

CTI Fellows and Faculty Learn at Yale Intensive Session

A Seminar Leader's Perspective

YNI: An Enlightening Experience



Heather Smith, CTI Seminar Leader
"All Immigration is Local" seminar
Professor of Geography, UNC Charlotte

This past July, I had the great privilege to join a group of Charlotte Mecklenburg School teachers as they travelled to New Haven, CT to participate in the Yale National Initiative (YNI) Intensive Session. My time with this group, and their colleagues from school systems from across the country, was enlightening in many ways. In addition to a series of focused sessions that reviewed the purpose, structure and logistics of the Teachers Institute approach, I observed in-progress seminars in which National Fellows explored topics such as the relationship between branding, authenticity and global capitalism in a seminar on *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Consumer Culture*, and the multi-faceted causes and consequences of air pollution in a seminar on *Energy, Environment and Health*. As a new seminar leader for the Charlotte Teachers Institute, observing these sessions provided an invaluable opportunity to reflect on the interaction between Fellows and Seminar Leaders at Yale as well as consider how content, curriculum unit development, discussion, lecture, pre-work, in-classroom exercises and reading load expectations were balanced across different seminars.

The Intensive also included working sessions for faculty on the curriculum unit that clarified for me the sometimes confusing but critical difference between assisting with a unit as opposed to assessing a unit. Beyond the knowledge I gained about what it takes to develop and run a Teachers Institute, I also came away from the week with myriad ideas to be incorporated into my own seminar(s).

Most importantly, I have come away humbled and awed by the tremendous work and invigorating spirit of the CTI colleagues with whom I travelled. Their vision, leadership and passion for CTI, and what it can do for their students, are truly inspiring.



Happy, Studious Fellows Enjoyed Yale This Summer

CTI Yale National Fellows Beth Lasure, Tiffany DiMatteo, Deb Semmler, Nicole Fraser, Jashonai Payne and Matt Kelly (pictured), along with CTI Seminar Leader Heather Smith (UNC Charlotte) and CTI National Advisory Council Member Ann Fox (Davidson), attended the Yale National Initiative's Intensive Session at Yale University in July, where Fellows created curriculum units for their students.

CTI Fellow's View: A Career Highlight



Nicole Fraser, CTI Yale National Fellow
Fifth Grade Teacher
Davidson Elementary School

To describe my Yale experience in a short article would never fully encompass the reality of my time there. Inspiring, refreshing, intellectual, and collegial are only a few words that describe my experience at Yale. Immersing yourself in an academic culture for two weeks has left a lasting impression and I'm sure that my teaching and love for learning will never be the same.

When I first went to Yale in May I found myself wishing I could be a professional student. It was amazing to walk around campus, study in the beautiful library, and experience the life of an Ivy League student. The two weeks in July were far more valuable than I could have imagined as there were no distractions of normal life, so I could fully engage in my research. I was also given the opportunity to meet several times with my seminar leader, a Yale professor who is an expert on the topic of my research!

Throughout the two weeks I also had the opportunity to have great conversations with teachers from around the country. It seemed every conversation lent itself to something deeper than just normal chit chat. The Yale National Initiative will definitely be a highlight of my career!



Wells Fargo Awards CTI \$50,000 Gift for Program Support

A generous CTI sponsor since 2009, Wells Fargo recently awarded Charlotte Teachers Institute \$50,000 for program support. Wells Fargo Community Affairs Manager Jay Everette announced the award and explained, "The Wells Fargo Foundation continues to be impressed with the professional development Charlotte Teachers Institute offers our local teachers. Many participants say that this program helps them teach with more impact and passion. We also like the fact that curriculum created by these educators through their experience with Charlotte Teachers Institute is shared nationally with other educators via Yale University." CTI Director Scott Gartlan said, "We are thrilled to receive Wells Fargo's confident and sustained support. Our work is focused on making connections between public school teachers and university professors to meet the needs of students in the classroom. This gift will allow us to continue this valuable work."