Consultant Spotlight
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Jonelle Rocke

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Jonelle Rocke is LCI's newest consultant. She began her career in education as an elementary school teacher before moving into a professional development role. Prior to joining LCI, she worked with the NYC Department of Education and other organizations, focusing on projects related to assessment and curriculum design.

Outside of her work, Jonelle is passionate about preparing our youth to be responsible global citizens and responsible stewards of their resources. She also enjoys using movement to reach others as an inspirational dancer.

Get to know Jonelle and her work, below.

Curriculum

Jonelle's first teaching job was in the same elementary school she attended as a child, which provided a unique opportunity to reflect upon the different experiences of teacher and student, and helped to inform her educational philosophy.

Driven by the belief that educators only have a short amount of time to have the greatest impact on the lives of children, Jonelle is motivated to help teachers ensure that the time their students spend in the classroom is as influential and effective as it can be.

As she reflects upon her time in the classroom, Jonelle sees how she invested time creating lesson plans without first having the knowledge to design them to be effective, authentic and engaging. This sparked her interest in using curriculum design and tools like curriculum maps to help teachers create and use units that best promote student learning.

[Learn](#) about LCI's newest curriculum resource,
A Practical Guide to Developing Quality Curriculum Units of Study.

Assessment

Jonelle believes that student engagement can be achieved, in part, by making curriculum and assessment meaningful to students. She was able to apply this philosophy through her work supporting Teaching is the Core (TiTC) grant recipients during this school year. In August 2014, NYSED awarded TiTC grants to 31 consortia throughout the state to help them identify, improve and develop assessments that contribute to student learning, and eliminate those assessments that did not. LCI was retained by 20 consortia to assist with their grant-related work, aiding their assessment audit, review and design efforts, while helping them to make and keep their assessments learner-centered.

In her TiTC-related work, Jonelle was primarily involved in assessment design support. She focused on deepening participants' understanding of balanced assessment practices and then taking them through the process of revising and designing curriculum-embedded, standards-based and rigorous formative assessments aimed at monitoring student learning and informing teachers' instructional practices.

A critical piece of this process was helping educators to understand and reframe assessment as an ongoing process of gathering evidence of learning, rather than an event-type activity that causes them to stop instruction in order to administer a test. As Jonelle explains, "This is not to say that tests don't have their place in an assessment plan… but they are not, and should not be, the only way we measure student learning." Instead, authentic, performance-based assessments – those that are designed both to be integrated into the learning process, and whose content enable students learn about themselves and the world through the assessments they experience – provide a meaningful experience for students while still enabling teachers to receive feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching.

Download LCI's *Checklist for Assessments that Produce Learning*

Learn about our Learner-Centered Assessment webinar series, which provides an introduction to quality assessments and provides concrete examples and tools for implementing them into the classroom.

Read about our professional development programs in assessment.

Technology

Jonelle is intrigued by the potential for technology to transform the learning experience for students, given how much technology is naturally integrated into their personal lives of students.   She talks about watching the children of friends using these types of tools in their spare time, for fun, and the disconnect between their being immersed in that environment and then walking into classrooms where they are told to "sit down, open your textbook, and turn to page 62."

The challenge for educators, she believes, is providing them with the time and space to figure out how to integrate technology in a way that is meaningful to their students. The strategy of plopping an iPad into a classroom, say, encouraging students to use an app to practice math, is not enough. Jonelle encourages educators to begin with the end in mind – think about what they want students to produce, know, and be able to do – then plan how technology can help them to achieve those goals, and thoughtfully integrate it into their lesson plans.   Jonelle believes administrators can play a role by actively searching out best practices and sharing them with their staff, and she looks forward to seeing how using these techniques and others can help students to flourish in the classroom.

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Learner-Centered Initiatives works to improve education by focusing on teaching, learning and leadership practices. We use a systems approach, recognizing that changes made in one area will naturally interact with, and affect, other components and participants in the system.

At LCI, we practice the priority that our name establishes, integrating learner-centered practices into our work, engaging participants' perspectives, energy and expertise and tapping their passion for education. Our programs, products and services are customized to each clients' needs and interests. They integrate relevant neuroscience approaches, as well as educational practices grounded in research and refined through practical field-application.

We are a certified MWBE in NYS and NYC, and have been successfully helping clients since 1995.

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