



Director's Digest

Important Dates and Upcoming Events

Wednesday, Nov

16: Community Meeting - Strategic Plan (7:00 PM - 8:00 PM). TL/CLC Library.

Friday, Nov 18: 1st Trimester Progress Reports sent home.

Mon - Fri, Nov 21 -

25: SCHOOL

CLOSED: Thanksgiving Holiday. Watch for information from Educare about special day activities.

Wednesday, Dec 14: BOD Meeting (7:30 PM - 9:30 PM). TL/CLC Library.

Friday, Dec 23: Winter Celebration (9:30 AM - 10:45 AM). TL/CLC Campus Gym.

Friday, Dec 23: SUPER MINIMUM DAY: 12:00 noon dismissal.

Dec 26, 2016 - Jan 9, 2017: SCHOOL CLOSED. Winter Break. Watch for information from Educare about special day schedule and activities.

The Value of Seminars

Voice and Choice for Learners (and parents)...

When we first opened our doors back in 1994, we didn't really have a curriculum. (Well, there was a 25-page document broadly describing what should be taught but there was no indication or guidance of how it should be implemented!). We were in desperate need of common time to plan a cohesive program. We also had an abundance of talented and creative parents who had ideas to enrich/augment the core curriculum and wanted to be intimately involved in the curriculum. From these two needs, CLC's Seminars Program was born. It was an elegant solution that provided common planning time for educators and a meaningful way for parents to contribute to the educational experience of the learners.

Needless to say, the program has evolved over the last 20+ years due to both internal and external forces. Internally, the biggest driving factor for the changes has been our steadily increasing population. As the number of learners grows, so does the number of classes needed to accommodate them all. This has stretched our capacity with respect to space and parent volunteers needed to support the program.

The most influential external factor that has come into play is balancing all of the subject areas competing for air time in the classroom. Increasingly we feel the pressure to focus more on academics and achievement at the expense of the "non-core" subject areas.

Given these challenges, why do we still make seminars a priority and continue to allocate time and resources to support the program? Not to be cliché but, it's for the kids. Seriously.

Alumni tell us that the experiences and memories that stick with them are often from a seminar(s) they participated in. Learners truly value having exposure to ideas and areas of study that they are not typically exposed to in the course of their normal day. They appreciate the variety of educators and the fact that they get to choose their classes (especially in the upper grades). They also like the opportunity to mix with other learners that are not in their homeroom/grade level.

In the upper grades we offer seminars in lieu of a more traditional elective program. (Generally electives run the entire year and provide the opportunity for a more in-depth study of a particular subject area.) We have neither the time, space, nor money to support a traditional program. I know this is disappointing to some parents and learners (for example those that want a band program during the school day), but we just don't have the economy of scale to make that happen. Instead, we have focused on building an exploratory program. This type of program provides a wide variety of short-term experiences that allow the learners to try out many different things. The idea is that they will (hopefully) find something that sparks their interest, something they will choose to pursue in greater depth.

We also continue to grow and evolve our Seminar program because it remains an excellent venue for our diverse parent talent pool. We have scientists, computer scientists, artists, dancers, musicians, felters, seamstresses, chefs, etc, that share their authentic experience with our learners. It is so valuable for the learners to see adults with a variety of passions and talents, that they may or may not be using in their profession. As the number of seminar choices increases, we have augmented our parent educators with outside experts. In the last couple of years we are also utilizing our learner alumni as guest educators (this round in the upper grade seminars we have three alumni educators)! This is particularly gratifying for me to have them back at CLC, contributing to a program that they valued when they were learners here.

Finally, seminars continue provide our educators with valuable collaborative planning time within the school day. We have high expectations of our educators with respect to creating and implementing our curriculum. We also expect and value collaborative grade level team work. Seminars are the one time that team members are all available to meet and collaborate. I can attest that the educators do not take this time for granted and use it productively in ways that benefit the learners. They also value the program and see the educative value that it brings to the learners overall experience.

As always we have room for improvement. During our strategic planning process, we identified some specific areas for growth for the Seminar program. In particular, we are looking to expand the type of experiences that we were offering to include design and computational thinking experiences. We have a very dedicated group of parents, The Parent Seminar Team, that are working to enrich the seminar offerings. As part of this process they are soliciting feedback from the learners so that the offerings incorporate learner interests. The program and the learners are reaping the benefits of this enthusiastic and committed group of parents.

I want to end by underscoring and appreciating how essential parent participation is to the success of this program. We couldn't maintain this program if parents were not willing to volunteer their time sharing their passions and expertise and supporting the classes in many other ways. Thank you for your participation and appreciation of the program. Although we (staff and learners) may not tell you often enough, it makes a difference!

Stacy Giles Emory
CLC Director

*"Follow your own passion - not your parents', not your teachers' -
yours. — Robert
Ballard*

