



White Paper: The National Great Teachers Seminar - A strategic investment that benefits both faculty and students.

Written for Madisonville Community College – Institutional host for the 2023 National Great Teachers Seminar under the leadership of Dr. Cindy Kelley, President - Published October 2023

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GREAT TEACHERS SEMINARS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This summary provides an overview of the rationale, objectives, and expected benefits of hosting a National Great Teachers Seminar, holding a regional, state, or local seminar, or sending participants to such an event. It presents a compelling case for organizing an event, sending participants, and outlines the potential advantages for the institution, the faculty, and the broader academic community. It aims to justify allocating resources and highlights the likely impact on both individual faculty members and the institution.

“The focus of the seminar is not on the teaching of specific fields, but rather on the art of teaching as such. The emphasis is on the nature of a great teacher. It is a quest for The Great Teacher, and, as in the case of any quest, the questers learn much about themselves” (Gottshall, 1993), (see Appendix A).

The primary objective of the seminar is not merely to gather already established "great teachers," but rather to create a space where all educators can explore and discover the great teacher within themselves. This philosophy is grounded in the belief that teachers possess valuable expertise in their field and can learn most effectively from one another. Overall, a Great Teachers Seminar is a celebration of the dedication and passion of educators and aims to elevate the teaching profession by encouraging self-discovery, collaboration, and continuous growth as teachers. The purpose of the seminar is to:

- Celebrate good teaching.
- Challenge educators to venture beyond the limits of their own specializations and environments in search of transferable ideas and the universals of teaching.
- Promote a spirit of introspection and self-appraisal by providing a relaxed setting and straightforward process whereby participants can seriously review and contemplate their attitudes, methods, and behaviors as teachers. Practice rational analysis of instructional problems and develop realistic and creative approaches to their solutions.

- Stimulate the exchange of information and ideas by building an expanded network of communication among teachers in higher education.

RATIONALE

Faculty development is crucial for maintaining a high level of education and ensuring that faculty members are up to date with the latest pedagogical techniques, research methodologies, and industry trends. NCSPOD (National Council for Staff, Program & Organizational Development), at the time an affiliate council of AACC (American Association of Community Colleges), recognized the need for “extramural experiences” for faculty rather than those facilitated within their own institutions by their own staff (Gottshall, 1978). While insular academic environments may naturally create a close-knit community, they also have the potential to inadvertently hinder the introduction of fresh ideas and innovative approaches.

“Contemporary higher education utilizes diverse learning spaces such as traditional classrooms, online platforms, and virtual reality settings. These spaces enable various teaching and learning approaches, including collaboration, projects, and experiential learning” (Papaioannou et al., 2023, p. 526). Different disciplines bring unique perspectives and methodologies to the table. In the context of contemporary higher education, involving disciplines such as education, psychology, technology, sociology, and more can provide a holistic view of the challenges and opportunities associated with diverse learning spaces and teaching approaches.

Professional development that includes faculty from different disciplines and institutions supports the position of the American Association of Community Colleges core value of diversity as being “crucial to a democratic society, that diversity enriches the educational experience, and that diversity respects and celebrates differences among institutions and individuals alike” (American Association of Community Colleges, 2023). Faculty members often share similar backgrounds, experiences, and academic perspectives, leading to a narrow range of viewpoints. This similarity can discourage dissenting opinions and foster a sense of uniformity, homogeneity of ideas, confirmation bias, and cognitive dissonance. By actively seeking opportunities for cross-disciplinary

interactions and encouraging participation in off-campus conferences and workshops, institutions can enrich their academic communities with diverse viewpoints, leading to a more vibrant and dynamic learning experience for all involved.

Many community college instructors enter the teaching profession with strong expertise in their respective fields but might not have had the opportunity to receive formal training in teaching and pedagogy. “Professors are experts in their discipline, but usually have had little to no training in instructional practices. Expertise in subject matter is valued more than instructional methodology” (Nkana, E. (2020). This can have many implications for student experiences and learning outcomes. Instructors might struggle to convey complex concepts in a way that's easily understandable by students.

In a recent report from Latinx STEM faculty, “the job skills most often mentioned as important assets of faculty participants were interpersonal and social-emotional skills. This included descriptions of communication and collaboration skills, both with fellow faculty, as well as with students” (Berdie et al., 2023, p. 21). The Great Teachers Seminar experience is based in social interaction which fosters collaboration, sharing insights, and providing a supportive environment for skill development. Instructors share real-world examples of situations where effective strategies made a significant impact on student comprehension, engagement, and motivation. These anecdotal exchanges can serve as powerful learning experiences for other educators in developing responses to trending issues in the dynamic areas of technology, society, and methodology that affect student learning outcomes.

"Higher education institutions—recently rocked by the COVID-19 pandemic and fearing the effects of the enrollment cliff—are now faced with a new disruption: generative AI" (Hodges & Ocak, 2023). While we continue to adapt to the "new normal" in the post-pandemic era, educators are grappling with the dual challenges of harnessing the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) to improve personalized learning while also addressing concerns related to academic integrity. Adding to the mix are Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR) technologies being used for immersive learning experiences in fields such as medicine, engineering, and the sciences. While these technologies require investments in hardware and software resources, they require instructors to

adapt to new teaching technologies and methodologies. These, along with complex social challenges, such as addressing student mental health, often require interdisciplinary approaches. According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics, out of the 20 million students enrolled in higher education institutions in 2019, approximately 19.9 million students faced mental health challenges (Imagine America Foundation, 2020).

Emergent trends call for collaboration to stay ahead of the curve. "Colleges and universities have generally been slow to adopt change"(Hodges & Ocak, 2023). Sharing ideas across disciplines allows for the integration of diverse perspectives and innovative solutions, to address developing issues as they arise. Encouraging professional collaboration can leverage resources and expand opportunities for faculty as well as for the students and institutions they serve. "Professional development can help to bolster employees' confidence in their work. Greater confidence can, in turn, translate into higher overall job satisfaction, employee performance, productivity, and overall morale" (Parsons, 2023). Faculty members who are satisfied with their work and feel confident in their abilities are more likely to provide high-quality education. Their enthusiasm and commitment to teaching and research can positively impact students' learning experiences.

Ultimately, the goal of any educational institution is to ensure student success. Instructors equipped with effective teaching techniques and motivating factors for staying with their institution are better positioned to support students' learning journeys and contribute to higher retention and graduation rates.

OBJECTIVES

A great teachers seminar shares many characteristics with a community of practice or learning community, as both aim to foster collaborative learning, knowledge sharing, and ongoing professional development among educators. "A community of practice may or may not have an explicit agenda on a given week, and even if it does, it may not follow the agenda closely. Inevitably, however, people in communities of practice share their experiences and knowledge in free-flowing, creative ways that foster new

approaches to problems” (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). These settings provide valuable opportunities for educators to enhance their teaching practices and contribute to a culture of excellence in education.

The following provides a structured and objective way to measure progress and make informed decisions, ultimately assisting organizations in achieving their missions and goals more effectively and efficiently. Objectives, Measures, and Key Performance Indicators can serve as a critical tool for performance management, strategy execution, and continuous improvement. Seminar hosts have incorporated their institutional effectiveness strategies and measures in some of the following ways (see Appendix B).

CELEBRATE GOOD TEACHING

At the center of these celebrations of good teaching are high-quality products and practices that reflect the content and skills that instructors have learned through their professional practice of their discipline.

- **OBJECTIVE:** Recognize and celebrate exemplary teaching practices.
- **MEASUREMENT:** Conduct pre-and post-seminar surveys to assess participants' perceptions of their teaching skills, with a focus on improvements.
- **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI):** Percentage increase in participants' self-reported perception of their teaching skills from the pre-seminar to the post-seminar survey, aiming for a target of at least 15% improvement.

CHALLENGE EDUCATORS TO EXPLORE TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

Educators are encouraged to explore concepts, strategies, and knowledge that can be applied and adapted across different contexts or subjects. It involves prompting them to think beyond the immediate subject matter and “imagined limitations,” and consider how their expertise and skills can be used in diverse situations or disciplines (Gottshall,

1993). Essentially, it's about fostering a broader and more versatile perspective in teaching and learning.

- **OBJECTIVE:** Encourage participants to seek teaching ideas beyond their specializations.
- **MEASUREMENT:** Collect data on the number of participants who engage in interdisciplinary discussions or projects during the seminar.
- **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI):** Within the seminar timeframe, increase the percentage of participants actively seeking teaching ideas from disciplines outside their specialization by at least 10% compared to the initial baseline measurement. Within one academic year, increase the percentage of participants actively seeking teaching ideas from disciplines outside their specialization by at least 10% compared to the initial baseline measurement.

PROMOTE INTROSPECTION AND SELF-APPRAISAL

Seminar activities and discussions encourage individuals to reflect on their thoughts, actions, and behaviors, as well as to assess their own strengths and weaknesses. It involves fostering a deeper understanding of oneself and one's actions for personal and professional growth.

- **OBJECTIVE:** Facilitate self-reflection among educators.
- **MEASUREMENT:** Administer a self-assessment questionnaire before and after the seminar to measure changes in participants' attitudes, methods, and behaviors as teachers.
- **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI):** Achieve a minimum of a 10% overall improvement in participants' self-reported attitudes, methods, and behaviors as teachers, as measured by the self-assessment questionnaire, from the pre-seminar baseline to the post-seminar assessment.

PRACTICE RATIONAL ANALYSIS OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROBLEMS

Participants are encouraged to actively document practical and actionable solutions during problem-solving sessions, fostering a constructive and results-oriented approach to addressing instructional challenges.

- **OBJECTIVE:** Equip educators with problem-solving skills for instructional challenges.
- **MEASUREMENT:** Include a specific question in the post-seminar survey that asks participants to report the total number of actionable solutions they proposed or contributed to during the problem-solving sessions. Or use a Likert scale to assess educators' confidence in addressing instructional challenges they bring to the seminar (before and after the event) to evaluate the seminar's impact on their perceived abilities.
- **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI):** Achieve an average of at least three actionable solutions per participant, as indicated by participant feedback and documented proposals generated during problem-solving sessions. Or achieve an average increase of at least 20% in educators' self-reported confidence levels, as measured by Likert scale assessments, in addressing the specific instructional challenges they bring to the seminar from the pre-assessment (before the seminar) to the post-assessment (after the seminar).

STIMULATE INFORMATION AND IDEA EXCHANGE

Promoting the exchange of information and ideas among educators is vital for their continuous professional growth and the improvement of teaching methods. Establishing a continuous communication network enables educators to share their expertise, engage in mutual learning, and collaboratively drive innovation in education, ultimately benefiting both educators and students.

- **OBJECTIVE:** Build a network of communication among educators.

- **MEASUREMENT:** Track the number of participants who engage in post-seminar networking and knowledge-sharing activities, such as joining online discussion forums or attending follow-up events.
- **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI):** Track and aim to increase the percentage of seminar participants who actively engage in post-seminar networking and knowledge-sharing activities, such as joining online discussion forums or attending follow-up events, with a target of at least 30% participation.

OVERALL SEMINAR SUCCESS

Assessing the overall success of the seminar, considering participant satisfaction, knowledge enhancement, and the commitment to applying seminar insights, is paramount for the hosting organization as it ensures the event's effectiveness, enhances the organization's reputation, and validates its investment in educational development. “Administrators are more likely to adopt a new initiative if it is occurring elsewhere, especially if the institutions have credibility and the initiatives have evidence of success” (Shaw et al., 2021, p. 149). Seminars have been conducted in hundreds of institutions and attended by thousands of participants worldwide for more than 50 years (see Appendix C).

- **OBJECTIVE:** Assess the overall impact of the seminar on educators' growth and collaboration.
- **MEASUREMENT:** Conduct a comprehensive post-seminar evaluation, including quantitative data on participant satisfaction, knowledge gain, and intent to apply seminar insights in their teaching.
- **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI):** Achieve a post-seminar participant satisfaction rating of at least 85%, with a minimum of 80% of participants indicating increased knowledge acquisition, 70% expressing a strong intent to apply seminar insights in their teaching practices, and a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 50 or higher, reflecting a high likelihood of participants recommending the seminar to their peers.

SUSTAINABILITY OF SEMINAR PRINCIPLES

The continuation of seminar principles demonstrates a favorable Return on Investment (ROI) for the organization's resources spent on hosting the event or sending participants. It validates that the knowledge and skills imparted during the seminar have a lasting impact, justifying the initial investment.

INSTITUTIONS

Measuring the impact of a seminar within an organizational context can be a multi-faceted process that involves both quantitative and qualitative assessment methods. The specific metrics and methods used depend on the goals and objectives of the organization's unique needs and context (see Appendix B). For example, hosting a seminar can be built into the professional development component of an institutional plan “to implement and assess a focused set of initiatives designed to improve student learning across the university” (The University of Memphis, 2023). Numerous institutions have and continue to seamlessly integrate these activities into their strategic initiatives (see Appendix C and D).

TEACHERS

To measure the impact of the seminar on key instructor metrics post-seminar, a combination of methods and metrics can be used. It's advisable to determine this prior to hosting a seminar or sending participants. Some suggestions follow:

- **OBJECTIVE:** Ensure the continuation and integration of the seminar's principles in the teaching practices of participants, sustaining their impact for at least 6-12 months following the event.
- **MEASUREMENT:** Implement a multi-faceted measurement approach that includes ongoing assessments, feedback collection, and observation, focusing on the sustained application of seminar principles. Administer post-seminar surveys to instructors. Include questions related to their perceived growth in teaching skills, confidence, and the extent to which they have implemented seminar principles in their teaching. Use self-

assessment tools or checklists that allow instructors to rate their own progress in applying seminar principles.

- **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI):** Sustain a minimum average score of 4 (on a scale of 1 to 5) in ongoing assessments of the integration of seminar principles in teaching practices, with at least 80% of participants reporting increased confidence in their ability to apply these principles, and a student satisfaction rating that remains at or above pre-seminar levels at the 6- and 12-month follow-up points.

STUDENTS

Leveraging student outcome data as a concrete measure of the seminar's impact on teaching practices and, subsequently, its effect on student success and engagement is entirely possible. For a direct assessment of how the seminar's principles influence the educational experience for students, careful pre-planning must take place with specified targets.

- **OBJECTIVE:** Ensure the continuation of the seminar's principles, even after the event.
- **MEASUREMENT:** To measure the impact of the seminar on key student outcome metrics (e.g., improved student performance, increased engagement), use a combination of quantitative data sources and measurement instruments, depending on the specific outcomes to be assessed.
- **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI):** Demonstrate a statistically significant positive impact on at least one key student outcome metric (e.g., improved student performance, increased engagement) in the classrooms of participating educators over the designated period following the seminar, showcasing the successful continuation of collaborative and reflective teaching practices.

These measurable objectives will help gauge the effectiveness of the seminar in achieving its purposes and continuously improve the seminar's impact on educators and the teaching profession.

CONCLUSION

By celebrating good teaching, challenging educators to explore transferable ideas, promoting introspection and self-appraisal, and stimulating information and idea exchange, the organization fosters a culture of excellence in teaching. This, in turn, enhances educational outcomes, elevates the organization's reputation, and justifies the allocation of resources by ensuring that its initiatives have a lasting, positive impact on educators and students alike. Additionally, these measurements enable the organization to assess the effectiveness and return on investment of its programs, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently to support the ongoing development of educators in higher education.

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The National Great Teachers Movement (NGTM)

The following excerpt was written in 1993 by NGTM Founder David B. Gottshall, College of DuPage (Glen Ellyn, IL) in recognition of the its 25th Anniversary.

The Great Teachers Movement is called a movement because it is not associated with, nor does it constitute a corporation or an organization of any kind. Thus, it serves no institutional or commercial interests. There is no headquarters or address, and there are no officials, owners, employees or politics. There are no manuals or handbooks, only a few simple guidelines. Everything is passed on by oral tradition in order to prevent the development of any form of true-believership or fixed procedure that might come to be followed to the letter and of which the education professional would soon tire. The many annual Great Teachers Seminars throughout North America exist and persist only because of the initiative and selfless ambition of people who want to share the experience with teachers in their own geographic area.

The above paragraph is the most important paragraph in this document. It explains the success of the movement of the past 30 years. It needs to be understood by all who use the Great Teachers model and who venture into the Great Teachers Movement if it is to survive in the 21st century.

APPENDIX B

Alignment Matrix

Institution	Source	Alignment
Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) Western Association of Schools and Colleges	2024 Accreditation Standards	Standard 3: Infrastructure and Resources 3.2. The institution supports its employees with professional learning opportunities aligned with the mission and institutional goals. These opportunities are regularly evaluated for overall effectiveness in promoting equitable student success and in meeting institutional and employee needs. (The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, 2023)
Higher Learning Commission (HLC)	Criteria for Accreditation	Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support 3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services. 1. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development. (Higher Learning Commission, 2023)
Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)	Standards For Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation Fourteenth Edition	A candidate or accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: 2. student learning experiences that are designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals who are:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. rigorous and effective in teaching, assessment of student learning, scholarly inquiry, and service, as appropriate to the institution’s mission, goals, and policies; d. provided with and utilize sufficient opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation; <p>(Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2023)</p>
New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)	<i>Standards for Accreditation</i> , effective January 1, 2021	<p>Standard Six Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship</p> <p>6.11 The institution defines the scholarly expectations for faculty consistent with its mission and purposes and the level of degrees offered. Through their scholarly pursuits, all faculty are current in the theory, knowledge, skills, and pedagogy of their discipline or profession. Scholarship and instruction are mutually supportive. (NECHE), 2023).</p>
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)	NWCCU 2020 STANDARDS	<p>Standard Two – Governance, Resources, and Capacity</p> <p>Human Resources</p> <p>2.F.2 The institution provides faculty, staff, and administrators with appropriate opportunities and support for professional growth and development (NWCCU, 2023)</p>
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)	2018 Resource Manual for <i>The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement</i> Section 6: Faculty	5. The institution provides ongoing professional development opportunities for faculty members as teachers, scholars, and practitioners, consistent with the institutional

		mission. (Faculty development) ("Accrediting standards," 2022)
WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)	New WSCUC Standards November 4, 2022	CFR 2.6 The faculty exercise effective academic leadership and act consistently to ensure that the quality of academic programs and the institution's educational purposes are sustained. CFR 2.8 The institution has clear expectations for faculty research, scholarship, and creative activity that are commensurate with the mission and degree portfolio (WSCUC, 2023).

Hosting Organizations

The Great Teachers Movement has a rich tradition of passing on information through oral means, fostering a unique sense of community and shared knowledge. It operates without a central headquarters or physical address, and it prides itself on its lack of hierarchical officials, owners, employees, or political affiliations. Below, you'll find a sampling of some of the hosting organizations and institutions that have been part of this vibrant tradition from 1969 to the present.

Asnuntuck Community College, Enfield, CT

Austin Community College, Austin, TX

Bakersfield College, Bakersfield, CA

Beaufort County Community College, Washington, NC

Bismarck State College, Bismarck, ND

Blue Ridge Community College, Flat Rock, NC

Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute, Hudson, NC

Camosun College, Victoria, BC, Canada

Central Carolina Community College, Sanford, NC

Central Piedmont Community College, Charlotte, NC

Central Virginia Community College, Lynchburg, VA

College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, IL

College of the Mainland, Texas City, TX

College of the North Atlantic, Doha, Qatar

Colorado Northwestern Community College, Rangely, CO

Delta Community College, University City, MI

Faculty Association of California Community Colleges, Sacramento, CA, formerly the Community College League of California

Fayetteville Technical Community College, Fayetteville, NC

Foothill College, Los Altos Hills, CA
Forsyth Technical Community College, Winston-Salem, NC
Grand Rapids Community College, Grand Rapids, MI
Grant McEwan University, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
GrowingChange.Org, Laurinburg, NC
Guilford Technical Community College, Greensboro, NC
Highroad Professional Development, LLC, Cedar City, UT
Institute for Community College Development, A SUNY and Cornell University Partnership
Isothermal Community College, Spindale, NC
Lansing Community College, Lansing, MI
League of California
Leeward Community College / University of Hawai'i, Pearl City, HI
Los Angeles Southwest College, Los Angeles, CA
Madisonville Community College, Madisonville, KY
McLennan Community College, Waco, TX
National Great Teachers Seminar, Ukraine (2019)
North Carolina Community College Faculty Association, Greensboro, NC
North Carolina Department of Justice, Raleigh, NC
Nova Scotia Community College, Halifax, NS, Canada
Portland Community College, Portland, OR
Red River College, Winnipeg, MB, Canada
Richmond Community College, Hamlet, NC
Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, Salisbury, NC
San Bernardino Valley College, San Bernadino, CA
Sandhills Community College, Southern Pines, NC
South Texas College, McAllen, TX
St. Joseph of the Pines, Southern Pines, NC

Taft College, Taft, CA

Texas Community College Teachers Association, Austin, TX

Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops, BC, Canada

Umpqua Community College, Roseburg, OR

Wake Technical Community College, Raleigh, NC

West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, Charleston, WV

Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC

Wilkes Community College, Wilkesboro, NC

SELECT NGTM DOCUMENTS

1. Scanned copy of David B. Gottshall's original writing, *The History and Nature of the National Great Teachers Movement* published by College of DuPage. https://ngtm.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/History_Nature_NGTM_HiRez.pdf
2. Scanned copy of Larry H. Fujinaka's original writing, *Building a Hawaii Great Teachers Seminar* published by Leeward Community College. https://ngtm.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Building-a-Hawaii-Great-Teachers-Seminar_Larry_Fujinaka_LeewardCC.pdf
3. *The Great Teachers Format: Why Does It Work?* Cindra Smith, Community College League of California. https://ngtm.net/pdf/Cindra_Smith_WhyItWorks.pdf
4. *A Great Teachers Seminar Mind Map - College of the North Atlantic, Doha, Qatar*, March 2012. https://ngtm.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/McHargue_CNA-Q_GTS_MindMap_06MAR2012.pdf
5. *Great Teachers Seminar Facilitator Notes & Observations - College of the North Atlantic, Doha, Qatar - March 2012*. https://ngtm.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/McHargue_06MAR2012_GTS_CNA-Q_Notes.pdf

Additional documents (.PDF Format) have been provided by individuals who have authored or otherwise recorded information about Great Seminars and various aspects of conducting a Great Teachers event. These are available on The National Great Teachers Movement website (<https://ngtm.net>) along with other resources for host organizations. These are located in the NGTM Resource Library (<https://ngtm.net/ngtm-resource-library/>).