

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING (CCT)

AQUAD REVIEW SURVEY: *CCT Graduates*

Questions asked:

1. Program of study completed in CCT:
2. For M.A. students, what was your specialty area (for your electives and syn/thesis)? For example, "creative thinking at work," "science in a changing world," "critical and creative thinking in literature/arts/music," other (please describe).
3. How did you hear about the CCT Program? Examples: Graduate catalog, UMB website, CCT wiki, UMB open house, CCT open house, referred by CCT graduate, other (please describe).
4. What information or other features of the Program led you to apply?
 - 4a. If you considered joining other graduate programs, what did CCT seem to offer beyond what might be gained through the other program(s)?
5. What aspirations for professional or personal development did you have when you joined the Program?
6. In what ways (if any) had these aspirations changed by the time that you graduated?
7. What professional or personal changes have happened that you attribute, at least in part, to your studies and experience in the CCT program? E.g., promotion, new kind of work, publications, award or formal recognition, other (please describe).
8. What evidence would you provide to show that your studies and experience in the CCT program contributed to those professional or personal changes?
9. What suggestions do you have for improving the ways the program could serve a student with your aspirations?
10. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the CCT Program?: Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, No Opinion -- please explain if you feel that is needed.

Name (optional -- supply only if you choose to identify yourself).

Responses:

1. Program of study completed in CCT:

- a) M.A.
- b) M.A.
- c) M.A.
- d) Graduate Certificate
- e) M.A.
- f) M.A.
- g) M.A.
- h) M.A.
- i) M.A.
- j) M.A.
- k) M.A.
- l) Graduate Certificate
- m) M.A.

2. For M.A. students, what was your specialty area (for your electives and syn/thesis)? For example, "creative thinking at work," " science in a changing world," "critical and creative thinking in literature/arts/music," other (please describe).

- a) Creative thinking, education and leadership
- b) emergent design
- c) Creative Thinking Online course for Community College Students
- d) [NO RESPONSE]
- e) Teaching Creativity
- f) Critical and Creative Thinking in Social Change and Entrepreneurship/h
- g) problem solving in high school math
- h) Science in a Changing World
- i) Higher Education
- j) Creative Play as an Adult
- k) Cognitive processes of creativity
- l) [NO RESPONSE]
- m) Creative Thinking in Education

3. How did you hear about the CCT Program? Examples: Graduate catalog, UMB website, CCT wiki, UMB open house, CCT open house, referred by CCT graduate, other (please describe).

- a) UMB website
- b) UMB website
- c) UMB Website and the CCT Wiki. Also, I spoke with two people who were current students.
- d) UMB website and Google Search

- e) Googled master's in creativity; umb website came up
- f) Online search Google
- g) catalog
- h) UMB website and CCT open house
- i) UMB Website
- j) UMB website
- k) Open House at UMass
- l) Internet search of graduate programs
- m) UMB website and CCT wiki

4. What information or other features of the Program led you to apply?

- a) The CCT program was online and open enough for me to focus on my interests.
- b) The core content and opportunity to use it explore topics of my own choice.
- c) The people I spoke with that were currently in the program talked highly about the quality of support provided to students to explore their academic and professional interests.
- d) I liked the diversity and quality of courses along with faculty credentials. But I also liked that I could apply through the College of Advancing and Professional Studies. Seemed to me that I received a little tuition discount for doing it that way. I also liked that my courses were online. I could not have done the certificate program were it not for online courses.
- e) The inclusion of critical thinking; the descriptions and testimonials of the program on the CCT portion of the umb website; the emails letting me know of upcoming courses when I first expressed interest (I applied after several months of weighing options so I am glad that I received updates and invitations to contact them with further questions throughout that time).
- f) The program felt like a perfect fit for me, plus there was an online option.
- g) The ability to take it all online coupled with how interesting the program sounded led me to apply.
- h) having a one-on-one conversation with faculty about my study interests and taking the time to sort out the right fit - but also because I was able to keep working full-time while pursuing my degree
- i) The flexibility to focus on topics I was personally interested in.
- j) I was unsure (looking between CCT and American Studies), so I took Creative Thinking as a non-degree student with Nina Greenwald and really enjoyed the class.
- k) Flexibility of what I could research
- l) Focus on Critical & Creative Thinking. Track focusing on applying that to science. Can be completed online.
- m) The curriculum, the ability to study online, and the cost of the program.

4a. If you considered joining other graduate programs, what did CCT seem to offer beyond what might be gained through the other program(s)?

- a) CCT was on line and I felt it was one that I could fit into my schedule and complete in a timely manner.

- b) CCT was less rigid and more open to my interests and ideas.
- c) I liked the flexibility of being able to take online and face to face classes. I also liked how you could apply the concepts of the course to problems that were important to me personally and professionally.
- d) I liked the courses that allowed me to tailor my needs and research interests. And I liked the fact that I could take my courses online. I could not have taken courses at UMB were it not for the online classes.
- e) CCT was more well rounded with the critical thinking and reflective practice elements than other master's of creativity programs I considered. CCT had more clarity about what the program is and what you can do with it. I found the other creativity programs rigid in class structure and format--and quite frankly very uncreative and boring in their approach to creativity. I was looking for something cutting edge, not cookie cutter. Since I wanted to not only practice creativity but teach it, I didn't want someone else's idea of creativity (like the program in Buffalo) to be the only acceptable expression of it. I didn't like that their formula for creativity seemed to have to be my way to use and teach creativity too. Drexel, another master's of creativity program I looked at, made no effort to reach out to me--they had a very ""take it or leave it"" approach when their website at the time (haven't looked since) was confusing about what exactly their program was about and how it worked. They didn't bother to follow-up with my emailed questions; I guess because they thought their name was enough. CCT was pioneering creative hybrid online courses which was a huge advantage over its main two competitors who insisted I must attend in person at least once a year for my classes. I also was attracted to the ideals CCT offered (I want to use creativity to serve others, not just commercialize it) and I was sold on the fact that CCT was both adaptable and considerate of my needs.
- f) I was specifically interested in critical and creative thinking
- g) n/a
- h) the unique opportunity to blend my study areas into something practical for my career
- i) The chance to put together courses and projects that focused on my interests.
- j) I liked that CCT was so flexible and allowed me to think and write in new ways to cater the program to me as a person. I was questioned as to why I wouldn't get an MBA or something more business-focused, and the reason was because I wanted a personal experience that would be fulfilling to me in my life, not just my career. I was intrigued because it was an area of study that I had never heard anyone talk about before.
- k) I thought the program was unique in what it offered. Critical Thinking, and all the aspects of it, was a new approach to education and the workplace that I thought would serve me well for future employment. Unfortunately the majority of the courses were worthless
- l) I was looking at other programs focused on specialized areas in education. This program offered a unique perspective.
- m) Courses that really interested me, and a program about thinking and creating that could support and inform my art-making, my professional work, my relationships, my civic engagement.

5. What aspirations for professional or personal development did you have when you joined the Program?

- a) I wanted to earn an MA for my own benefit and to help me in my career.
- b) At the time I wanted to go back into teaching History and wanted to learn how to bring critical and creative thinking into the classroom and curriculum.
- c) I wanted to increase my creativity and become better reflective practitioner.
- d) I had three goals...1) complete the graduate certificate, and 2) gain additional and new knowledge in the area of CCT, and 3) gain graduate course transcript credit for my own credentials.
- e) I wanted to teach in an academic setting to pioneer new ways to facilitate and encourage creativity. I also wanted to come up with new theories and practical tools for my creativity and for others.
- f) To make change in the world using social media as a tool for social change
- g) I wanted a Masters that would allow me to obtain a professional teaching license.
- h) I wanted to inquire about horticulture and climate change and the role of public gardens in today's world
- i) I wanted to explore academic topics and develop as a person.
- j) I was happy to have an opportunity for more writing (I am a Communications professional) and the opportunity for expanding my thinking. I felt stuck in my professional life and was looking for something more fulfilling, beyond the office. I wasn't sure whether this would help me professionally or personally, but I was very interested in being open to the experience.
- k) I wanted to teach English Comp at a Community College
- l) Deeper understanding of science education.
- m) I wanted to get a better, more interesting and rewarding job. I wanted to make a new body of artwork. I wanted to write stories.

6. In what ways (if any) had these aspirations changed by the time that you graduated?

- a) I might have chosen a degree with a more specific job application now that I am looking back on it.
- b) I decided to apply what I was learning to the field I was currently working in.
- c) Since starting the program, I have been implementing strategies I learned in the CCT courses into my work. The strategies and concepts I learned helped me implement positive changes in my department; and, consequently lead to a promotion.
- d) My aspirations remained the same as when I entered.
- e) I found that I didn't have to teach in an academic setting to have an impact with my teaching of creativity. I was able to do workshops at work and in the community which gave some people access to the creative thinking tools and practices that they would never otherwise encountered. I was able to use the new theories and tools I had created in CCT even in my writing work. I was empowered and equipped to do this branching out through the learning foundation and the many thinking tools I had been given in CCT.
- f) Aspirations did not change.
- g) n/a
- h) I dove deeper into my leadership, building courage, and practicing collaborative change making

- i) I learned a tremendous amount, even more than I could have hoped!
- j) By the time I graduated, I had decided to pursue this degree in a very personal way. I was able to overcome some personal fears of my own and really open myself up to exploring my main fear, failure. In this program, I thrived and felt the confidence to revisit old passions of mine, and to really examine my own thinking and question myself. I felt supported by the faculty and the core group of students in the program, including several students that I am still friends with that were actually in the education program but taking CCT courses; I liked this crossover aspect.
- k) [NO RESPONSE]
- l) I was also quite happy to explore fields I hadn't investigated before, such as Science/Technology Studies.
- m) I found that I wanted to tell stories through podcasting and writing. I still wanted a more rewarding job. And I learned that I want to teach.

7. What professional or personal changes have happened that you attribute, at least in part, to your studies and experience in the CCT program? E.g., promotion, new kind of work, publications, award or formal recognition, other (please describe).

- a) I have more confidence and there are more job opportunities.
- b) The program reawakened my own curiosity, led me to some breakthroughs in the work I do, and influenced the way several of my colleagues think about and approach their work.
- c) I have become more flexible and adaptive in my thinking. I have changed the way I interact with my colleagues in a positive way; I actively listen and provide a supportive environments for people to make changes and try new things. I strongly believe the changes I made in the way I interact with colleagues and direct reports was instrumental in receiving a recent promotion.
- d) I became more knowledgeable in several areas of CCT that I was not already. This allowed me to be more accurate in my writing and teaching. Additionally I was able to meet students from around the world who were taking courses with me. This was important as I gained unique perspectives about other cultures' perspectives about CCT.
- e) After graduation, these are the following changes that I attribute to CCT:
 - I got a new job which increased my salary over 40%.
 - I self-published a book on creativity.
 - I was invited to be a lead contributor to the G+ CreativeHE (Higher Education), publishing articles on creativity in three of their online magazines the past two years. This is a 600+ membership of creative teachers from around the world and I am one of the few Americans (if not the only one).
 - I was a contributor to the Peeragogy Handbook (which is now in another edition), as part of Peeragogy G+ community, another group of worldwide creative teachers with over 1,000 members.
 - I was a small group leader for the Learning Creative Learning MOOC at MIT three years ago
 - Over the past four years I have contacted and corresponded with several of the most notable creativity experts in the world such as Amabile, Gardner, Kaufman, MccAffrey, Jeffries, Brandt, Sawyer, and Simonton."

- f) The CCT program is definitely responsible for my ability to follow through with my goals. Although I was a "thinker" before I never understood there is clearly a formula to follow to think through a situation for best outcome
- g) I obtained my professional teaching license.
- h) new job as director of a program at a major university garden
- i) I learned a tremendous amount academically, and about myself. The program gave me insight into myself and how I wanted to develop as a person.
- j) Since the program, I have become a mother to two children (4 and 1), which is challenging in many ways. I am teaching my 4 year old to be flexible in his thinking, and to learn how to deal with difficult situations in creative ways. In many ways, I am using skills that I learned in this program in my transition to motherhood. I am also still working part-time, and have been able to do this with a job share person, a working experience that is unique to this office. We have been able to job share for 3 years now, and I attribute this to communication skills that I developed with this program. I plan to pursue some of my personal passions again when the kids get a little older, but by already revisiting these passions in the program, I have not lost hope that I can return to them any time that I want.
- k) Complete disappointment in the program. There is only one other Critical Thinking program in the country- which is a very good program. UMass program had/has so much potential and could have done so much, but they actually did nothing.
- l) Difficult to say. I am now working in classroom teaching, but I was headed that direction before the program. I am still assimilating my experience in the program. I do feel that I am now far better equipped to encourage students to explore and critically examine the roles of science and technology in society.
- m) I now lead advising for graduate students at Parsons School of Design.

8. What evidence would you provide to show that your studies and experience in the CCT program contributed to those professional or personal changes?

- a) [NO RESPONSE]
- b) The scholarship, vocabulary, insight, and knowledge that I learned in CCT.
- c) I teach an online course in Creative Thinking at Middlesex Community College (MCC) every semester since I graduated in 2013. I am on the Assessment Committee at MCC. I ran the Assessment day activities for the Student Affairs division last year. I promote and implement reflective practice activities in my department, and feel I am creating a culture within the department that is focused on thinking about the effectiveness of the work they do and ways to do it better.
- d) The outcomes for several courses I took resulted in final papers that I intend to use as the basis for publications. Additionally, my previous knowledge about CCT was challenged and augmented by the subjects I learned.
- e) My current employer noted that my master's degree in critical and creative thinking was a key factor in being selected over the numerous other candidates especially since it was such an unusual degree.
My book on creativity was an extension of my thesis work so it would not have been written without the research and development of my thesis which came from my CCT coursework.

I would not have been aware of either of the teaching groups I listed to be able to publish articles for them and I would not have done the MIT MOOC. CCT connections in the postgraduate Collaborative Explorations led to two of the group collaboration opportunities and the third group was listed as a link in a CCT monthly newsletter as another way I found to connect to the creativity community.

It is highly unlikely that the creativity experts I have listed above would have engaged with me or accepted my requests for the interviews/email correspondences without my CCT degree and without my research of their work while at CCT. Because of my studies and experiences at CCT, I was able to ask these world renown experts in-depth questions that showed my knowledge of the current theories and experiments in the field of creativity."

- f) I moved to the Middle East in 2012 and using the skills I developed through CCT I have developed several online Facebook groups that address social need and fill a void within the community. Due to this work, I was asked to be a community group advisor for Facebook MENA (Middle East, North Africa, Turkey).
- g) A masters degree is required for the license. Beyond that, no evidence exists.
- h) risk-taking in interview (clarity built through CCT program) resulted in new job
- i) Since graduating the lessons I learned in CCT has helped me navigate through a series of personal and professional challenges.
- j) My co-workers notice that I am more vocal at work than I was in the past. I have more confidence in my writing and editing skills, and this is shown by the quality of work that I can produce. I was able to improve my research and organizational skills. Having a flexible work schedule was new to everyone in my office, and I am showing them that it is possible to get my work accomplished and work successfully with another person (despite seeing that person only once a week). I am more open to personal and professional experiences that I may fail at, whereas in the past I chose to not even try.
- k) Turns out the program was over-rated and not worth the effort. The head of the program barely acknowledged my existence, missed my 'synthesis' presentation and graduated me before I had completed my project.
- l) The large amount of research material, online resources, notes, and journals that I accumulated during the program.
- m) I don't think I would be in this role if not for the training I engaged in during the CCT program.

9. What suggestions do you have for improving the ways the program could serve a student with your aspirations?

- a) It is not the program, it is me.
- b) I've been out for a few years and am not sure how things may have changed so I don't feel qualified to comment.
- c) I was completely happy with my experience in the program.
- d) One course (CRCRTH 611 Critical Thinking in Business) was terrible. I was very disappointed with that course. I was really looking forward to it and it was nothing more than a review of CRCRTH601. I think that this course could have been the "stand-out" course of my program and yet it was wasted. The instructor did not make the link between CCT and Innovation. He did not talk about transformation and culture change

through CCT in an organization. He did not talk about incremental and disruptive change. He made no mention of products/services that benefit from CCT. Most of the material was philosophical in its nature and lacking the practical application to business. So much could be part of this course including complex problem solving, organizational development/culture and CCT, process of CCT and Innovation, how to handle an employee who has a creative idea/innovation, and how to create an organization that employs CCT. Alas, none of that was covered. Rethink that course please! I think you could have a large potential market of students if you link the CCT program to business better with this (611 Critical Thinking in Business) course being a flagship course!

- e) I am glad that CCT gave me the confidence and the competency to reach out to other creativity leaders to enrich the incredible teaching I had in CCT. The professors make the program special. The courses are creatively designed, executed and evaluated--all that I, as a teacher, admire and aspire to do in my own sphere of influence. I think what would be helpful for future students that are looking at the field of creativity itself (which is different than most of the mid career students who are looking at improving their creativity for use in another field) is to do some collaborative reaching out to the newer creativity leaders. It was wonderful to see how my professors did reach out and bring in some professors for a session or talk from another institution but I would have liked to know more about how creativity is being taught or practiced in the third world or in Asia first hand rather than by finding and reading abstracts. Is there also a way to add more choices in the current course curriculum? Can there be another Creativity course that is a follow-up to the required one? I mean one that is a stand alone on the topic of creativity (not one on creative writing, teaching, leading, entrepreneurship, etc. but one on creativity 2.0). "
- f) I would suggest a program in Abu Dhabi/Dhabi. There is a very big need for the development of CCT skills here in the UAE. Please let me know if there is any interest and I will help facilitate.
- g) I have none.
- h) a way to host in-residence time for one semester or concentrated semester
- i) [NO RESPONSE]
- j) I think the program is confusing to some, because it is not directly linked to improvement in a specific professional career; it is interdisciplinary in both its approach to learning and its application. However, by improving personal thinking and growth, this will naturally improve your career as well. It is not a black and white program, it has a lot of gray area, which is something that I love, but may scare others. I think focusing on some concrete examples to show aspiring students how to use this program and apply it both professionally and personally would be helpful for students that have a fear of the unknown.
- k) Carol Smith was my Psychology professor- she was excellent. I learned so much from her. The program needs to hire people like her
- l) I don't have any suggestions. I was primarily looking for the opportunity to investigate certain areas in depth, and the program provided that. I was not working in education during my time in the program, so I was not looking for opportunities to apply my investigations at that time. However, the program does provide ample opportunities to do this, as well.
- m) Including the study of Design Thinking in the Creative Thinking course.

10. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the CCT Program?: Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, No Opinion -- please explain if you feel that is needed.

- a) Very good
- b) Good (Very Good!) and could be Excellent with more resources.
- c) Excellent
- d) Good. PROS.....I like the idea of us meeting via video hangouts. That was wonderful to get to know my instructor and classmates. To me that was the highlight of the program. I think that interaction with fellow students made the discussion rich in the class meetings. I personally think required video meetings should be a part of every course, not just a few. I like that the full time instructors taking the time to get to know each of the students personally....and...they take the time to post to blogs and ""hangout meetings"" outside the course to keep everyone informed about what is going on in the field of CCT. I think more invitations to blogs and classes should be undertaken. I like the variety of courses...many from which to choose. And I really like the ability to chose my research topics in the courses I took. I felt I had a custom-made program. CONS: Several things that could make it better. Rethink the course CRCRTH611 CCT in Business. It could be MUCH better than what it is. I did not enjoy that some instructors used Google Wikispaces and others used BlackBoard. I think there needs to be some consistency. It was very confusing and time-consuming to use Wikispaces and often felt lost in maneuvering the sites. Hangouts (video) were good, but there are so many better video programs (like ZOOM) that could be used to suit the needs of a college class better. CRCRTH602 Creative Thinking was way too much work...busy work. I think that course needs to be reworked especially since the author of the course material is not teaching it any more. I enjoyed the course but it needs to be reworked and streamlined with current PowerPoints and more integrated and relevant assignments (i.e. a journal AND a diary...choose one not both). Finally, I was in the Certificate program and did not get a Certificate! The CCT program should take the time to print on up! I decided to make one for myself and had people sign my certificate! LOL...it looks great so if you need a template I'd be happy to send you the one I printed up for myself! LOL....
- e) Excellent, there is no other program that inspires the deep appreciation and creates transformational learning experiences as this one does. In comparison, I have taken other graduate level courses on creativity (such as Teaching Creativity Creatively which didn't live up to the name). This degree does live up to its name and the description on the umb website.
- f) I was one of the first graduating classes with an online program so I am sure there has been changes since 2011. I would rate the quality of the program in 2011 as good. I look back on the experience fondly and am very proud to be a graduate of a university that understands the need for the program
- g) Good; many of the classes were excellent, with teachers who were supportive. I did have a couple of bad experiences, but the heads of the program and my peers were always helpful.
- h) Excellent
- i) Excellent
- j) Excellent. I really enjoyed my experience and think back to it a lot.

- k) Poor
- l) Excellent--both for the depth of focus and course aspects (such as format and teaching).
- m) Excellent

Name (optional -- supply only if you choose to identify yourself).

- a) [NO RESPONSE]
- b) Carl Ericson
- c) Noreen McGinness Olson
- d) Bill Haney
- e) Teryl Cartwright
- f) Gina Dillon
- g) Daniel Albert
- h) [NO RESPONSE]
- i) Jeremy Poehnert
- j) Aimee (Blaquiere) Ladner
- k) [NO RESPONSE]
- l) Brian Lax
- m) Jill Lake