

THE 39TH ANNUAL CALIFORNIA GREAT TEACHERS SEMINAR

LA CASA DE MARIA, SANTA BARBARA, CA – JULY 30-AUGUST 4, 2017
“THE OLDEST, CONTINUALLY HELD GT SEMINAR IN NORTH AMERICA!”



Seminar Summary

Submitted by Steve Smith
Seminar Conductor

ABOUT THE SEMINAR

The 39th Annual California Great Teachers Seminar (CGTS) was held at [La Casa de Maria](#) which is located in Santa Barbara, just 90 miles north of Los Angeles. The CGTS continues to be run as a self-supported event without commercial or outside business vendors through the [Faculty Association of California Community Colleges](#) (FACCC). The Coordinator for the seminar was Lidia Stoian, Director of Program and Development at FACCC's Education Institute.



SEMINAR LEADERS AND PARTICIPANTS

Steve Smith (1st Person Seminars) conducted the seminar assisted by California community college faculty members (*and CGTS Staff*) Cynthia Mosqueda (El Camino College), Dyan Pease (Sacramento City College), René Lozano (El Camino College), Dave Nakaji (Los Medanos College), Damon Cagnolatti (Cerritos College), and Chad Greene (Cerritos College).



DEMOGRAPHICS

Fifty-four (54) faculty members & staff representing twenty-four (24) community colleges participated in the Seminar. The range of experience included first year faculty to those with over 30 years of experience. Disciplines from all areas of the college were represented, including Math, English, Spanish, Counseling, Biology, Drama, Philosophy, ESL, Criminal Justice, Nursing, Music, Kinesiology, SCE Basic Skills, Humanities, Psychology, Physics, Business, PE, Library Science, History, Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology, Art History, Justice Studies, Statistics, and Chemistry.

COLLEGE REPRESENTATION

The following California community colleges (*and one from Wyoming*) were represented at the seminar:

- Antelope Valley College
- Berkeley City College
- Cerritos College
- College of the Redwoods
- Compton College
- Contra Costa College
- Cypress College
- De Anza
- Diablo Valley College
- El Camino College
- Fullerton College
- Las Positas College
- Los Angeles City College
- Los Medanos College
- Monterey College
- Moorpark College
- NOCCCD
- Pasadena City College
- Sacramento City College
- Santa Ana college
- Santa Barbara City College
- Santa Monica College
- Ventura College
- Western Wyoming College

SCHEDULE AND ACTIVITIES

The CGTS opened Sunday evening with an introduction to the seminar history, purpose and philosophy. The participants engaged in a sorting exercise designed to highlight social and experiential commonality avoiding mention of their college, discipline, and/or teaching field. This was followed by a more reflective activity that allowed participants to dedicate their week's work to a great teacher in their own life.



Monday morning was devoted to small group discussions of the innovation papers prepared by participants, and later that afternoon focused on discussions of the educational problems and problem solving. The “tricks of the trade” were presented in a large group session on Monday evening followed by a group closure activity.

Tuesday morning was dedicated to providing an opportunity to more thoroughly explore problems and challenges they face in teaching and in their own classrooms. That afternoon, the topics that were identified by seminar staff during the facilitated small group meetings were introduced to the entire seminar contingent. Additionally, participants' innovation and problem papers were distributed and faculty had an opportunity to share “first day teaching tips” with their colleagues. Participants reviewed the list of topics and voted on those they wished to discuss further. Relevant topics and selections included the following:

- *Student Engagement*
- *Connectivity (relational transactions with students)*
- *College as a Foreign Language*
- *“Read Me” (strategies for getting students to read)*
- *Service Learning*
- *Growth Mindset*
- *How to Facilitate your Class*
- *Making It Real (classroom relevance)*
- *Students as Teachers*
- *Student Motivation*
- *Strategies for 1st Year Teachers*
- *Work/Life Balance*
- *Equity v. Equality*
- *Classroom Management*
- *Providing Student Feedback*
- *Honest Feedback (contextually with adjuncts; integrated into prior topic)*
- *Students Responsibility in the Learning Process*

Tuesday night included finishing “tricks of the trade” and preparations for the next morning.

The topic sessions were held on Wednesday morning in more traditional, conference –style sessions. Participants engaged in a positive, solutions-based discourse of teaching methods, strategies, and teaching innovations. Wednesday afternoon & evening was an opportunity for participants to individualize the seminar. FACCC offered a membership promotional activity for non-FACCC faculty as a method of organizational recruitment.



Thursday morning and afternoon consisted of workshops, roundtable discussions, and activities offered and facilitated by the participants themselves. Topics included, but were not limited to:

- *Using Technology in the Classroom*
- *Q&A About the Great Teachers Movement*
- *Crafting*
- *Teaching Games in Class as an Instructional Strategy*
- *Language Teachers Round Table*
- *Physical Relaxation & Physical Activity (outdoor fitness)*
- *Classroom Culture*
- *Using Personal Essay in Life & in the Your Classroom*
- *Counselors as Facilitators*
- *Instructional Improvisation!*
- *Stats-Flix & Chill: Innovative Statistics Instruction (cross-disciplinary application)*

Later that afternoon, seminar participants enjoyed the traditional CGTS BBQ prepared by La Casa staff at the outdoor fire pit. Acoustic musical entertainment was provided by seminar participants! Thursday's evening session focused on four faculty who were new to teaching. Participants shared their thoughts and advice for successful teaching and responded to questions from those new to classroom teaching.

Friday morning closed the seminar with group presentations on understanding the nature of "The Great Teacher"—all of which were profound representations of the art and spirit of teaching. Certificates were awarded



to participants in the infamous "Great Teachers Graduation Ceremony"! The final closing circle gave each person an opportunity to express what he or she was taking home from the seminar. In addition to the structured Seminar activities, participants found time to share ideas and thoughts during meals, early morning walks around the wooded grounds of La Casa, and in late night discussions. Many participants stretched themselves through new activities of various kinds.

INSPIRATIONAL BOOKS

The following books were available throughout the seminar period (the infamous *Great Teachers Browsing Library*) for perusal by participants and were furnished by the participants themselves as part of the Seminar format.

- Books, Bell. *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom.*
- Brown, Peter C., Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel. *Make It Stick the Science of Successful Learning.*
- Cox, Rebecca D. *The College Fear Factor: How Students and Professors Misunderstand One Another.*
- Dweck, Carol L. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success.*
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.*
- Manson, Mark. *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F**k.*
- McCaw, Allistair. *7 Keys to Being a Great Coach.*
- Schinske, Jeffrey . *Teaching More by Grading Less (or Differently.)*
- Books, Bell. *Teaching to Transgress Education as the Practice of Freedom.*
- Maxwell, John. *Developing the Leader Within You*
- Payne, Ruby. *Hidden Rules of Class at Work*
- Hillenbrand, Laura . *Unbroken A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Resilience.*
- Masters, Leslie . *Naked This is My Story....This is Our Story.*
- Williams, Pat. *Coach Wooded.*

- Emdin, Christopher. *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood...And the Rest of Y'all Too.*
- White, David. *The Heart Aroused.*
- Boyle, Gregory. *Tattoos on the Heart The Power of Boundless Compassion.*
- Palmer, Parker. *The Courage to Teach Exploring the Inner Landscape of the Teacher's Life.*
- Tolle, Eckhart. *The Power of Now.*
- Jay, Meg. *The Defining Decade; Why Your Twenties Matter-and How to Make the Most of Them Now.*
- *On Course; Strategies for Creating Success in College and in Life.*
- Henley, Martin. Ramsey, Roberta. *Characteristics of the Strategies for Teaching Students With Mild Disabilities.*
- Duckworth, Angela. *Grit The Power of Passion and Perseverance.*
- Malcolm Gladwell. *Outliers The Story of Success.*
- Clifton, Donald. *StrengthsQuest Discover and Develop Your Strengths*
- Patterson.Grenny.McMillan.Switzler. *Crucial Conversations - Tools for Talking When Stakes are High.*
- Coelho, Paulo. *The Alchemist.*
- Cohen, Alan Ralph. *Shakesfear and How to Cure It.*
- Rath, Tom and Clifton, Donald. *How Full is Your Bucket?*
- Davis, Angela. *Are Prisons Obsolete?*
- Hedges, Chris and Sacco, Joe. *Days of Destruction Days of Revolt*

For the most up-to-date information about the California Great Teachers Seminar,
visit <http://www.faccc.org/>.

The 40th Annual CGTS is scheduled to be held July 29-August 3, 2018.

