

N.Baccari Exit Self Assessment
June 2011

I. "MY SYNTHESIS PRODUCT SHOWS THAT..."

A. I can convey who I want to influence/affect concerning what (Subject, Audience, Purpose).

My intention is to engage with my peers in a faculty learning community where we will use concepts in CCT such as the dialogue process, critical thinking, problem based learning, and reflection to provide a new way of thinking and learning in the workplace.

I received positive feedback of my FLC project from my colleagues. Most expressed excitement and interest in this professional opportunity. I look forward to experiencing the "ah ha" moments of faculty as they move and connect with the richness of the CCT values.

I am hopeful that I will secure a small group of participants. Time constraints and other responsibilities may affect the launching of my FLC. I will be mindful of and appreciate the participant's schedule and continue to outreach by email and face to face conversations to convey the riches and benefits of the FLC.

B. I know what others have done before, either in the form of writing or action, that informs and connects with my project, and I know what others are doing now.

My quest is to limit teacher isolation by providing an opportunity to improve collegial relations, support deep learning, and make meaningful change. With the expertise of Milton Cox, of Miami University who has coordinated many faculty learning communities over the years and Peter Senge who writes about teamwork, I have built a faculty leaning community framework that will support my intention. This framework will bring teaching colleagues together, in a rich, safe, trusting environment to promote new ways of learning and teaching by creating a shared vision, appreciation of individual and group talents, communicating through dialogue, thinking critically and reflection. Moving forward I will continue to study and reach out to FLC experts and to my colleagues in my workplace who have implemented student learning communities.

C. I have teased out my vision, so as to expand my view of issues associated with the project, expose possible new directions, clarify direction/scope within the larger set of issues, and decide the most important direction.

Through mapping exercises and meaningful conversations with my peers and advisor, I have found new ways to identify and grapple new directions and opportunities in a systematic manner. In addition, I have modified my typical fast thinking by permitting myself the space and time to muddle, ponder, and reflect.

D. I have identified the premises and propositions that my project depends on, and can state counter-propositions. I have taken stock of the thinking and research I need to do to counter those counter-propositions or to revise my own propositions.

I am focused on what I want to do personally and professionally. While I expect some bumps in the road, I will persevere. I will reflect on my premises and goals to confirm my direction and may well need to alter my course a bit which is what life is about.

E. I have clear objectives with respect to product, both written and practice, and process, including personal development as a reflective practitioner. I have arranged my work in a sequence (with realistic deadlines) to realize these objectives.

This fall, I will move towards implementation of my FLC. I will have the summer to reflect and review my framework, consult with administration and seek professional development opportunities that will assist me in my role as a FLC facilitator. I will be patient in moving forward and mindful that prospective participants may need to frequently hear the benefits of this opportunity.

F. I have gained direct information, models, and experience not readily available from other sources.

I found online interviews with FLC expert Milton Cox very insightful as he shared some of his early and later experiences in directing FLC. In addition, I learned from a colleague the concept of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and knew it would be an effective tool to incorporate in my FLC plan. My colleague shared her journey as a student of AI and her experience as a trainer. I plan to meet with her again to share my FLC plan and to discuss training opportunities.

G. I have clarified the overall progression or argument underlying my research and the written reports.

I have found confirmation that teacher isolation has been a longstanding problem. Educational institutions are in the business of teaching and learning. There is some degree of socialization and sharing in schools, however, the way

in which we teach and learn is so compartmentalized that we miss the opportunity to leave the classroom cubicle to explore experience and learn with other faculty and students.

There are many more learning communities on college campuses today. Most of the learning communities focus on students to support their academic goals.

There are fewer campuses offering teachers a similar experience. Faculty learning communities are slowly becoming part of the fabric of our institutions.

One of the reasons for this comes from administrators who see a FLC as a threat to the status quo.

It is easier for administrators to monitor and control teaching and learning when it happens in the confines of a classroom. Admin set the tone for planning and development. A FLC community can be viewed as a challenge to the system and admin control. Quite the contrary, a FLC brings admin and faculty closer together to improve student outcomes and promote faculty effectiveness.

H. My writing and other products Grab the attention of the readers/audience, Orient them, move them along in Steps, so they appreciate the Position I've led them to.

I knew that writing a clear, directive, and engaging narrative was going to be challenging. My creative writing skills are minimal and need improvement. I am grateful and most appreciative to Nick Colella in the MCC Writing Center and Peter Taylor, Director of the CCT program for their patience, numerous reviews and editing to help me to say what I wanted to say in a meaningful way that would grab the reader's attention.

I. I have facilitated new avenues of classroom, workplace, and public participation.

I have now in place a faculty learning community (FLC) framework. My next step is to implement the FCL by collaborating with peers and administration in my workplace. I believe that the FLC will provide a purposeful and collegial environment where faculty feel less isolated and more engaged with colleagues to improve teaching and learning.

J. To feed into my future learning and other work, I have taken stock of what has been working well and what needs changing.

Over the last three years, I assumed new work responsibilities which have further isolated me, surprisingly, from my colleagues and family. I had not realized the breadth and depth of my administrative role and the impact it has taken on myself and my family. In moving forward, I will return to a full time faculty teaching position this coming year and devote my time to my CCT

project and passion of building a faculty learning community, as well as my family.

II. DEVELOPING AS A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER, INCLUDING TAKING INITIATIVE IN AND THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

1. I have integrated knowledge and perspectives from CCT and other courses into my own inquiry and engagement in social and/or educational change.

As a parent of a college age student, I withhold judgment in favor of asking probing questions and/or relating counter propositions which allows for my son to create multiple options and make independent decisions.

2. I have also integrated into my own inquiry and engagement the processes, experiences, and struggles of previous courses.

My CCT experiences have enriched, enlightened and strengthened me as a spouse, parent, child, teacher, learner, colleague and mentor. The concepts of CCT are life-long skills that are useful in personal and professional growth. For example, as a leader in my workplace, I have worked to create a meeting environment where each person is given space to share her/his concerns, ideas or reservations and for the audience to address counter propositions respectfully.

In the CCT Problem based learning course, team work, self and peer assessment were necessary practices for each participant. My group encountered challenges where one member had difficulty being open to other's ideas and a preference to work alone in favor of collaboratively,. I consider myself having a patient nature, but I must say I was running out of steam. I found my contributions in moving us forward were not working. Eventually, three of our team members met to brainstorm. We decided at our next class meeting we would share our feelings directly and openly. The climate improved for a short time. Through this experience, I learned, that peer review may serve to assist the individual but the individual must be ready to embrace a behavior change.

3. I have developed efficient ways to organize my time, research materials, computer access, bibliographies, etc.

I am a great fan of collecting materials, not just any materials but the best and most contemporary available. I realize this inhibits me from moving forward and adds self induced stress to the process. I am mindful and assess this behavior in my day to day responsibilities. I work to keep it fresh in my mind to avoid

getting stuck, running out space and time and avoiding showcasing my weaknesses.

4. I have experimented with new tools and experiences, even if not every one became part of my toolkit as a learner, teacher/facilitator of others, and reflective practitioner.

I value the attributes of reflective practice. Reflective practice is especially useful yet challenging to implement in the midst of distressing times. With consistent reflective practice, I have learned to diffuse stressful situations to make my life calmer.

5. I have paid attention to the emotional dimensions of undertaking my own project but have found ways to clear away distractions from other sources (present & past) and not get blocked, turning apparent obstacles into opportunities to move into unfamiliar or uncomfortable territory.

This has been a great challenge for me. Clearing away my own emotions about my writing skills was a serious distraction in moving my project forward. Although it has somewhat improved, it still presents distress which I will continue to work on. Some of the ways I will work on this is to do more free writing, join a writing group, and use the writing tutoring service at my workplace.

6. I have developed peer and other horizontal relationships. I have sought support and advice from peers, and have given support and advice to them when asked for.

I am a great fan of peer support. The richness of peer support is exhilarating. It provides new and exciting ways of thinking. It has impacted my personal and professional growth and development in several ways. For example, I have gone out of my way to seek opinions of those who think differently from me as a way to learn and view things through alternative lenses.

7. I have taken the lead, not dragged my feet, in dialogue with my advisor and other readers. I didn't wait for them to tell me how to solve an expository problem, what must be read and covered in a literature review, or what was meant by some comment I didn't understand. I didn't put off giving my writing to my advisor and other readers or avoid talking to them because I thought that they didn't see things the same way as I do.

At the onset of my writing, I dragged my feet in sharing my work as I was uncomfortable with the organization and quality of my writing. I was very self-conscious. I would try to make my drafts as close to a final version as possible. Over time, I would share my work in its roughest draft form. I would be sure to preface my sharing my writings to peers and advisors that my writing skills are not what they should be as a way to prepare the reader to what they would see.

In hindsight, it would have been advantageous to collaborate with a writing tutor straight away. In the future, I will seek writing support at the onset of any writing projects.

8. I have revised seriously, which involved responding to the comments of others. I came to see this not as bowing down to the views of others, but taking them in and working them into my own reflective inquiry until I could convey more powerfully to others what I'm about (which may have changed as a result of the reflective inquiry).

I absolutely love the feedback from my peers and advisors. I appreciate each and every suggestion and recommendation I receive to make my writing clearer, meaningful, and grab the reader's attention. For me the stumbling block was letting go of my internal negative self-talk about my writing and taking ownership of the reader's impression of my writing.

9. I have inquired and negotiated about formal standards, but gone on to develop and internalize my own criteria for doing work—criteria other than jumping through hoops set by the professor so I get a good grade.

The most important thing for me was to work, study, and absorb the expertise of others to develop a graduate level of writing and improve my skills. The grade was not a motivating factor.

10. I have approached the CCT synthesis course and the CCT program as works-in-progress, which means that, instead of harboring criticisms to submit after the fact, I have found opportunities to affirm what is working well and to suggest directions for further development.

Life is a work in progress. Learning, reflecting, and self-assessing to me as an adult learner is an ongoing process of improvement.

I look forward in moving my synthesis project forward and expect to modify change and improve along the way.