

"... I am a learner, I am curious, and I believe in what I do. I seek to engage students and stretch their limits. I address learners where they are to challenge their critical thinking. I hope to provide students with multiple opportunities for success and risk."



May 2014 Program Report

The mission of the Community Center for Teaching Excellence (CCTE) is to work collaboratively across the K-20 continuum to improve student success by creating spaces, structures, and opportunities that support teachers and teaching excellence.

COMMUNITY CENTER FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

<http://www.communitycenterforteachingexcellence.org>

Dear Colleagues,

It is a pleasure to share this program report with you as we wrap up the first three years of the Community Center for Teaching Excellence (CCTE) at Monroe Community College (MCC).

CCTE has been a regional initiative led by MCC with funding from the U.S. Department of Education. The professional expertise and dedication of the CCTE Facilitation Committee has been exceptional, and we thank our partners in this endeavor: **St. John Fisher College, SUNY Geneseo, The College at Brockport, Rochester City School District (RCSD) and Rush-Henrietta Central School District (R-H).**

In a few short years, CCTE has developed and supported regional professional learning communities that cross traditional boundaries by bringing together K-12 teachers and college faculty in our pioneering **K-20 Faculty Fellows Program.**

Research shows that effective professional learning communities (PLCs) have a shared vision of powerful, authentic learning that defines good teaching and classroom practice, and that creates new knowledge and beliefs about teachers and learners.

Our cross-sector approach to professional learning enables educators to work together on the essential element of teaching and learning. Vibrant PLCs of experienced educators focus energy and expertise on understanding, developing, and implementing teaching practices that enhance student engagement and academic success.

By recognizing the central and enduring role of teachers on the success of students at all grade levels, we support educators to **use action research to refine classroom practice** and move beyond narrow definitions of student success. Empowering educators to do more of what works in the classroom has resulted in a **statistically significant increase in college course completion and a decrease in the number of students who failed, withdrew or did not complete a course.**

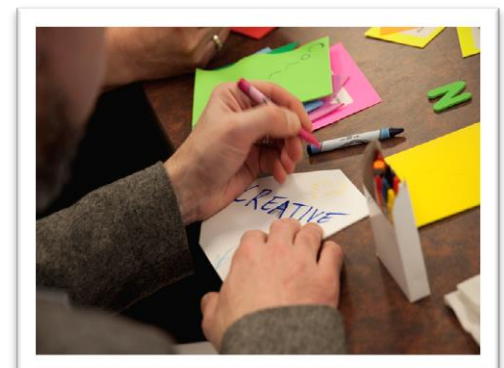
We sincerely hope that CCTE's work from 2011-2014 serves as a foundation for continued regional efforts to support the success of all students in the Greater Rochester region.

Thanks for reading,

Ann Pennella



Ann Pennella
CCTE Program Director



Quotes and Photos

Some of our Fellows' thoughts and photos are included on these pages. Quotes, though written by CCTE Fellows and Facilitators, are presented here anonymously.

We invite you to visit the [CCTE website](#) to learn more about the Fellows, their personal teaching philosophy, and their action research.

Fellows engage with a broad range of perspectives on learning and teaching. They come together and form Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) where reading, collegial discussion, reflection and classroom visits are designed to support learning about teaching.

"I am often wondering how to more quickly identify and capitalize on (respond to) those spontaneous teachable moments that occur during classes."



Dawn Lee, CCTE Fellow
The College at Brockport



Sam Simpson, CCTE Fellow
Rochester City School District

Fellows create knowledge by designing and implementing action research. In this process they look carefully at the impact of their teaching on student learning, motivation, and achievement.

"The biggest question I ask myself is how I can meet the needs of students who are not prepared for college work while still maintaining the integrity of the college classroom."

Fellows' dedication, curiosity, and commitment to doing their best work drives their [action research](#) and learning in the program.

"Am I using assignments/concepts that are both familiar to them and relevant to their lives in school and outside it? Are students stretching themselves intellectually? Am I helping them to build on what they already know? Are students retaining what I teach?"



Rob Feissner, CCTE Fellow
SUNY Geneseo

Questions, Ideas and Learning

Curious about what teachers think about and how they approach the work of teaching? Inquiry-based learning is a powerful way to learn and teach. Fellows discover this first-hand: their questions and ideas drive their own professional learning and research in the PLCs.

"How much of what students learn will they retain and for how long? I am fairly satisfied with my assessment mechanisms at this point, and I am confident most all of my students are learning. I just want to ensure they transfer their understanding to new material in college."



Bryan Coe, CCTE Fellow
Rush-Henrietta Central School District



Theresa Westbay, CCTE Fellow
St. John Fisher College

Independent external evaluation of the Fellows Program reveals that for both Fellows cohorts, the use of action research had the highest average classroom impact score (see chart on page 5).

"I found the same honesty, commitment, and genuine questioning you brought to our Affinity Group meetings reflected in your writing. I especially appreciate the last line of your reflection about the power of this kind of work to make us better teachers."

"Using a set of questions that sustained the attention of the students helped guide them in making interesting and valuable observations. They were comfortable and confident enough to explore and accept multiple viewpoints, and backed up their reasoning with valid evidence. This activity was extremely successful in showing an improvement in the students' critical thinking skills."



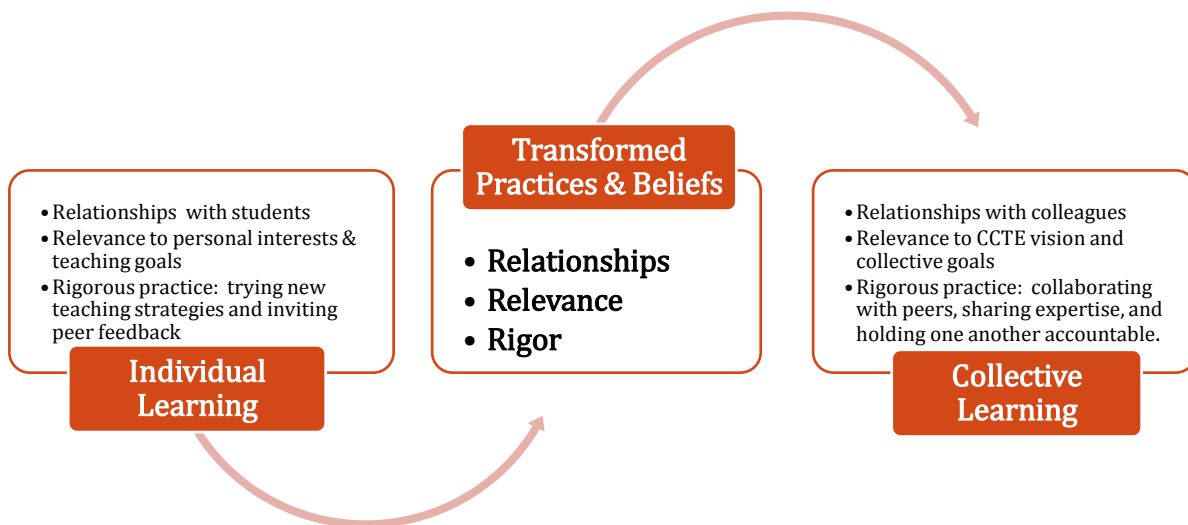
Angelique Johnston, CCTE Fellow
Monroe Community College

CCTE Builds on What Works

CCTE's work with collegial, job-embedded professional learning for educators across sectors is based on current educational research and best practices in the classroom. The diagram below was adapted from work on adult learning done by the Small Schools Project,¹ because it depicts our sense of how teachers' learning is interwoven with students' learning. The choice of action research as a primary modality for the program is underscored by the work of Gerald Pine² who states:

"For nearly 40 years, consistent documentation of the gap between educational research and the classroom practice reveals that school context, complexity, and culture have a profound impact on the implementation of research findings. To address the gap, it is argued that teacher action research, which encompasses school culture, complexity, and context, is a powerful research approach for improving teaching and learning and for building a knowledge democracy."

Adult Learning in Service of Improved Student Learning



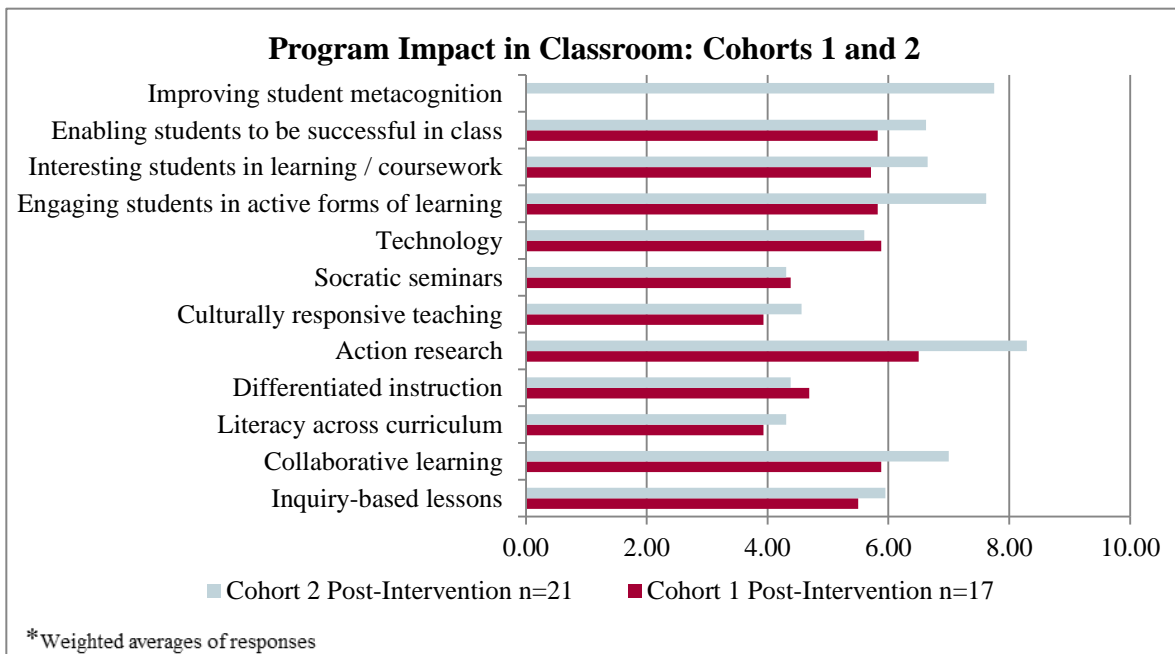
¹ Mary Beth Lambert et. al. (Fall 2006). *Adult Learning: Turning the Corner to Instructional Change*. Retrieved May 28, 2014 from [http://www.nsrharmony.org/research/Lambert et al 2007.pdf](http://www.nsrharmony.org/research/Lambert%20et%20al%202007.pdf)

² Pine, Gerald J. (2009) *Teacher Action Research: Building Knowledge Democracies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Pine describes knowledge democracies as schools or educational organizations characterized by collaborative, participatory and democratic relationships between and among teachers, college faculty, students and parents who together build communities of inquiry that promote the democratization of knowledge-building.

Program Impacts

A comprehensive evaluation of CCTE was conducted by the Center for Governmental Research (CGR). Faculty Fellows, their students, program leaders, and the Facilitation PLC participated in the evaluation process.

After program completion, Fellows were asked to report the program's impact on their ability to do or use strategies and concepts in the classroom. Ratings were on a scale where 1=no effect and 10=large effect. Both groups rated program impact highest for action research. Fellows from the second cohort also gave "improving student metacognition" a high rating; this topic was not explored by the first group.



Bridging the K-12/college divide was identified as a program outcome which helped build a sense of collective responsibility and an understanding that “*we are sharing the same students over time.*”³

Research was also conducted to examine college students' course completion rate. Across four participating colleges for the 2013-14 Fellows cohort, there was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of students who successfully completed the college courses taught by Fellows using new instructional strategies and action research.⁴

³ Pryor, Kirstin and Erika Rosenberg (April 2014). *Strengthening the K-20 Pipeline by Focusing on K-20 Faculty: External Evaluation of the Community Center for Teaching Excellence in Monroe County, NY*. Rochester, NY: Center for Governmental Research, p15. Special thanks to CGR for permission to use the graph on this page.

⁴ DeMario, M.M. (April 2014) *Faculty Fellows Cohort 2 Course Comparison Report, v2*, IR, 3pp.

CCTE's Supported Practice Model

"Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes."⁵

CCTE's model of Supported Practice is designed to sustain a safe space for Faculty Fellows to raise questions, explore ideas, and obtain resources, both material and conceptual, while they implement instructional changes and related action research. Affinity groups of teacher-researchers are guided by CCTE Dialogue Facilitators with expertise in action research and classroom teaching. The Supported Practice model blends coaching with peer-to-peer learning, [reflective practice](#), and tangible support to empower educators as they work to improve student success in their own classrooms.



*Tracy Peterson, CCTE Facilitator
SUNY Geneseo
Director of Student Success*

"The visits to other teacher's schools and classrooms were an eye-opening experience that I believe cannot be replicated by simply reading or talking or watching videos. I wish for more faculty members to gain the same valuable hands-on experience. It indeed offers perspective."

"I want to thank you for your support and helpful feedback you have provided over the course of my research and writing. Your comments have helped shape my thinking and will continue to do so as I dig into the data more deeply this summer."

Summer Program Teacher Study

CCTE is sponsoring a qualitative research study to look at how teachers impact student learning in a multi-dimensional summer program. The study began in summer 2013 and is currently in process. Knowing that summer learning loss contributes to the academic achievement gap for all children, particularly those from low-income families, researchers are investigating how summer teaching relates to school-year teaching, and whether effective approaches in summer are transferable to school-year instruction. Results of the study will be shared with the community and used to help both summer and school-year programs do more of what works.

⁵ [Standards for Professional Learning](http://www.learningforward.org/standards/learningdesigns/index.cfm) (2011). Learning Forward: Oxford, OH. Retrieved May 10, 2014 from <http://www.learningforward.org/standards/learningdesigns/index.cfm>. These research-based standards address the following topics: learning communities, leadership, resources, data, learning designs, implementation, and outcomes. Standards for learning designs were used to develop the Fellows Program.

Connected Educator Team

The term “connected educator” was first coined by Sheryl Nussbaum-Beach whose book on learning and leading in a digital age prompted a [CCTE Connected Educator Team](#) to embark on a year-long commitment to online learning and action research related to using technology for learning.

The CCTE team investigated the use of an online forum to study patterns of “teacher talk” and whether a private online forum contributed to a cross-sector PLC, the 2013 Fellows, who used a private online forum during the first program semester. Researchers found that Fellows’ online discussions fell into two main categories across the STEM and Liberal Arts groups: **teacher engagement** and **teaching mechanics**. The full research report can be accessed from the Connected Educator Team webpage.

“Connected learning is a process of learning, unlearning, and then relearning as we participate in networks and communities. Several basic concepts of the digital age require unlearning. We need to unlearn that learning occurs only in school, is limited by time and space, and is an individual pursuit. We need to unlearn that we have to be experts in our classrooms and that leading is only for those with titles.”⁶



Joe Cicero
CCTE Fellow & Tech Consultant
Rochester City School District

CCTE Website

Creating a website with both public and private spaces for educators has been a primary strategy used to achieve the CCTE mission. Built collaboratively by the Facilitation PLC and the Faculty Fellows, the site offers a wealth of resources on teaching and learning.

Fellows share their work through [action research reports](#) and [blog posts](#). The Facilitation PLC’s [key words and resources](#) glossary documents a shared understanding of educational terms across K-20. Rich media provide a peak at [using technology in teaching and learning](#) while [student voices](#) from distant places give us a fresh take on cross-cultural education.

The website is tracking 300+ new visitors each month, and a recent survey of educators not involved with CCTE provides new insights on content and utility. **Special thanks to all who have contributed to the current website.** We will continue to evolve the site to make it even more useful to teachers and education researchers locally and world-wide.

“The use of technology enhances not only student engagement, but also teacher excitement.”

⁶ Nussbaum-Beach, Sheryl and Lani Ritter Hall (2012). *The Connected Educator: Learning and Leading in a Digital Age*. Bloomington IN: Solution Tree Press. (pp. 49-50).

Regional Expertise: CCTE's Facilitation Committee

CCTE's Facilitation Committee is comprised of representatives from each partner district and institution. The group operates as a Professional Learning Community, and continually strives to identify and develop key initiatives that will have a positive impact on student success. The collective wisdom, expertise, and dedication of this group is truly exceptional.

Facilitation PLC Members 2011-2014

Monroe Community College

Kimberley Collins, Assistant Vice President, Academic Services
Mary Ann DeMario, Specialist, Institutional Research
Jonathan Iuzzini, Coordinator, Teaching and Creativity Center
Michael McDonough, Provost and Vice President, Academic Services
Kate Schiefen, former Dean of Academic Services, Damon City Campus
Tracy Wyant, Assistant Professor of Education

Rochester City School District

Kelly Bauman, Coordinating Director of Expanded Learning and Professional Development
Beverly Burrell-Moore, Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning
Mark Ferraro, former Professional Learning Support Tech, Office of Professional Learning
Carlos Leal, Instructional Director, Office of Professional Learning
Beth Mascitti-Miller, former Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning
Karen Sangmeister, (Acting) Assistant Principal, Office of Adult and Career Education Services

Rush-Henrietta Central School District

Denise Anthony, former Assistant Superintendent for Quality Assurance and Community Relations
Todd Russo, 11th Grade Vice Principal, Rush-Henrietta Senior High School

St. John Fisher College

Jeanine Dingus-Eason, Associate Professor, Doctoral Program in Executive Leadership
Michelle Erklenz-Watts, Associate Professor, Education

State University of New York at Geneseo

Jane Fowler Morse, Professor of Education, Ella Cline Shear School of Education
Tracy Peterson, Director of Student Success, Ella Cline Shear School of Education

The College at Brockport

Betsy Ann Balzano, Distinguished Service Professor, Department of Education and Human Development
Christopher Price, Director, Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching

Thank you for all of your efforts on behalf of our regional enterprise.

Teaching Excellence: CCTE Faculty Fellows

We salute the educators who participated in the Fellows Program with a high level of commitment and enthusiasm. Fellows' passion for teaching and learning was evident throughout, as was their willingness to grow and support one another.

CCTE Fellows 2012-2014

Monroe Community College

Mark Bellavia, Mathematics
Thomas Blake, English
Maria Brandt, English
Jim Cronmiller, Biology
Rebecca Horwitz, Psychology
Angelique Johnston, English
Elizabeth Johnston, English
John Striebich, Business
Rita Straubhaar, American Sign Language
Jessica Wilkie, English

Rochester City School District

Brad Craddock, English
Joe Cicero Jr., Inquiry Specialist
Anna Haines, English
Erin Hoover, TESOL
Pratima Kumar, Mathematics
Patty Moynihan, Physics
John Palo, Mathematics
Ellen Post, Earth Science
Susan Rudy, Art
Sam Simpson, Mathematics
Diane Watkins, Social Studies

The College at Brockport

Adam Rich, Biology
Dawn Lee, Chemistry and Physics
Amanda Lipko-Speed, Psychology
Susan Orr, Political Science

St. John Fisher College

Stephen Brauer, English & American Studies
Ed Freeman, Biology
Kermin Martinez-Hernandez, Chemistry
Kristin Picardo, Biology
Theresa Westbay, Biology

Rush-Henrietta Central School District

Chuck Abell, English
Jillian Adams, Mathematics
Ross Amstey, English
Joe Bellanca, Social Studies
Heather Bradstreet, Earth Science
Bryan Coe, Mathematics
Mike Fantauzzo, American History
Matt Greene, Physics
Katie Lanning, Social Studies
Allison (Scotty) Linn, English
Scott Nash, English

SUNY Geneseo

Yusuf Bilgic, Statistics
Michelle Costello, Library Science
Rob Feissner, Biology
Andrew Herman, Communications
Glenn McClure, Education and English
Bob O'Donnell, Biology
Jennifer Rogalsky, Geography

Thank you for all of your efforts to help every student meet academic success and enjoy a love of learning.

Toward the Future of Learning and Teaching

As we look to the future of learning and teaching, the work of Barnett Berry and the TeacherSolutions 2030 team serves as inspiration. Berry's team identified emergent realities in education including a transformed learning ecology for students and teachers, seamless connections in and out of cyberspace, differentiated pathways and careers for teachers, and a future of innovation including "teacherpreneurism."

*"We imagine social change of a very high order, transforming a narrow conceptualization of teachers' work—one that has produced more than a century of claustrophobic teaching policy—into an absolute realization that teaching is a subtle and intricate profession that must be supported by an equally subtle and intricate policy approach."*⁷

The future is not a fixed point. It is ours to create.

KnowledgeWorks Forecast 3.0

Education futurist Howard Rheingold describes the convergence of mobile technology, peer-to-peer networks, increased connectivity, and other technologies that will make smart networks commonplace, resulting in "an infrastructure that makes certain kinds of human actions possible that were never possible before."⁸

*"Knowledge-based industries such as education continue to confront the most significant disruptions and also to find the greatest opportunities for recombination. Recombinant education will discover diverse organizational forms and learning formats that find many ways to integrate talent, community assets, and global resources in support of student-centered learning."*⁹

CCTE is poised to continue collaborative cross-sector work to build the future of learning in our region. We welcome your support and involvement.

Announcements about future programs and opportunities through CCTE will be available on the [CCTE website](#) which is the best place to keep tabs on our work.

⁷ Berry, Barnett et. al. (2011). *Teaching 2030: What We Must Do for Our Students and Our Public Schools—Now and in the Future*. New York: Teachers College Press, p. 15.

⁸ Rheingold, H. (2002). *Smart mobs: the Next Social Revolution*. Cambridge, MA: Basic Books.

⁹ KnowledgeWorks Forecast 3.0. (2012). *Recombinant Education: Regenerating the Learning Ecosystem*. Retrieved May 21, 2014 from <http://knowledgeworks.org/future-of-learning>

Do not go where the path may lead; go instead where there is no path and leave a trail. *--Ralph Waldo Emerson*



May 2014 Program Report was prepared by Ann Pennella, CCTE Program Director, and approved by the CCTE Facilitation PLC on May 19, 2014. Visit the CCTE website for announcements about future cross-sector programs and opportunities.

COMMUNITY CENTER FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

<http://www.communitycenterforteachingexcellence.org>

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