

From the Editor's Desk

Frank Fair

The first article in this issue is a reflection piece by Baker University's Donald Hatcher entitled "Reflections on Critical Thinking: Theory, Practice, and Assessment." In this piece Don describes his intellectual journey as part of the movement to teach critical thinking, including an explanation of his conviction about the great value of deductive reconstruction as a technique that can foster critical thinking. I personally find this a bracing counterweight to a common denigration of the contribution of formal, deductive logic to critical thinking. Furthermore, in his reflection, Don provides something that is of very special interest, namely an extremely informative account of the "Baker Experiment." This was a pedagogical enterprise which combined critical thinking instruction with written composition and which generated 18 continuous years of assessment data. That run is unlikely to be surpassed as documentary record. In his conclusion Don draws a somewhat somber moral from his experience about the impact of critical thinking instruction and the prospects for critical thinking across the curriculum. His conclusion should temper any easy optimism one might feel about successfully instituting programs of critical thinking across the disciplines.

With that caution in mind, I feel especially glad to present next a piece by Robert Ennis that is, in effect, a manifesto: "Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum: The Wisdom CTAC Program." In addition to this deeply serious and comprehensively developed manifesto, those who know Bob will not be surprised to find that he agreed to reply to challenges to the CTAC program as he outlined it. So in "The Wisdom CTAC Proposal: Editors' Comments and Ennis' Replies" readers will note how graciously he responds to critical challenges that three of my *INQUIRY* editorial colleagues, Sheryl Murphy-Manley, Scott Miller, and Marcus Gillespie, presented to the proposed program.

A reader of the previous issue may recall that there Amanda Heiner gave us "Critical Thinking in the Literature Classroom, Part I" in which she argued that "literature students must master the skills of analysis, reasoning, evaluation, and argumentation," and thus "they can benefit from deliberate and explicit instruction in the concepts and practices of critical thinking in the classroom, including instruction in the elements of reasoning and the standards of critical thinking described by critical thinking experts Richard Paul, Linda Elder, and Gerald Nosich." Now in this issue, her "Critical Thinking in the Literature Classroom, Part II: Dickens's *Great Expectations* and the Emergent Critical Thinker" gives us an extended demonstration "of how protagonists in literary works such as Pip from Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1860-61/1996) can be understood and interpreted as literary representations of an individual's transition from a first-order, unreflective thinker to a second-order, reflective, metacognitive critical thinker, further illuminating the literary texts and further reinforcing students' understanding of the concepts of critical thinking."

Finally, Linda Carozza gives us a detailed and thoughtful review of a well-regarded critical thinking textbook by Leo Groarke and Christopher Tindale. Their *Good Reasoning Matters! A Constructive Approach to Critical Thinking* (Oxford University Press, 2013) is now in its fifth edition. Linda has used previous editions of *GRM!* since 2004, and she allows that the fifth edition has improved the text significantly. In the course of her review she expresses what to my mind is one of the best things one can say about a critical thinking textbook: "From the beginning of reading *GRM!* readers understand that this is a textbook that takes them well beyond critical thinking in a classroom setting."