

Discovering our Core Competencies

Karen Strobel, Castilleja's Director of Institutional Research

In 2013, Karen Strobel, who had been an educational researcher at the Graduate School of Education at Stanford, became the Director of the Partnership for 21st Century Assessment at Castilleja. At the outset she worked with faculty to identify, define, and name Castilleja's Core Competencies. Dr. Strobel explains, "I listened to the teachers describe the skills students were building in their classes. In the process of sharing back their words with the full faculty, a pattern became very clear: their words clustered around concepts like curiosity and self-directed learning (initiative), flexible problem solving (agility) and interpersonal skills such as empathy and collaboration (purpose)."

LEARNING AND LEADING Since then, her title has evolved, and she has become Castilleja's Director of Institutional Research. She has worked with faculty and administrators to reflect on questions they want to pursue and evidence they need to inform their decisions in the classroom or for the institution. Meanwhile, her work defining the core of the Castilleja program, has also guided the school



through developing more specific Learning and Leading Competencies and newly-defined Antiracism Competencies. Having an in-house educational researcher assures that as we innovate, we remain true to our mission. Dean of Faculty Christina Gwin^{HA} explains, "She helps teachers translate big ideas into pedagogy and works with teachers to make sense of data to inform and improve their teaching."

Partners in Innovation

FORGING PATHS Castilleja students are lucky that Bill Kind and Karen Strobel both share strength in one particular core competency—agility—as they zero in on a question to understand it fully, then quickly back away to see it in context. Within our program, we encourage students to develop agility by engaging "in creative problem-solving both independently and collaboratively." Over the past decade, Bill and Jaynie Kind's support of the Innovation Investment Fund was both a vote of confidence in the mission and a form of collaboration with Castilleja's educators. It is also part of the reason our program is agile enough to accommodate all of those countless paths around the Circle.