heavily on the ideas of Aristotle, Hegel, Marx, Husserl, and, of course, Sartre to address the question. From my perspective, as a PhD student in philosophy, grounding *The Second Sex* in the philosophical traditions gave her analysis and feminist perspective a great deal more credibility than they would otherwise have had. In the hands of de Beauvoir, philosophy became a powerful tool that enabled her to make a huge difference in the lives of millions of women.

At the same time that I was working on my dissertation, a senior seminar required of all graduates of Baker University was in crisis. The seminar required seniors to choose a public policy issue brought about by current developments in science or technology, research the issue, evaluate alternative policies, and choose the most reasonable one. They then wrote, presented, and defended a fifteen- to twenty-five-page position paper arguing for the chosen policy. It was clear to most who were teaching the course that many of our seniors were not prepared to write such a paper. The main problem was students had little experience in making and evaluating arguments. (Of course, with no required course in logic or critical thinking, we should not have been surprised.)

At the same time, our Academic Dean had received a brochure from Richard Paul advertising the International Conference in Critical Thinking and Educational Reform at Sonoma State University. He thought the description of critical thinking sounded like a promising cure for the problems our seniors faced. So, with the help of a grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities, he sent me to the conference to find an articulate expert and arrange for the person to come to Baker the following summer and give a week-long workshop to our faculty on critical thinking and ways to integrate it into all of our courses. So, I signed up for the conference and went to Sonoma State. Little did I know that

my academic life would be forever changed.

The conference started on a Sunday morning. Richard Paul stood in the open air on a raised podium with a microphone and spoke to over one thousand attendees mostly seated in chairs on the lawn of Sonoma State University. His topic was how education should be reformed with a focus on critical thinking, rather than its typical emphasis on memorization and regurgitation. Paul also warned the audience that students' beliefs were mostly a function of culture rather than honest inquiry and rational choice. He explained how natural human biases interfered with clear thinking, and how education tended to be aimed more at indoctrination than creating reasonable citizens capable of thinking critically about important issues in their lives and the life of the state.

What immediately struck me was how, much like Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*, here was a very articulate person, educated in philosophy, who was using his knowledge of the history of philosophy to effectively communicate important ideas about the human condition and education to a general audience from many different disciplines. The phrase was "critical thinking," but the message could just as easily have been, "Socrates warns in *The Allegory of the Cave* that, unless we learn to think beyond our culture, we are slaves to its unquestioned ideas and values." Or Paul could have said, "We need to remember that Francis Bacon warned us in *The Four Idols* that we are all innately disposed to specific irrational tendencies—tendencies to only look for evidence to support our beliefs and ignore counter-examples, tendencies to see patterns and causal connections where there are none, tendencies to trust our sense experience over data, the tendency to understand all events through the lenses of some pre-existing general theory. We need to be aware of these tendencies and learn to fight against them." Richard Paul used the notion of "critical thinking" as a way to approach questions and

issues that were pretty much an extension of what some of the major figures in the history of philosophy had modeled, e.g., Socrates, Aristotle, Aquinas, Bacon, and Mill. (Later, in looking at material on the “History of Critical Thinking” on his Center for Critical Thinking website, Richard spoke directly to how critical thinking is imbedded in the philosophical tradition.) To me, who had been taught to give great respect to these thinkers and their writings (Hatcher, 2013), this gave critical thinking a legitimacy and status far superior to fads in education that were so often touted as cure-alls by the academic equivalent of “carnival barkers.” In other words, as Paul presented it, critical thinking legitimized the value of philosophical thinking to the wider circles of academe from kindergarten to graduate education.

While the emphasis on reflective thinking and rationality is nothing new to philosophy teachers, we were a small circle. To share these philosophical values with thousands of teachers from all disciplines, who were looking for ways to improve their teaching, was pure genius and did a great service to all disciplines. I think Francis Bacon captures beautifully the distinction between what Richard Paul did with the history of philosophy and what the rest of us tend to do. In the *Novum Organum* (#95), Bacon draws the distinction between scholars and scientists who are like ants and those who are like bees. Ants, like most scholars, work incessantly, finding food and bringing it back unchanged to share with the colony. Bees, on the other hand, transform what they find (pollen) into something very special (honey). Richard took much from the history of philosophy and transformed it into material that attracted and served the needs of thousands. It was pure genius, I thought. The very idea that knowledge of the history of philosophy could be put to such good use was exhilarating. It changed my life.

To use an example from my own

experience, two years after the initial conference, I was able to convince my Academic Dean and faculty colleagues to support the efforts of a group of us to design a two-semester sequence in critical thinking and written composition to be required of all freshmen (2013). These non-philosophers would never have been interested in requiring all students to read the works of philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Bacon, or Mill—the philosophical foundations of critical thinking. But critical thinking, as Richard Paul had presented it, could be presented so it appealed to almost everyone in academe. To be against critical thinking would be akin to opposing something like “teaching children the ABCs.” We traditional philosophers, who had been arguing for much the same things for centuries, could never have convinced our colleagues of such a shift in education. Hence, those of us who have been able to teach critical thinking for over 30 years, owe a great deal to Richard Paul, “*the evangelist*.” He was instrumental in convincing thousands that critical thinking was an absolutely essential element in education. I should point out that George Hanford and the College Board were also instrumental in raising the interest in teaching logic and reasoning skills across education when they published *Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do* (1981). Hanford and others argued that education needed to include what they called “the Fourth R” or Reasoning, beyond the traditional three R’s. And, of course, a good deal of critical thinking is about good reasoning. I believe copies of this book were sent to every school in the US. Hanford was the keynote speaker at one of the earliest critical thinking conferences at Sonoma.

Beyond Richard’s ability to use his knowledge of philosophy to convince so many that education should focus on critical thinking, as most who knew him were aware, Richard Paul had great talents in other areas.

I cannot think of another thinker who has been so adept in transforming his ideas about educational reform into a reality. Being skilled in writing books and papers is one thing, but being able to organize large and complex events is quite another. For example, that annual conference at Sonoma State, begun in 1980 and attracting thousands of scholars and teachers from disciplines across academe, is still running 36 years later. To me, the organization of this huge and complex event is amazing. I could not imagine the amount of work that such an undertaking required.

To get some appreciation for the complexity of these four-day conferences, the program for the 1995 conference was over 190 pages long. Richard's amazing energy and organizational skills were clearly on display throughout the four days. For example, in 1995, while overseeing the complex workings of the conference, he also gave eight presentations, including the traditional opening hour-long welcome speech on the first Sunday of the conference. (Some of us came to think of these Sunday morning speeches, in the open air of Sonoma State University, as sermons in "The Church of Reason.") Putting on this conference alone would place Richard Paul in the annals of critical thinking.

As the chief architect of the International Conference on Critical Thinking and Educational Reform, Richard brought together some of the most important scholars and writers in critical thinking: Bob Ennis, Ralph Johnson, Matthew Lipman, John Hoaglund, Neil Brown, Stuart Keeley, Stephen Norris, Harvey Siegel, Michael Scriven, Tony Blair, Ed Damer, Alec Fisher, Bill Dorman, Vincent Ruggiero, Sharon Bailin, Mark Battersby, Maurice Finochiarro, Mark Weinstein, Ian Wright, Gerald Nosich, Connie Missimer, Zachary Seech, Perry Weddle, Jerry Cederblom, and John Chaffee, to name only a few. (Some of the works from these scholars are listed as "Recommended Readings" at the end of the 1990 edition of *Critical Thinking*:

*How to Prepare Students for a Rapidly Changing World*, as well as in the works cited page of this paper.). To get a sense of the quality of the papers, many of the presentations by these scholars later became published papers. The conference gave these cutting-edge scholars the opportunity to try out their ideas and receive immediate feedback from other leading scholars in the critical thinking field. Dialectical thinking was alive and well at the Sonoma Conferences.

It also gave newcomers, like me, an introduction to numerous debates over critical thinking. That was an important and exciting part of the Critical Thinking Movement; that is, it was obvious that there were still many important issues that needed to be addressed. I often thought of the conferences as a crucible where, through heated debates, important ideas became more and more purified. The ideas of these leading academics also inspired some of us to study many of their works. For example, it was only after hearing a presentation by Harvey Siegel on what is wrong with epistemological relativism that I was inspired to read *Educating Reason* and then use his book as a springboard for the staff's development of our critical thinking and written composition program we were planning at Baker University. It was only after hearing a presentation by Gerald Nosich that I read his then-new text, *Reasons and Arguments*. (Much to his amazement, the idea of Deductive Reconstruction has, for better or worse, stuck with me as a very teachable model for critical thinking for over thirty years (Hatcher, 1999, 2013b)).

So, looking back, one might legitimately ask, where would the widespread interest in critical thinking be today if it had not been for the tireless efforts of Richard Paul? If one agrees with Jean-Paul Sartre that humans are only what we do, then, by any measure, Richard Paul was a remarkable human being: a committed visionary who was a very skilled, very focused, and very energetic

man. "Raise high the roof beam, carpenters."

In conjunction with the conferences, Paul created the Center for Critical Thinking and Moral Critique, also located at Sonoma State University. His combining critical thinking and moral criticism was yet another stroke of genius. This is because, if the focus of critical thinking is only on issues surrounding epistemology or what counts as a justified belief, its appeal would be limited to only those who were interested in those issues. But once critical thinking was linked to ethics and moral criticism, the duty to think critically applied to all rational beings. For example, practical arguments about the effects of global warming on coastal cities tend only to interest people who would be affected by the rising sea levels. However, to put forth a moral argument about our duty to carefully evaluate the consequences of our behavior on others, as well as future generations, or the consequences of endorsing practices that harm those who live on the coasts, and that do not pass any utilitarian or contractarian test, is to argue that all people have specific obligations to others. In the spirit of W.K. Clifford, there is something immoral about ignoring counter-evidence against one's half-baked theories or ideas. This is connected with Paul's emphasis on intellectual dispositions such as confidence in reason.

Richard Paul also created the Foundation for Critical Thinking, originally in Santa Rosa, CA. Its website, [www.criticalthinking.org](http://www.criticalthinking.org), is a goldmine for materials on every aspect of critical thinking. According to Paul's "Reflection Piece" in *INQUIRY* (2011), he and the folks at the Foundation for Critical Thinking wrote and distributed over 1 million complimentary "Thinker's Guides" on critical thinking suitable for use in classes across academe. He set up Critical Thinking Academies in England. He did hundreds of in-service faculty workshops in the US (including one in 1987 at Baker University) helping students and faculty understand the importance

of integrating critical thinking into their classes. Paul also authored numerous scholarly articles on critical thinking: its definition, how to teach it, and how to assess it. There is a richness and fecundity found in these articles that is quite rare in scholarly philosophical writings. (For only one example, see his 1989 article "Critical Thinking in North America: A New Theory of Knowledge, Learning and Literacy," *Argumentation*, 3, 197-235.)

### III. One of Many Major Ideas

Of all the important ideas that Richard Paul contributed to the Critical Thinking Movement, for the purposes of this short paper, I want to focus on only one element of his theoretical and pedagogical writings: intellectual virtues or the moral dimension of critical thinking. There are many conceptions of critical thinking. Matt Lipman lists thirty-one in his 2003 book, *Thinking in Education* (pp. 56-58). However, one of the many important elements of Paul's thought was his continued focus on distinguishing honest, legitimate conceptions of critical thinking from bogus ones or pseudo-attempts. He called many dishonest attempts, particularly those by modern-day sophists, instances of "weak-sense critical thinking" (1990). Like a modern-day Socrates, Paul's moral critique (Paul, Elder, Bartell) was exposing those who were attempting to teach or even sell bogus critical thinking courses. In hearing many of Paul's presentations about this at the Sonoma conferences, I was always reminded of J. D. Salinger's character, Holden Caulfield in *The Catcher in the Rye*, who had a terrific eye for and dislike of the phonies in his life. Of course, as one might expect, given Paul's ties to the history of philosophy, this exposé of the phonies puts himself in line with a great tradition. It was exactly what Socrates was doing with the sophists and other pretentious folks who claimed to have a clear understanding of some important concept like knowledge, justice, friendship, piety, or love in many of the Platonic dialogues, but, upon

Socratic examination, did not. With respect to folks having a clear understanding of critical thinking, this problem is as prevalent today as ever. All too often, almost everyone in every discipline thinks he or she is an expert when it comes to teaching critical thinking. And, of course, as Paul, Elder, and Bartell have shown, this is absurd (1995). In their research project, when people who claimed to be teaching critical thinking were asked to define it, they could not do so in any meaningful way (1995). As Kevin Possin recently puts it, today “*critical thinking* has been defined . . . so absurdly broadly that any thought or any thought about a thought (i.e., metacognition) constitutes critical thinking. With this view comes the complete lack of recognition of expertise in critical thinking, since, as with all subjective matters, all opinions are equal—e.g., there is no expert on whether or not strawberries taste good” (Possin, 2016).

The phonies aside, the other ethical element that plays such an important role in Paul’s conception of critical thinking is what he calls “weak-sense critical thinking” (1990). To put it succinctly, legitimate critical thinking is honest, open-minded, unbiased inquiry. Like the sophists of the Platonic dialogues, someone who practices “weak-sense critical thinking” may possess the skills needed for legitimate critical thinking, but uses the skills only to support some preconceived favored ideas or agenda. When it comes to treating objections, only the simplest are addressed, ignoring all that may legitimately challenge the reasonableness of the position or belief. In all of Paul’s writings on the subject, developing intellectual virtues, especially “fairmindedness,” is central to becoming a legitimate critical thinker, as opposed to a phony.

One thing that Paul’s conception of “strong-sense critical thinking” implies is that, for most complex issues, there are indeed strong arguments on both sides. If taken seriously, this realization should incline critical

thinkers to be more tolerant of those who hold views counter to their own—at least until the strongest counter-arguments have been clarified and evaluated. Strong-sense critical thinking also entails that there is a genuine respect for others and their beliefs.

Another implication of this view is that the “strong-sense critical thinker” is one who takes counter arguments seriously and hence should be willing to change his or her mind if there is no reasonable response to the counter-arguments. On the other hand, the “weak-sense critical thinker,” one who never takes the strongest counter-arguments seriously, seldom, if ever, changes his or her position. This would be akin to what Popper called “the dogmatic thinker,” one who is primarily looking for evidence to support his or her position (bias) rather than taking seriously the evidence that might be used against the belief (1963). This distinction is of the utmost importance in Paul’s conception of critical thinking.

#### IV. Disagreements

Finally, I would not be doing my duty as a critical thinker, as Richard Paul defined it, if I did not at least mention some of our disagreements over the years. As Harvey Siegel so nicely put it, “Critical thinkers must be critical about critical thinking” (1997, p. 73). One area of disagreement that came up in the middle 80s was my concern that Richard’s emphasis on conceptual schemes implied a relativist epistemology. For example, in a 1985 paper in *Informal Logic*, he claimed that “First of all, the world is not given to us sliced up into logical categories, and there is not one, but an indefinitely large number of ways in which we may ‘divide’ it . . . and [there is] no ‘detached’ point of view from the supreme perspective of which we can decide on the appropriate taxonomy . . . Conceptual schemes create logical domains, and it is human thought, not nature, that creates them . . .” (1985, p. 40).

Being familiar with some of the critiques of tying reasonableness or truth to “conceptual schemes” (Davidson, 1974; Siegel, 1986; and Trigg, 1973), I argued, perhaps naively, that Paul’s reference to conceptual schemes would present practical problems for the critical thinking movement (Hatcher, 1987). For example, “How can one who believes that truth is relative to some particular conceptual scheme ever hope to evaluate competing beliefs which presumably reflect different conceptual frameworks” (p.4)? Also, if what counts for good reasons is relative to one’s conceptual scheme, then why isn’t critical thinking itself just one conceptual scheme among others? Why should it have epistemic priority over other schemes like witchcraft and voodoo? If one is committed to understanding all claims as relative to one’s chosen conceptual scheme, critical inquiry seems impossible.

Another area where I questioned Richard’s position was, in the tradition of Descartes, his emphasis on the individual thinker being able to best decide what was reasonable to believe and do. This focus on the individual thinking about his or her thinking is present in much of his writing. Consider his definition of critical thinking quoted by Fisher and Scriven: “Critical thinking is that mode of thinking – about any subject, content or problem – in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully taking charge of the structures inherent in thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them” (p. 91). Richard gives a similar definition in a paper for *Argumentation*. Critical Thinking:

- (a) “The art of thinking about your thinking, while you’re thinking, so as to make your thinking more clear, precise, accurate, relevant, consistent, and fair.”
- (b) “The art of constructive skepticism.”

- (c) The art of identifying and removing bias, prejudice, and one-sidedness of thought.”
- (d) “The art of self-directed, in-depth, rational learning.”
- (e) “Thinking that rationally certifies what we know and makes clear wherein we are ignorant.” (1989, p. 213)

From these examples, one can easily see that Paul’s conception of critical thinking seems not only to emphasize metacognition or “thinking about your thinking,” but requires it (Fisher and Scriven, p. 91).

From personal experience, I questioned this focus simply because I had benefitted greatly from the criticism of my ideas and writings by my teachers, my colleagues, and especially journal editors. I (and others) saw critical thinking, and philosophy in general, as a dialectical enterprise, where the most important members of the dialogue were other inquirers. This is what Johnson called “the dialectical tier” (2000, p. 164), or Peirce referred to as a “community of inquirers” (960, p. 268). In my experience, I knew that I, who claimed to be a “fallibilist,” was my own worst enemy with respect to my own thinking and needed the help of others to clarify, critique, and reformulate my ideas. So, I concluded, it was a mistake to define critical thinking as primarily *individuals* thinking about their own thinking in an attempt to improve it. As J. S. Mill pointed out in *On Liberty*, the essential element for inquiry is an openness to the criticism from others. “He who knows only his own side of the case, knows very little of that” (1978, p. 35).

In retrospect, I think both of my criticisms, e.g., Richard’s reference to conceptual schemes and his focus on critical thinking as the individual thinking about his or her thinking, were not wholly correct. In 1987, on his visit to Baker University,

he gave me a draft of a paper co-authored with Joel Rudinow, “Bias, Relativism, and Critical Thinking.” After explaining that all of us live in “meaning-schemes, with conceptual, conative, affective, and behavioral dimensions” and how “We cannot step outside of our experience to look at it from some trans-ideational or completely detached standpoint” (pp. 15-16), the paper ends by saying the best way to critically evaluate our personal thinking and our conceptual scheme is “from discourse and exchange with other minds; this indeed is the primary means whereby we can correct and balance our thinking” (p. 16).

This claim clearly contradicts the idea that operating from conceptual schemes leads to the inability to evaluate claims from different conceptual schemes. It also undermines any Cartesian idea of a critical thinker as an individual who can best improve his or her thinking by simply monitoring their biases or “thinking about our thinking.” In that paper, Paul and Rudinow are claiming that it is possible to evaluate competing conceptual schemes and that the best way to do that is through the criticisms others might provide. I only wish Paul and Rudinow had gone on to recommend a healthy dose of pragmatism as a way to evaluate competing conceptual schemes and the ideas coming from different schemes. That is, one might evaluate competing conceptual schemes by comparing the results or outcomes relative to our stated purposes.

Another place where I disagreed with Richard was what he understood as the consequences of being committed to infusing critical thinking instruction across the entire curriculum K-12, in all subjects, and in college. To do this, he developed theories and pedagogy that could be applied to this wide audience. To this end, he and his colleagues at the Critical Thinking Community developed an amazing amount of teaching materials that gave schematic instructions and representations of the various dimensions of critical thinking. These originally included nine Elements of

Reasoning, fourteen Standards of Thought, thirteen Traits of Mind, seven Modes of Reasoning, and twenty-one Abilities (1992). These, he thought were all part of what it meant to engage in critical thinking and for students to become critical thinkers. (Much of this sort of material is also included in his 2011 and 2012 reflection pieces for *INQUIRY*.)

While one cannot help but admire the complexity, depth, and breadth of this work, it did not appeal to me. First, it seemed to move critical thinking away from the Socratic position that Paul said was the source of critical thinking (1987). It seemed to me that Socratic inquiry, as presented in the Platonic dialogues, was much simpler than this. For example, one can analyze Plato’s *Meno* using straightforward deductive reconstruction (Hatcher, 1996). This is true for numerous other dialogues. In fact, it was symbolizing many of Socrates’ arguments in my Plato seminar in graduate school that inclined me to focus on deductive reconstruction (2013b).

In the spirit of Ockham, I had become a fan of simplicity, where possible. For my own materials in my work with faculty members teaching in the Baker University Critical Thinking and Composition Program, by necessity, the motto was “Keep it simple, stupid.” Consider, for example, Gerald Nosich’s prescription for argument evaluation in his *Reasons and Arguments* (1982). According to Nosich, we should evaluate the reasons for a position by treating the conclusion and reasons as an enthymeme, and then add the major premise to turn the argument into a valid deductive argument, i.e. we apply the technique of Deductive Reconstruction. (Please note that, because of Richard Paul’s influence, Nosich has long since abandoned this strategy (2010; 2012) in an attempt to be more inclusive of disciplines beyond philosophy.)

The method of Deductive Reconstruction is summarized by Nosich as



follows:

Step 1. Paraphrase the argument so that you are sure you understand it.

Step 2. Break the argument down into premises and conclusion.

Step 3. Arrange the premises and conclusion in their logical order.

Step 4. Fill in the missing premises needed to make the argument valid.

Step 5. Criticize the argument for validity and the premises for truth. (Nosich, 1982, p. 142)

For me, the very simplicity of this approach had great appeal: clarify the argument, make it deductively valid, and then evaluate the reasonableness of the premises. Unfortunately, according to the assessment data from standardized critical thinking tests used in the BU program, some faculty members had difficulty understanding even this simple approach and could not teach it (Hatcher, 2013b). Some of the students even got worse on the post-tests.

The Deductive Reconstruction approach did not appeal to Richard. It did not serve his purposes of creating a robust critical thinking program for teachers from kindergarten to college graduation.

My last conversation with Richard was in the spring of 1999. In August of the previous year, by Richard's request, Jerry Cederblom, Ralph Johnson, and I had worked hard putting together what we thought was a well-integrated four-day workshop on critical thinking and informal logic for Richard's 18<sup>th</sup> Annual International Critical Thinking Conference. The four-day workshop needed to coordinate and integrate a narrative covering what Ralph called "the whole enchilada." The preparation was demanding. And, of course, we thought the workshop was a great success. The next year, we did not receive a request to

repeat the workshop as part of the 19<sup>th</sup> annual conference. I remember calling Richard to see if perhaps our services had been overlooked by mistake. His response was absolutely clear. He pointed out, much as Gerald Nosich did in his 2011 "reflection piece" for *INQUIRY*, that what Jerry, Ralph, and I did last year was "critical thinking for philosophers," not critical thinking for disciplines across the curriculum. Because by far the majority of the attendees at Richard's conference were not trained in philosophy, our approach was not suitable. We needed to change if we were to continue to be part of the conference.

Of course, as I found out later, Richard was correct. People who have no training in logic have a lot of trouble understanding what, to philosophers, is pretty simple. Such standard logical concepts as *deductive validity* and *soundness* are foreign to their way of thinking. As a result, even though I continue to have success in my college critical thinking classes, I have given up expecting most non-philosophers to successfully employ the Deductive Reconstruction model that I use (2013a).

## V. Conclusion

I think that many of us "old timers" of the critical thinking movement would agree when I say that no one did more than Richard Paul to make enhancing critical thinking skills and dispositions a central goal in education. Who would have thought in 1980, the year of the first Sonoma conference, that 30 years later, an article in *Forbes* would list critical thinking as the skill most desired by employers (Casserly). No one else has left such an abundance of valuable materials to be used in the teaching of critical thinking. And only through Richard's efforts in organizing the annual conferences was a large community of inquirers, all of us concerned with enhancing students' critical thinking skills, formed. We may not agree on the means, but we do agree on the end and its importance for education.

We thank you, Richard Paul! Our debt to you is huge. We miss you greatly.

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