

## College of Education



| Center for Creativity  
and Critical Thinking

Center Location  
Pollack Library North 403

Established: 2008  
Prior Review: 2014-2017

Current Review:  
2020-2023  
Report Submitted:  
3-14-2024

Dr. Cynthia Gautreau, Director

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## Mission and Goals

In 2008, the SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union Center for Creativity and Critical Thinking (referred to as the Center for this report) was launched with the goal of *advancing current educational practice to better prepare students for success in the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. This goal was fueled by the understanding that many of the fastest-growing jobs rely on workers' creative capacity, and as educators, we needed to offer teachers the tools to develop the creative capacity in the students with whom they work.

To achieve this goal, the Center's Mission is to work collaboratively with schools and community organizations to embed the arts, technology, and science as vital components for learning across the curriculum to promote the development of:

- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Collaboration
- Ingenuity, and
- Innovation

The mission and goals of the Center are closely aligned with the mission and strategic plan goals of the University and the College of Education as indicated in the following table:

<b>Tenets of Center's Mission and Goals</b>	<b>University Mission/Strategic Goals</b>	<b>College of Education Mission/Strategic Goals</b>
Collaboration		
Advancing knowledge and developing 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills		
Building creative capacity		
Preparation for successful careers in a global 21 <sup>st</sup> century		
Provide innovative services to educators beyond campus walls		

  

	<p><u><b>Mission:</b></u> ... Cal State Fullerton transforms lives through innovative and quality education, research, and creative activities. We inspire all members of the Titan community to engage in their lifelong pursuit of critical inquiry and social justice; to become catalysts for equity and inclusivity; and to advance the intellectual, cultural, and economic growth of Orange County and beyond.</p> <p><u><b>Goal 4: Expand and Strengthen Physical and Financial Capacity and Community Relations:</b></u> Strengthen the reciprocal relationships amongst the university, alumni, and communities.</p>	<p><u><b>Mission:</b></u> ... The College of Education is committed to the preparation and professional development of innovative and transformative educators who advance just, equitable, and inclusive education. As a professional community, we promote creativity, collaboration, innovation, and critical thinking as fundamental to student achievement and success in a diverse and interconnected world.</p> <p><u><b>Outcomes:</b></u> Impact schools and communities through a commitment to dismantling systems of oppression by supporting students, teachers, and leaders as citizens in a highly diverse, global, interconnected, and digital world.</p>
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### Activities (2020-2023)

To accomplish its mission and goals, the Center focuses on providing specifically-designed professional development (PD) projects that are:

- Collaborative
- Needs-based
- Led by teams of specifically selected experts
- Based on a set of particular elements

The Center's model for professional development is based on creating genuine relationships, trust in teachers' desire and ability to improve, and in providing ongoing site support. Each project is designed specifically to meet the needs of the schools and teachers involved.

The Center has been very active during the three years under review (2020-2023). The activities listed here comprise several collaborations with school-districts and include school, after-school, and summer training opportunities. In addition, the Center has expanded its reach beyond the immediate surrounding community by offering online webinars. The webinars provide professional development in a wide range of topics including technology, literacy skills, social sciences, social and emotional well-being, educational software, special education needs, and just, equitable, and inclusive educational practices. Together, these activities provide learning opportunities across disciplines, such as through the arts (visual, dance, music, theatre), technology (virtual reality, augmented reality, artificial intelligence, iPads, etc.), and other STEM fields (science, math, engineering).

The activities are listed here and described more fully in Appendix A. Descriptions include information about the number of educators served and student impact.

### Organizational Structure and Governance

Center leadership is provided by the College of Education faculty. Dr. Teresa Crawford, professor, served as the Director of the Center from 2008-2016. In 2016-17, Kim Case, full-time lecturer, was brought on as a co-director in 2016-17. In 2018-2019 Christine Mayfield, a full-time lecturer, served as the director. From 2019-present the director is Dr. Cynthia Gautreau, professor. The director reports directly to the Dean of the College of Education.

Alternative to a traditional Steering/Advisory Committee, the Center uses a "design thinking" model for project planning and direction. This approach taps into the deep reservoir of opportunity the campus and surrounding community has to offer and brings together people from different disciplines to serve as leadership teams for specific projects. This model enables higher level of engagement and project success as each leadership team acts as a steering committee, if you will, for a project in which they hold expertise and a passion to design and complete.

All leadership teams are selected by the director, and one member is assigned the role and responsibility of the project lead. There have been as many leadership teams as project activities, and they always include several university faculty and community partners. They generally include between 2-6 people, depending on the size of the project. Leadership teams report to and are monitored, by the Center Director.

#### Resources and Sustainability

The Center is primarily funded through the SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union (SFCU). It receives no regular funding from the College. The Center was originally launched with a \$250,000 five-year gift from SFCU in 2008. Based on the success of the Center, SFCU, gifted an additional \$500,000 for eight years of continued funding. On average the Center receives \$80,000-160,000 annually in additional funding from SFCU.

Appendix B shows a budget breakdown by year, including beginning budget, deposits, debits, and remaining balance.

Center leadership personnel are paid through Center funding:

- Center Director: Release time equivalent (9 units - 3 each semester and summer)
- Expert Faculty hired by Project: Stipend (varies according to project workload). The number of faculty paid also varies according to the number of projects in each semester.

The Center does not employ administrative staff or student assistants.

The Center is primarily an outreach program and conducts most of its work in off-campus facilities (e.g. district offices, school site classrooms, organization space). The Center (PLN 403) is a shared classroom space with the Elementary & Bilingual Education Department. It is maintained by the College and Department.

To date the center remains well-funded and active. The Director continues to bring in funding from SFCU and keep a reserve in the budget balance. As a result, the Center has proven itself to be high functioning with a high level of sustainable potential. The Center is expanding its outreach and increases the number of educators who receive professional development in the local community.

## Highlights and Accomplishments

**Impacting more than 1,848 local educators through synchronous in person training, and over 10,000 views of our collection of online webinars. The Center has expanded its outreach to support local teachers and educators at a distance.**

- **92%** of survey responders reported feeling more confident about their ability to support students on the topic of the workshop
- **76%** of survey responders teach at schools with large concentrations of students from low-income families
- **77%** of survey responders are teachers of color
- 36 school districts from Orange, Riverside, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino counties, plus private schools are represented by workshop participants
- **1 – 30** years of teaching experience represented by participants
- **TK-12 + SPED** teachers represented, including first-year teachers

### Planning and Strategic Outlook:

The Center's strategic planning process currently includes the design thinking model in which leadership teams and center coordinators work with the Center's Director to reflect on all Center activities and analyze data to inform future activities. Building upon this successful model, the Center's Director plans to create an Advisory Board that will consist of select leadership team members, Center's Coordinators, classroom teachers, district leadership and community partnership members. Having a diverse advisory group will help to ensure a variety of perspectives and needs are included. The Advisory Board will meet once a semester. The Board's first task will be to determine the needs of teachers and the community and design a needs assessment survey.

The Center's professional development offerings have increased in enrollment. Based on this increase, the Center will offer multiple and diverse professional development training to accommodate the community's needs.

## APPENDIX A

### Activity Descriptions

#### **Special Projects Undertaken in AY 2020-2021**

##### *Special Education and Augmented Reality: Professional Development Project*

The Center collaborated with special education teachers (N=19). Teachers attended a three-hour workshop focused on learning about augmented reality resources through the integration of online resources across the curriculum. This training directly impacts learning potential and opportunity for over 400 special education students in the school districts throughout the county. Each teacher who attended the session teaches in a different school district.

##### *History Education and Augmented Reality: Professional Development Project*

The Center collaborated with Walnut Valley School District, Suzanne Middle School to provide professional development for middle school teachers (N=56). Teachers applied the skills they learned related to virtual reality and augmented reality from the training. Teachers used the virtual reality Oculus Goggles (provided by the College of Education) to teach their students about historical places and geography skills. This training directly impacts learning potential and opportunity for over 2,100 middle school students at Suzanne Middle School in Walnut, California.

##### *K-12 Teacher Webinar Series Professional Development Project*

A webinar series focused on just-in-time training for teachers was designed to meet the needs of classroom teachers who were teaching virtual, hybrid and face-to-face in fall 2021. The Teacher Webinar Series featured 7 webinars, two hours in length. During the synchronous webinars, 412 teachers attended. The webinars were recorded and uploaded to the College of Education's YouTube Channel. This training directly impacts the teachers who participated in the webinars and their students. Recording the webinars and distributing the recording on YouTube allows teachers to learn from the training and extend the Center's community impact. One of the more popular recorded webinars is titled Teaching Practices that Help Introverted Students Thrive. Other titles in the summer series included:

- Universal Design for Learning
- Making Reading Fun and Engaging
- Special Education: What is embedded instruction?
- Sensitive Children: The hidden gems in our schools
- Shame in our schools, how to spot it and how to stop it
- Inspiring Quit Leaders
- Teaching Practices that Help Introverted Students Thrive

### Social Emotional Learning Webinar Series

The Center hired special education faculty to design a series of 6 webinars focusing on Social Emotional Learning. Each webinar is approximately 60 minutes in length. The webinars were designed and developed and hosted by faculty in the Department of Special Education at Cal State Fullerton. Designed to support all teachers and their instructional needs related to social emotional learning. Collectively the webinars were attended by 337 teachers. The content presented in the webinars featured topics such as:

- Social Emotional Learning
- Building Teacher Social Emotional Skills
- Social Emotional Learning and Self Care
- Introduction to Social Emotional Learning
- Social Emotional Learning Understanding CASEL Part 1
- Social Emotional Learning Understanding CASEL Part 2

### Art Journaling Online Workshops

Due to the continuing Global Pandemic, the Center offered three Art Journaling Workshops in the fall 2021 semester. Teachers were encouraged to engage in hands on art workshops that empower creativity and to explore the power of the arts for mental wellness while learning curricular connections to share with their students. Seventy-five teachers attended the training. This training has the potential to impact 2,250 students who will benefit from art journaling.

- Nature journaling: Connecting to the great outdoors can promote wellness and inspire hope
- Travel journaling: Traveling in person or through your imagination
- Journaling as mental recovery: Processing emotions through creativity

## **Selected Special Projects Undertaken in AY 2021-2022**

### Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality Professional Development Training

The Center hosted on campus training sessions with four workshops designed to meet the growing technology needs of K12 teachers. Teachers (N=63) from local school districts attended the training. This training directly impacts literacy and technology skills learning potential for over 1,400 students. The workshops provided innovative technology professional development in the following areas:

- virtual reality in social sciences;
- utilizing readily available resources to support literacy skills in high school;
- incorporating augmented reality resources in writing skill development; and
- creating an online support network for elementary teachers to advance their technology skills and increase literacy.

### Literacy Skills and Learning Professional Development Training

To support K12 teachers in their reading, writing and skill development the Center hosted a hands-on, in person workshop training day. The sessions provided teachers (N=33) with much needed updated and innovative literacy support to engage students in the reading and writing process. Due to updates to the Common Core Standards, teachers need current professional development to update their skill set and learn about new requirements related to their instructional practices.

### Social Emotional Learning Professional Development Teachers

The demand and high need for Social Emotional Learning among our K12 students is at the forefront of education. The in person professional development for teachers (N=54) was offered by experienced educators who focused on several areas of need including:

- Culturally responsive restorative practices,
- Reaching all students through personalize learning techniques,
- promoting social emotional learning through universal design for learning,
- Social emotional learning basics, building effective connections in a strong classroom community.

### Audacious Action for Social Justice Professional Development Day

Social justice training for teachers is a high priority. To address the social justice need, the Center created professional development that was targeted to meet the growing needs and understanding of teachers. The on-campus sessions focused on the multiple skills of universal design for learning and incorporating social justice skills for all learners. The sessions were in person on the CSUF campus and were attended by local teachers (N=38) who teach over 1,300 students in the local area.

## **Selected Special Projects Undertaken in AY 2022-2023**

### Emerging Technologies Professional Development Training

The Center hosted on campus training sessions with two workshops designed to meet the growing technology needs of K12 teachers. The workshops provided innovative technology professional development in the following areas: artificial intelligence resources, virtual reality in social sciences; utilizing readily available resources to support literacy skills in high school; incorporating augmented reality resources in writing skill development; and creating an online support network for elementary teachers to advance their technology skills and increase literacy. Teachers (N=56) from local school districts attended the training. This training directly impacts literacy and technology skills learning potential for over 1,300 students.

### Writing Skills and Reading Development Professional Development Training

Writing skills and reading development are high priorities for every teacher. Knowing and understanding how to read and interpret text is essential to any grade level. To support K12 teachers in their reading, writing and skill development the Center hosted 3 hands-on, in person workshop training days. The sessions provided teachers (N=78) impacting students, with much needed updated and innovative literacy support to



engage students in the reading and writing process. Due to updates to the Common Core Standards, teachers need current professional development to update their skill set and learn about new requirements related to their instructional practices.

#### Professional Development for Teachers in the Arts

K-6 teachers were afforded with new art techniques to support their instructional needs. The session was in person, on campus and hands on. The teachers practiced the new skills and collaborated to determine best practices and the application of art into their instructional repertoire. Local teachers (N=84) attended the session, who teach over 1,700 students in their classrooms. A special emphasis was placed on artistic journaling to support the writing and reading process combined with artistic talent development.

#### Social Emotional Learning Professional Development Teachers

The social emotional learning (SEL) needs of students have changed drastically over the last several years. We focus on helping teachers to address the needs of their students. The demand and high need for Social Emotional Learning among our K12 students is at the forefront of education. The in person professional development for teachers (N=77) impacting over 1,600 students, was offered by experienced educators who focused on several areas of need including: Culturally responsive restorative practices, reaching all students through personalize learning techniques, promoting social emotional learning through universal design for learning, Social emotional learning basics, building effective connections in a strong classroom community.

#### Art for Primary Teachers, Social Emotional Learning, and Culturally Responsive Literacy Skills

During the fall semester 2023, we hosted Saturday trainings to support the literacy skills of teachers. In addition, we hosted a hands-on fine art learning professional development session for local teachers. The in person professional development for teachers was well attended by local schoolteachers (N=68) impacting over 1,300 students. Teachers learned new techniques to enrich their teaching and student development.

The workshop titles:

- The culturally responsive session provided teachers with strategies to learn about, and then draw from, their student's social identities to implement culturally responsive instruction.
- Social emotional learning for teachers and students
- Fine arts and literacy for primary teachers

#### Teacher Professional Development Webinar Series

The Teacher Professional Development Webinar Series which started in 2020 continues to be a successful endeavor for the Center. We reach a larger audience and provide professional development on demand. The recorded webinars are uploaded and made available to teachers from a larger demographic area. Collectively, the webinars have been viewed over 10,000 times. The various content areas covered in the webinars included curriculum development for teachers in all areas. As of today, there are over 125 webinars available on YouTube which provides free and immediate access to any teacher. Categorized below is a list of the various content areas, as well as the title of each webinar available to teachers.

### Education Technology

The need for training in technology is an ongoing and essential requirement for teachers. The Center provided the following webinars in education technology:

- Free Educational Apps for Educators Teaching Online
- Backwards Design Strategies for K12 Teachers
- Using Flipgrid an Assessment Tool for Teachers
- Podcast Like a Professional: Students and Educators
- Promoting Student Academic Growth with Hyper Rubrics

### Literacy and Writing Webinars

Teaching students to read and write has always been a priority. Due to the restrictions of the global pandemic, many students are lagging in their literacy skills. To address this ongoing need, we created a series of webinars to support teacher's professional development in teaching literacy and writing.

- Teaching literacy in a remote learning context
- Strategies to teach writing skills online
- Crafting effective summaries in high school
- Active engagement for the literacy rich classroom
- Making reading engaging
- Building literacy skills through art exploration
- Designing an engaging author's corner in the classroom
- Independent literacy activities to support struggling readers
- Building Literacy Skills in Early Childhood Education
- Identity Centered Assessment to Enhance Engagement and Literacy

### Social Emotional Learning Webinars

The need for teachers to incorporate Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in their instruction is a high priority for all school districts. The Center offers a special series on SEL to address this area of professional development for teachers.

- Inspiring quiet leaders
- Shaming in schools: how to interrupt a harmful common practice
- Sensitive children: the hidden gem in our schools
- Teaching practices that help introverted students thrive
- Supporting relationships and building skills
- Building social emotional skills for teachers

- Social emotional learning: coaching in special education
- Universal design for learning
- Key social skills needed for friendship building in schools

#### Science and Mathematics Webinars

Teaching and learning science and mathematics requires extra time and energy. To address this special need, the webinars were designed with applicable learning in mind.

- Next generation science standards, local habitats, and online strategies
- Growing young scientist with online teaching strategies
- Next generation science standards: decomposition, chemistry, and online instruction
- Disrupting math in equities
- Making problem-based learning manageable and starting small

#### Art Education Professional Development Webinars

Providing professional development for teachers in the area of art education is not always a priority for school districts. Therefore, the webinar series and professional development provided by the Center is a dire need for teachers. The webinars we offered include:

- Art journaling for mental wellness
- Building literacy skills through art exploration
- Turning trash into treasure creating junk puppets
- Ideas about art therapy in mental wellness
- Bringing art education into elementary classrooms
- Creating accessible lessons for special education from the Getty Museum virtual resources

APPENDIX B  
Budget Breakdown by Year

**2020-2021**

Based on July 2020 – June 2021 Statements

Beginning Balance (July 2020)	\$252,543
Deposits	\$151,704
Total Funds Available	\$404,262
Debits	\$75,399
Remaining Balance (June 2021)	\$328,863

Note: Rounded to nearest dollar.

**2021-2022**

Based on July 2021 – June 2022 Statements

Beginning Balance (July 2021)	\$328,863
Deposits	\$0
Total Funds Available	\$276,297
Debits	\$52,565
Remaining Balance (June 2022)	\$276,297

Note: Rounded to nearest dollar.

**2022-2023**

Based on July 2022 – June 2023 Statements

Beginning Balance (July 2022)	\$276,297
Deposits	\$167,011
Total Funds Available	\$437,009
Debits	\$106,142
Remaining Balance (June 2023)	\$330,866

Note: Rounded to nearest dollar.



Lisa Kirtman, Ph.D.  
Dean, College of Education  
P.O. Box 6868  
Fullerton, CA 92834-6868  
657-278-4021

March 18, 2024

Cynthia,

The SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union Center for Creativity and Critical Thinking Center stands out as an innovative hub dedicated for in-service teacher professional development. The center offers a range of programs and resources aimed at nurturing creativity and enhancing critical thinking for teachers and the students that they serve. The work is clearly aligned with the mission of the center, the College of Education, and the University.

One of the center's achievements is its impact on local in-service teachers. Through synchronous in-person sessions and recorded webinars, reaching over 10,000 views, the center has engaged with 36 districts, spanning from TK-12 to special education. The offerings range from arts education to social-emotional learning to culturally responsive teaching.

The center's dedication to providing these resources is commendable, and SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union deserves recognition for its ongoing financial support. However, there is an opportunity for clear integration of Just, equitable and inclusive education (JEIE) practices into its programming. While the center's work notes an alignment with principles of accessibility and equity, there is a need for explicit evidence of efforts such as presenting in multiple languages and ensuring resources and presenters are representative of the student population served.

I would like the center to consider collaborating with the JEIE committee to hold workshops and using the center's funding to host workshops directly at school sites. This could further increase attendance, engagement, and work towards the college's focus on advocacy.

Overall, the SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union Center for Creativity and Critical Thinking should be commended for the contributions to the community. As noted previously, future plans should show an explicit integration of JEIE principles and collaboration with the JEIE committee. In addition, there should be clear plan on how to spend down some of the funding through these new efforts.

Sincerely,

Lisa Kirtman  
Dean



**CENTER FOR CREATIVITY AND CRITICAL THINKING**

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To: Dr. Lisa Kirtman  
Dean, College of Education

From: Dr. Cynthia Gautreau  
Director of Center for Creativity and Critical Thinking

Re: 2023 – 2024 Center and Institute Reviews

March 26, 2024

Dear Dean Kirtman,

Thank you for your careful review of and kind remarks regarding the Self-Study for The Center for Creativity and Critical Thinking. Your leadership of the College of Education and the value that the college places on teaching, research, and outreach in education has been vital to the success of our center. We look forward to continued activities as a College of Education center.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Gautreau".

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