

**Preliminary Proposal for a PhD degree in Creative and Transformative Education  
at the University of Massachusetts Boston partnering with Massachusetts College of Art and Design**

**I. Introduction**

The University of Massachusetts Boston's College of Advancing and Professional Studies (CAPS) partnering with the Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt) seek to establish a *self-supporting* interdisciplinary PhD Program in *Creative and Transformative Education* (CTE).<sup>\*</sup> The Program would serve artists, designers, educators, and other professionals who are moving into leadership roles that build on their training and experience but take them beyond their original fields or specialties. More specifically, CTE would help mid-career practitioners advance as leaders in teaching and collaborations that support others to be creative and transformative in diverse settings. Learning from and contributing to research on such leadership would form a key part of CTE studies. The contributions of CTE graduates would be manifest in externally funded projects, publications, exhibitions, curricular changes and engagement with communities, educational institutions, and public agencies. Through the CTE Program UMass Boston and MassArt would advance research in which theory and practice inform one another, produce new kinds of interdisciplinary leaders, and develop intellectually rigorous, socially relevant graduate training and research.

**II. Purpose and description of the program**

CTE is designed as an interdisciplinary program, in which students would be guided to extend discussion and stretch inquiry where art and design intersect with the human and social sciences.

The term *transformative* is used by ten doctoral programs—9 U.S.; 1 Australian—in their titles or descriptions to refer to education that facilitates institutional and social change by guiding personal and professional change. The connection between personal transformation and social change has characterized the interdisciplinary field of "transformative learning" that has grown from Mezirow's path-breaking work in adult education in the 1970s. This mission of linking personal and organizational change is shared by the proposed CTE Program. Through rigorous, reflexive coursework and dissertation supervision students would learn about establishing creative habits—drawing on the latest research on thinking and cognition—as well as undertaking research grounded in engagement in field, community, educational, or other institutional settings. CTE differs, however, from the other transformative studies doctoral programs in giving a central role to building and working in well-organized studios, workshops, or analogous spaces. In the tradition of design-based instruction, it is important to have places where participants become reflective practitioners—where practical projects are incubated by individuals or in collaborative collectives, and sense is made of what happens when the projects are implemented in the wider world. *Creative and transformative* denotes, in short, the integration of creative habits, studio methods, and engaged research.

*Education* in the Program's title can be construed broadly as leadership in teaching and collaborations that support others to be creative and transformative in diverse settings. CTE would seek students who have already begun to move into such leadership roles and provide them the opportunity to deepen and extend that development in their careers. Experience from students' original fields and current employment, when combined with the knowledge and skills they gain in CTE, would inform the angles of research they pursue. The studio/workshop dimension of the Program would provide—and model—the support people need to establish creative habits—identifying and confronting complex, messy, ambiguous problems, drawing new connections, and seeing how things could be otherwise—and to undertake engaged research—taking risks in explore ways to put ideas into practice within diverse groups, taking stock of the outcomes, and revising one's approaches accordingly.

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<sup>\*</sup> This proposal seeks UMass approval. Details about the partnership are included in endnotes; other supporting materials, beyond the scope of a 5-page document, can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/CTEdocs>.

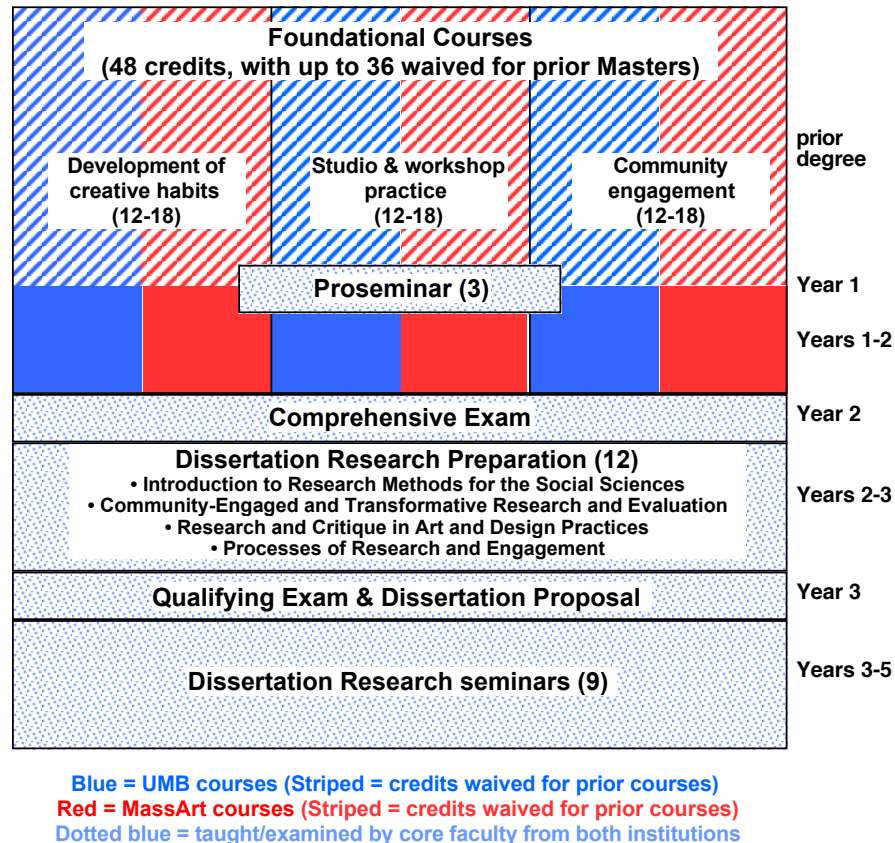
With a CTE PhD, graduates could expect to be strong candidates for leadership or facilitator roles as practitioners, researchers, policy makers, administrators, and educators in areas that encompass visual arts, design, and media; innovative education and interdisciplinary inquiry; and group facilitation and community engagement. Because CTE builds on graduate courses in Art Education, the Ph.D., while not an Art Education doctorate, could lead to college-level teaching in that area. At the same time, because career paths in many fields now require working in diverse groups and communities that face complex challenges and opportunities, the Program would welcome mid-career professionals interested in exploring studio and workshop practices in settings beyond art and design.

*Partnership:* The CTE Program represents a synergistic partnership between the two institutions in which the curriculum and finances build on the existing Masters course offerings in Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) in CAPS and Art Education (AE) at MassArt.<sup>1</sup> To launch the Program requires the participation of both institutions: MassArt cannot offer doctoral degrees; UMass Boston has a strong Art Department, but it offers only undergraduate courses. (The Art Department is in the early stages of developing a low residency Nantucket-based MFA program, but this would be in Art, not Art Education, and thus not a foundation for the CTE program.) The CCT Program's existing graduate-level course offerings on thinking and cognition would be foundation-course offerings for CTE, while MassArt has the faculty expertise and facilities for the CTE emphasis on studio-based graduate studies in art and design. In all other aspects, the institutions would be equal contributors. Although dissertation courses would be offered through UMass Boston, half of them would be taught by MassArt faculty members with teaching salary or buyout paid by CAPS. Faculty members from other units, especially the Art Department at UMass Boston and the Dynamic Media Institute (DMI) at MassArt, would be welcome as advisors for CTE dissertations, with course release for chairing four dissertations through to completion (letters of confirmation pending). Given that the work of many UMass Boston and MassArt faculty combines personal, professional, and social change, CTE students would be encouraged to include appropriate non-CTE faculty in their doctoral committees. Selected courses from the DMI Master of Fine Arts program would be included as Foundational course options, as would relevant courses from a UMass Boston Masters in Art were such a program to be formed.

*Curriculum:* The proposed CTE PhD requires 72 credits, but all applicants would be expected to have a relevant Masters degree and apply for matriculation as a Post-Masters PhD Candidate with up to 36 credits waived for prior courses that fit in the three areas of Foundational courses (see Figure on next page).

Foundational courses consist of existing CCT and AE Masters program courses, in which CTE doctoral students would be expected to undertake additional coursework in consultation with the instructor. The proseminar and dissertation-research courses would be new (submitted for governance review after Stage I approval). Students would be required to demonstrate research-level proficiency in a language other than English. The Program could be undertaken full-time or part-time during the fall, spring, and summer semesters, and be completed in 3.5 to 6 years. The Program could be taken from a distance through regular online courses with a limited number of synchronous sessions (for some Foundational courses only) and courses in which students are brought into regular class sessions over the internet (for all Dissertation courses and some Foundational courses). To accommodate working professionals regular classes meet in the late afternoon and evening or in 3-week summer institutes.

*Admissions:* The anticipated number of students who would matriculate each year is 10-12. Students would be selected on the basis of the quality and relevance of their prior education (with a GPA of at least 3.4 at the Master's level) and their research and career interests in creative and transformative education as evident in letters of recommendation, a personal statement, and a portfolio and writing sample, such as the student's Master's thesis or capstone project. The ability of applicants to pay for the Program would *not* factor into admissions decisions.



### III. Relationship to the Mission and Priorities of the Academic Units

A Creative and Transformative Education PhD would build on both institutions’ strengths, be distinctive among a small set of comparable local, national, and international programs, meet workforce demands in the nation and Commonwealth, and not compete with existing UMass Boston doctoral programs.

The CCT program has, for over thirty years, helped mid-career students involved in a wide array of professions and endeavors to develop clarity and confidence to make deep changes in their learning, teaching, work, activism, research, and artistry. By the time CCT students finish their studies, they are prepared to teach or guide others in ways that often depart markedly from their previous schooling and experience. Some CCT graduates have gone on to doctoral programs in conventional fields, but many more have asked for a doctoral program that extends their CCT education. The formal home of the CCT program moved to the College of Advancing and Professional Studies (CAPS) in 2012, but the core Program faculty continue to have appointments in the Colleges of Education & Human Development or Liberal Arts. CTE would be the first doctoral degree for CAPS, aligning well with the College’s role in a) promoting mid-career personal and professional development for adult learners with a diversity of interests and needs, and b) incubating workplace and instructional innovation, especially in areas that span traditional disciplines.

According to its Vision statement, UMass Boston seeks to “meet the need for independent, creative, and compassionate... leaders who will shape the quality of individual and social life,” “conduct research that has both local and global reach, that creates new knowledge in all major areas of human concern, and that helps our students acquire the refined and complex knowledge, values, and skills of inquiry that the highest levels of research foster and the globalized world requires,” “conduct research and scholarship across a broad range of intra- and interdisciplinary areas,” and “increase... enrollments, program offerings, advanced degrees granted, research support, and scholarly productivity.” (The strategic plans of MassArt

also include increasing graduate enrollments and offerings and increasing external funding and scholarly productivity.<sup>2</sup>) The CTE Program is well situated to contribute to all these goals with an innovative doctoral program focused on the relationships among professional and creative practices, educational philosophy and pedagogy, and transdisciplinary and innovative research. The research projects and grant applications of CTE faculty would be enhanced by faculty having PhD students to stimulate them and with whom to collaborate. Examples of inquiries that prospective core CTE faculty are involved in include the following:

- a. Community- and public-engaged scholarship that has a special focus on equity and access to the arts and design. Questions range from the development and evaluation of arts programming, curricula, assessment, and community partnerships for secondary schools to the study of educational and professional pathways to support public scholarship among “artists, humanists, designers, and other scholars in the cultural disciplines who passionately wanted to claim engagement at the core of their identities as intellectuals and artists” (quoting here from *Imagining America*, a consortium of “Artists and Scholars in Public Life,” <http://bit.ly/18KRvKs>).
- b. Research investigating arts and design teaching and learning including habits of work and play, potential transfer of skills and dispositions, and embodied and situated cognition.
- c. The development and implementation of the theoretical framework behind studio and workshop pedagogy in fields where that is not traditional.
- d. Design thinking about information, knowledge, and understanding and how that is created and communicated to foster, encourage, and support engagement to create a better society. This research examines the multiplicity of synchronous and asynchronous, digital and analog educational environments, and modes of adult education enable individuals and groups to undergo transformation.

Both institutions have committed themselves to global diversity in the student body and to international connections in their scholarship. The CTE Core faculty is already distinguished in this respect, having significant international experience and engagement in scholarship that is transnational in its scope. MassArt Art Education faculty members have developed international programs including university partnerships in Ecuador and India (pending final approval), and CCT has partnerships in development in Portugal and Australia. The option of an online degree would also help with recruitment of a diverse international student body.

#### **IV. Need for the program**

The CTE Program is designed for mid-career professionals. Students could remain in their current positions and undertake their studies after hours. In any case, they would not be moving from the Program to their first job. To indicate the demand, therefore, for a CTE PhD, two kinds of evidence are relevant: 1) research questions specifically suited for CTE students and faculty, which have been described above (sect. III); and 2) a pool of qualified mid-career professionals who seek education beyond their original fields or specialties and, more specifically, in interdisciplinary, transformative studies. Market research is planned to supply required numbers before submission for Stage II approval. At this stage, the second kind of evidence takes five forms:

- a. There are mid-career professionals who seek graduate education to reach beyond their original fields or specialties, evidenced, for example, in mid-career professionals choosing the MA program in Critical and Creative Thinking as a vehicle for making changes in their work and lives (averaging 11 MA graduates per year since 1980).
- b. There are mid-career professionals who seek an interdisciplinary, transformative studies PhD as demonstrated by the existing doctoral programs. For example, the Transformative Education PhD program at the California Institute of Integral Studies claims to recruit 30-40 new students each year to their program, which is primarily online. The profiles of their students and alums affirm that the picture in item a above extends to the doctoral level (<http://bit.ly/12SosRC>). The Transformative Education program at Curtin University (Australia) serves primarily students from countries around the Indian

Ocean, who receive support from their governments to study for a higher degree. The graduates have gone on to establish innovative educational programs in their home countries.

c. The two items a and b above are in line with increasing numbers of employers seeking managers and team leaders who have pursued learning that took them in new directions from their original specialty. Such leaders are prepared to guide personal and professional change in others. CTE would provide an affordable alternative to high-priced options in the private sector or associated with private universities that offer short courses, formal programs, or high-profile initiatives around learning about learning, such as the Society for Organizational Learning that emerged from MIT and the Learning Innovations Laboratory based at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

d. There is a trend analogous to item c for undergraduates and Masters students to take indirect paths through their education (see <http://bit.ly/1fCwM4x>). CTE graduates would be well suited to serve as their mentors, either in faculty roles or outside educational institutions.

e. There are mid-career professionals who are prepared to pay for a PhD (which would cost c. \$25K if the student is granted advanced standing for 33 credits. An oft-cited figure is that 40% of PhD students borrow money to pay for their studies at an average of \$37K.)

## **V. Major resource implications**

Under the Self-supporting Revenue model, CTE students would pay their way, either through their current salaries, securing external funding, or taking out loans. (Note: The ten doctoral programs mentioned earlier are private, with the exception of Curtin University in Australia; the cost per credit for CTE would be less than half that at those institutions.) CTE would be funded by the enrollments of doctoral students only, both in doctoral courses and in the foundational courses that also serve Masters students. Enrollments of students in the Masters programs are relevant only in that they are sufficient for courses to run at least once every two years *without taking into account the doctoral students enrolled*. Budgetary planning for the Masters program would not include income from CTE enrollments in Masters courses, which means that enrollment of CTE students in those courses would contribute (after relevant overhead %) directly to net revenue for the CTE budget for the corresponding partnering institution. Enrollment of CTE students in the proseminar and dissertation courses would cover instructor salary or buyout; net revenue would contribute (after relevant overhead %) to the CTE budget for UMass Boston.

The CTE budget for each institution would cover one course release/year for each of the CTE co-directors and one course release for any faculty member after chairing four CTE dissertation committees through to completion. CAPS and MassArt would each use the net revenue for hiring a) a half-time administrator and grant-support person for CTE starting year 2 and b) a half-time instructor for CTE starting year 3, with a renewable 3-year contract. (The positions at both institutions might be combined into single positions or held by the same person *if suitable arrangements can be made*.) When CTE reaches its steady state around year 5 the budgets at each institution would need, after factoring in the teaching done by the new instructor(s), to cover only 2-3 salaries, buyouts or course releases per year for other CTE faculty. Pending written agreements in each case, these salaries, buyouts and releases could be covered by using funds transferred from the CTE budgets to hire part-time instructors for courses that would have been taught by those CTE faculty member or by the home unit adjusting the frequency of some of their existing course offerings.

The budgets for the separate institutions would cover any awards to graduate students for conference travel, guest speakers in courses, equipment needs, costs for studio and exhibition space. Projections based on an initial cohort of 10-12 show positive net revenue, which, if carried over, would cover lower revenue if any cohort should matriculate on the low side.

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<sup>1</sup> **Partnership.** The proposed parameters of the partnership, in brief, include: The PhD is awarded by UMass, but if MassArt were approved to offer doctoral degrees, the partners would propose that it become a joint PhD. In the meantime the partnership with MassArt would be formally acknowledged in publicity and diplomas. Each institution would have to give five years' notice of intention to withdraw, which ensures that neither students nor the other institution could be left in the lurch. Institutional autonomy would be preserved (e.g., regarding foundation course content, accreditation of Masters programs, course schedules, staffing, income, and budgets). Inter-institutional transfers of funds would be limited to buyouts for MassArt faculty teaching dissertation-level courses. Coordination would occur through a Program Committee, for which each institution would select three faculty members, including a faculty co-director from each institution. The MassArt faculty on the Committee or teaching dissertation-level courses would be granted adjunct status at UMass Boston. The Program Committee would convene internal and external advisory groups to meet at least twice per year. The internal group would be drawn from faculty from UMass Boston and MassArt who teach CTE courses or advise on dissertation committees, together with the various Deans (or their designees). The external group would consist of leading national and international figures who would bring diverse perspectives to the evolution of the Program's approach to Creative and Transformative Education.

<sup>2</sup> **MassArt** is the only publicly funded, freestanding university of art and design in the country. From its inception, MassArt has innovated in art and design education, educating teachers who focus on the career development of students as well as promote in their communities deep engagement with the visual arts and design. The Art Education department's rigorous, field-based programs enable students to develop dual expertise as artists and educators. Most alumni continue to produce and exhibit work. Graduates have inquired about extending their professional development through a doctoral program that continues the dual foci on art and education. The partnership with UMass Boston would make this possible. The CTE program matches the emphasis of the next MassArt five-year strategic plan on developing innovative, internationally-recognized, educational programming in the visual arts and design; promoting diversity of viewpoints, students, faculty, and research; providing citizens of the Commonwealth with career development; and fostering economic and cultural development through innovative and creative practices that break new ground in how citizens respond to complex challenges and imagine new opportunities.