

the Rock

... on this rock we build



Pathways powered by Rocky Mountain College

Volume 2 2020

RMC's current mandate is discipleship and the development of biblical leaders. Pathways, our distributed learning model, has served us well in accomplishing that end. In the very near future RMC will be adding a Competency-Based Educational model to help us achieve that purpose. This edition of *the Rock* is serving as an introduction to Competency-Based Education. We trust you will find it helpful. – Kerry Belt, President



Competency-Based Education (CBE)

AN ANCIENT-FUTURE WAY OF LEARNING

Long before the advent of the university, the Church trained its ministry workers for centuries through an apprenticeship model. Instead of attending a series of classes, aspiring pastors were accompanied by mentors as they ministered in their congregations. This model has been revived today in the form of Competency-Based Education (CBE).

Built on the lessons learned by the wider Competency-Based Education movement, CBE has three basic characteristics:

■ Mastery Learning

Everything a thriving ministry worker needs to know, be able to do, or simply to be is defined in a collection of competencies. Over the course of the program, students must demonstrate proficiency in each one of those competencies. The student must demonstrate proficiency in all aspects of the competency to successfully pass the assessment, not just have a passing grade overall. After all: you can't fly if you only know how to take off and navigate—you need to know how to land as well! If a student attempts an assessment and is unsuccessful, they may re-attempt it until they succeed (with coaching after each attempt by the appropriate mentor).

Each competency has a standard set of learning activities that can be used to help the student develop that proficiency. However, the Faculty Instructor is free to remove or replace some or all of these activities if the student's prior learning, experience, learning style or context calls for it. This flexibility enables the mentor team to craft a development plan that suits the student, moving them towards competency on the most direct route possible.



“ Did COVID-19 impact my ministry?

You bet it did! Being a Youth Pastor through this season was interesting, I had to be very creative and more intentional. It was a blessing to be a constant in youth's lives and be able to speak the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout it all to them.

Rocky's online course delivery is superb to say the least. It keeps me engaged and encouraged to continue on with the lesson. I never find it difficult to jump back into a lesson if I am unable to be focused on my learning for a stretch of time.

I have personally found that the best time of day for me to work on my courses through Rocky is in the morning at home. However, the interface is so practical and the staff of RMC have always been available, so I'd say that any time of day is great.

The flexibility that RMC offers has been incredibly helpful, especially in such a turbulent time. Thankfully because of the flexibility I have with Rocky I can still be pursuing academic excellence as I work. It is a great thing to be a student, a Pastor, and most of all a husband that has the ability to put bread on the table.

The education I have received through RMC has been very impactful both in my life and my ministry. My relationship and knowledge of the Lord has deepened greatly, and with that my ability to lead the students in my youth ministry has also benefited.

To the greater RMC community, I want to thank you for the continual support you give to Rocky. Please know that the support you are providing the college is producing rippling effects not just in the students' lives, but in the lives of those that are impacted by the students. Through your support, you are helping countless others in fulfilling the Great Commission that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ gave us, to make disciples of the World.

– Nate

■ **Rational Learning**

Most educational programs mention a student-to-teacher ratio. But CBE boasts a teacher-to-student ratio—three to one! Each student has a Personal Mentor and a Vocational (or Ministry) Mentor, who accompany them throughout the entire program. These mentors are a vital part of the student’s team, as they both facilitate and assess learning together with the Faculty Instructor. These mentors are usually selected by the student, which helps to ensure a good fit. The Faculty Instructor switches from discipline to discipline to ensure students have access to a qualified Subject Matter Expert for each competency, and to expose the student to a variety of coaching styles.

■ **Contextual Learning**

Student learning should not occur in a vacuum. Rather, it should be tightly integrated with some ministry context. This goes a step further than distance learning, which simply allows students to pursue their studies while physically remaining in their context. In CBE, learning activities and assessments are oriented towards the student’s personal and ministry context, either by knowledge related to that context or by actual activities performed in that context. This way, students gather valuable practical experience while they are learning and have a portfolio of ministry skills when they graduate.

CBE is a wonderful way to recover the ancient model of ministerial formation within the framework of an accredited degree. By focusing on mastery, it ensures that every student is proficient in everything they’ll need to do well in ministry. By focusing on relationships, the student is supported throughout their training by a team of experts. By focusing on context, the student is not just equipped for real life, but real life becomes their classroom. Come join ancient-future way of learning!




“ I was on my UK vacation with the goals to relax, visit local coffee shops, wander in parks, libraries, museums and visit friends.

However, both Prime Minister Trudeau and the Greater Vancouver Youth Unlimited executive director called me home early. Like all international travellers, I quarantined for two weeks. One week alone, sequestered away, enjoying the slowed-down pace of life. The second week, like all youth workers, scrambling to figure out how to move in-person to online. This transition was difficult as I had planned to connect with students after my vacation and plan times to hang out and be creative together. Thankfully, Greater Vancouver Youth Unlimited has been full of grace as all staff navigated the first few months of the restrictions COVID-19 placed on us. The 2020–21 school year ministry will continue to look different, but we are working hard to stay connected with students and find creative ways to meet new students. Maybe pop up tents in a neighbourhood?

For about a year, I have been praying and discerning with trusted mentors of this reoccurring idea of returning to school for a counselling BA. GYU leadership has been sharing about the partnership with RMC. I guess it took a pandemic to get started! After 18 years of being out of school, I signed up, started and completed two courses. I am still working full time with GYU, the flexibility of the courses was helpful to me, my team and the young people I mentor. It also helped that the professors have been kind and caring—available to answer questions about the assignments, encouraging me in the passions I have and encouraging me to dig deeper.

I am looking forward to continuing my course work with RMC. God isn’t revealing His end goal for this BA; from experience, I need to press on and in. I hope that this time with RMC will serve my GYU team and the young people of our communities.


– Maria



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PRAYER MATTERS
PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Health of our students as they minister and study
- Health of our many pros as they teach and minister
- RMC finances during COVID-19 and the economic downturn

PATHWAYS PARTNERSHIPS









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