Faculty Focus

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Welcome and Introduction from the Newest FCTL Team Member
Chrissy Cruz

Chrissy Cruz is the newest member of the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning. She joins FCTL as Instructional Specialist after working as a manager at Global UCF. She also teaches Leadership Studies in the LEAD Scholars Academy.

Hello, my name is Chrissy Cruz, and I am a faculty Instructional Specialist at the Karen L. Smith Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning and an adjunct professor of Leadership Studies. I have ten years of university teaching, management, and career development experience and I have a passion for faculty and student development. I graduated from the University of Florida with a Master of Education and Specialist in Education. I hold an Instructional Design graduate certificate from the UF School of Teaching and Learning and I have a Quality Matters certification in higher education course design and assessment. Prior to my current role at the Faculty Center, I was a Manager and adjunct professor at Global UCF, in the career services division, preparing culturally and linguistically diverse international students to excel professionally within the United States higher education system.

At the Karen L. Smith Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, I teach faculty development workshops and lead teaching and learning programs on implementing effective teaching strategies, curriculum and course design, inclusive classroom management techniques, teaching with technology, and facilitating faculty interdisciplinary learning communities. I teach IDS6513 Preparing Tomorrow's Faculty within the UCF College of Graduate Studies, a UCF graduate course for Ph.D., Masters, and Post-Doctoral students, on effective teaching at the university level. In this course, I educate graduate students on teaching pedagogies, effective teaching methods, course design, student learning and motivation, assessment, classroom management, and career development. I serve as part of the leadership team of the Faculty Center by collaborating to plan events and provide faculty support through consultations and workshops. I deliver training programs for graduate teaching assistants and associates and conduct classroom observation sessions for faculty members across disciplines.

I have been teaching at the college level for ten years, and at UCF for the last four years. I currently teach LDR 2001 Foundations of Leadership, LDR 2002 Intermediate Leadership, and LDR 3950 Leadership Capstone to students enrolled in the UCF Leadership Studies minor, certificate, and LEAD Scholars Academy. I am passionate about educating faculty and students about leadership identity development and empowering others to become change agents within society. I was previously an Instructor at UMass Boston, the University of Florida, and Santa Fe College. I have designed and delivered face-to-face, hybrid, mixed-mode, and online courses across a variety of academic disciplines. I have internationalized college courses to align with cross-cultural competencies and global learning outcomes.

I employ a social constructivist and student-centered pedagogical approach within teaching and learning, fostering collaborative, active-learning environments where faculty and students are active participants within the learning process. Utilizing a learner-centered pedagogy, I involve faculty and students in the process of constructing meaning and knowledge by cultivating higher-order thinking skills outlined in Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. I utilize my instructional

design background to design educational courses, inclusive of student learning outcomes, lessons, assessments, and learning activities, via the Backwards Design and Universal Design for Learning frameworks. I focus on creative pedagogy in the classroom, incorporating educational technology and integrative multimedia projects into the curriculum. I sequence learning opportunities and assessments throughout course design to build student understanding and ensure evidence of learning. I focus on the implementation of teaching strategies such as inquiry-based, problem-based, and project-based learning while creating diagnostic, formative, summative, and authentic assessments to confirm knowledge acquisition.

I am passionate about inclusive classroom management techniques, and thus design learning experiences that address faculty and students' unique strengths and needs. I emphasize diversifying curricular requirements and incorporating culturally responsive materials to increase the presence of historically underrepresented groups, while honoring diverse perspectives to engage and deepen critical thinking. I believe in creating a learning atmosphere with understanding and appreciation of differences across cultures. I utilize a humanistic approach to motivate faculty and students, while implementing interactive teaching methodologies to enhance course content. I employ approaches that engage faculty and students to become active learners, such as conducting engaging lectures and discussions, and incorporating inquiry-based learning strategies.

I am a member of the Association for Talent Development and the National Career Development Association, and I am passionate about equipping faculty and students with career and leadership development strategies that foster professional success and advancement. I integrate the NACE Career Readiness competencies into course curricula, emphasizing preparation for the workforce and lifelong career management. Through course design in alignment with NACE competencies such as effective communication, leadership, and professionalism, I design educational programs that cultivate faculty and student success, empowering those I educate to actualize their potential and create a positive and meaningful impact within our global society.

COURSE REDESIGN INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

Success Stories from the Digital Learning Course Redesign Initiative
Samantha Richardson and Wendy Howard

Samantha Richardson is the Communications Specialist for the Pegasus Innovation Lab at the Center for Distributed Learning. Prior to writing for UCF, she was an AP Literature teacher and English teacher for gifted students in K-12. She enjoys reading, cooking, traveling, and spending time with her husband and kids.

Dr. Wendy Howard is the Program Director of the Pegasus Innovation Lab, an incubator of experimental projects focused on digital learning innovations that can be developed and refined through rapid prototyping and then promoted throughout the university to maximize collective impact on student success at scale.

In 2018, the UCF Board of Trustees strategically invested in a three-year Digital Learning Course Redesign Initiative (DL CRI). The goals of this redesign process were to leverage the benefits of online, blended, adaptive, and active learning. This initiative sought to:
- increase successful completion rates in benchmark courses,
- improve student success, retention, and satisfaction,
- target key courses such as success marker, foundation, and STEM, and
- increase classroom utilization.

During this time, we hoped to engage with at least 5 colleges, redesign over 100 courses, and impact over 50,000 student enrollments. By the end of the 3 years (with an extra semester due to COVID) we had engaged with 11 colleges, redesigned 140 courses, and impacted over 100,000 student enrollments.

Due to the enormous success of this initial redesign process, an extension to the initiative was granted this year, 2021. But a change was implemented to encourage redesign projects at scale. Moving forward, we shifted the focus to faculty-initiated group projects within three themed tracks: personalized adaptive learning (PAL), program level redesign, and post COVID innovations.

In total, 22 group projects involving more than 70 faculty members have been funded through the DL CRI extension. Using unallocated funds from the original investment, we are building upon the successes and lessons learned with an eye toward scale to maximize our collective impact on student success at UCF.

As we navigate the future challenges that may arise in online learning, we aim to prepare faculty to meet these challenges with the adoption of best practices discovered during the original initiative, so they are poised to succeed.

This *Faculty Focus* edition spotlights just a handful of these successful pilot projects. They represent a cross-section of the types of projects faculty tackled. In these articles, faculty members discuss both the successes and challenges they faced in redesigning their courses. Some worked with our personalized adaptive learning platforms, while others worked with instructional designers in making their courses more accessible for students online through the use of personalized content, active learning, or open educational resources.

Both the original initiative and the extension required faculty members to submit a proposal that was then reviewed by a panel and approved based on how well the proposal fit the goals of the initiative and if the proposal reflected a true "redesign" of the course. For the original three-year initiative, faculty members needed to be supported by their department chairs and describe the potential collective impact their redesigned courses would provide.

All faculty members who have participated in or are participating in the DL CRI are supported by the various teams at the Center for Distributed Learning (CDL) and the Faculty Center Teaching and Learning (FCTL). Each faculty member or groups of members also work with instructional designers who help facilitate the design and development of online courses.

We hope you find these testimonies inspiring and informative. We are proud of the work that has been done to improve the quality of online education here at UCF and look forward to future successes with our DL CRI extension groups.

The Impact of Course Redesign in Teaching Russian Language Classes
Alla Kourova

Alla Kourova is Associate Professor of TESOL and Russian and directs UCF STARTALK and the Study Abroad Program for Russian language and culture. She is a recipient of two National Excellence in Teaching Awards and is the Principal Investigator of nine federal grants over the past five years. Her pedagogical credo is teaching language through culture.

Starting the year by creating a strong community and tapping into the target culture of Russian language is a good strategy no matter where students are learning.

In the realm of world languages, interaction is everything. Before COVID, I was accustomed to engaging in two-way dialogues with my students in their target language every day. I have my students engage in constant conversation and collaborative work. These interactions not only require use of the target language in a real-life context, but also aid me in building relationships with my students. Whether I am teaching virtually, in person, or in a hybrid model, building relationships with students is critical for me.

The Course Redesign Initiative support program which was proposed before the pandemic was the best UCF can do to help professors to switch to an online mode and use any tools they want to use. Though we all needed to make changes to our traditional teaching practices, providing quality world language instruction and fostering a positive learning environment were and still are attainable goals.

As a teacher who prefers teaching face-to-face, my participation in the course redesign was challenging and at the same time very rewarding. The work of the team, including the redesign adviser Shelly Wyatt, made my preparation easier for switching to on online mode when we all locked down in our homes. The main purpose of this redesign for me was to increase students' engagement with the Russian language, as well as its culture and history. The new modality (mixed) also provides students with enhanced course content that is available anytime and on multiple electronic devices. This redesign added supplemental language practice activities that provide students with enhanced opportunities to engage with the language. Also, practical activities prepare students for traveling to Russia or any Russian-speaking country and can be used in the orientation program for Study Abroad. Each section of the redesign captures students' interest and promotes engagement; interesting and timely topics include Russian history and culture. The new mixed modality also offers

students the opportunity to work in online groups to practice speaking, grammar, and reading. This mixed-mode course has changed significantly from its face-to-face version. To keep all the rigor of my face-to-face Intermediate Russian course, I have included cultural and interview videos together with the scripts in both languages. These videos are based on the Fulbright-Hays group project abroad and on the materials in the textbook units which can be used in the online component of the course. Since standards in learning foreign languages have five "C" goals areas (Communications, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities), a lot of resources were added. I have also harnessed the power of Canvas to extend the class component beyond the standard 3 hours by using Materia Widgets, Quizlet, and other Canvas functions (e.g., students recording their Russian pronunciation). Here are some examples:

Start with connections

Whether I am teaching by video or in person, the first few days of the new course should be spent not by clinically reviewing a detailed list of rules and procedures but by building relationships and creating a positive, upbeat classroom.

In my traditional in-person class, I typically start off my Russian or TESOL classes with the following first-week activities:

Name tags: Each student receives a piece of paper and creates a name tag. Students write their name and draw three objects that represent them. Then, students explain why they chose the objects they did, either in the target language or in English, depending on the level of the course.

Guess Those Facts: In my beginner Russian I class, I post three facts about myself in Russian with corresponding images. I then give students a few minutes to guess what each fact means in English. This is one of the first activities in which students are exposed to the target language.

Two Truths and a Lie: I break students up into small groups, and one by one, each student shares two truths and a lie about themselves. Their group members must guess which statement is the lie. (Note that in Intermediate Russian and above, students can conduct this in the target language, but in the beginning Russian class, students can participate in English. No matter the level, you might post some key words in the target language for students to use.)

Artifacts: Each student brings an artifact to class that holds special meaning for them. Depending on the level of the course, they can explain why this artifact is important.

Tap into all communicative modes

Once I am ready to kick off instruction, I ensure that I am tapping into all communicative modes—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—in the target language. I also reflect on technology tools I am using and ask myself whether these tools specifically target at least one communicative mode. It was a dilemma for me during my redesign time, but it worked out well in the end.

Weave in cultural connections

I truly believe that the study of cultural elements and practices should be at the core of any world language curriculum. During the redesign time I always asked myself: Are they culturally focused? Do they allow students to make observations about and connections with cultural practices that are different from their own?

Taking inventory of all resources I was using in person and transferring them virtually, I aimed to compile as many authentic resources as possible. I utilized authentic video clips, including commercials, interviews, or how-to videos featuring native speakers. These authentic learning opportunities ensure that students are more likely to be engaged and motivated to learn.

All the above examples were made by working on the Course Redesign Initiative program with the CDL's Pegasus Innovation Lab and also participating in Teaching and Learning Days and learning how to use Zoom with FCTL, to whom I owe huge gratitude for preparing us for the unknown future.

Taking Advantage of the Pegasus Innovation Lab's Course Redesign Initiative
Martha Hubertz

Martha Hubertz is a social psychologist and Lecturer in the Psychology Department. She teaches social psychology and several diversity courses as well as research methods. Dr. Hubertz has been recognized on numerous occasions for her innovative approaches to teaching. These recognitions include: Teaching Incentive Program Award (2021), the Chuck D. Dziuban Award for Excellence in Online Teaching (2020), and the Rick Schell Award for Writing Across the Curriculum (2019).

Course Redesign Initiative: Reduced Seat Active (RA) Modality

Faculty who teach the relatively new Reduced Seat Active (RA) modality course encounter the challenge of how to best use the eight hours of face-to-face contact for a 3-credit course. I faced this challenge when I taught the Psychology Department's first Reduced Seat Active (RA) modality course, SOP 3004 Social Psychology. As part of the Pegasus Innovation Lab's (iLab) Digital Course Redesign Initiative (CRI), I designed my RA course to allow for an intense, active-learning experience both online and throughout the 8 contact hours. To increase engagement and exploration of the course content, my students participated in a simulated society. This active learning component, in the form of a simulated society, allowed students to experience the practical impact of phenomena discussed in social psychology and to greatly improve their understanding and ability to apply these concepts. The simulation I ran is based on the SimSoc model created by a sociologist in 1969 (Gamson, 2000). This game illustrates cooperative versus competitive group behaviors and their effect on society. Students are divided into 4 groups that represent different socioeconomic strata. The participants manual has a vague set of rules as they are designed for the society to create its own set of norms. Some roles are randomly assigned by me before the simulation begins, but many students take on leadership roles independently. I have run multiple SimSoc's over the years and no two Sims are the same. The roles that students take on or create, and cohesion and personalities within the group, drive the simulation.

Student Response

I have now taught two sections of the RA version of this class, and student perceptions increased over the two sections. Both semesters, I also taught Web (fully online) sections of the class for comparison purposes. The classes were identical except for the Simulated Society activities and modified writing assignments and discussions for the RA version. When asked what students' three most favorite things about the class were,

students in the RA section overwhelmingly listed SimSoc. Student comments included many statements like:

- "The SIMSOC weekend was probably one of the best things about this course. It was an interesting experience, and I wouldn't mind doing it again."
- "SIMSOC was wonderful in both what it taught me about social psychology and how well it was integrated into all of our course material. I also very much like the connect tool, it is much more organized than tools I have used in the past."
- "SIMSOC weekend was an experience that I will forever remember. It was such a great weekend and a chance to make friends with people at UCF."
- "I loved this course! It was very situational, and I loved SIMSOC."
- "I loved the fact that this course had a weekend, where students were placed in a simulated society as a way to further develop on social psychology concepts."

Students in both classes were surveyed multiple times throughout the semester. Their feedback and my SPoI's indicated that students found the RA section very active and engaging. In particular, student feedback on the simulation was extremely positive. I also had students write the three words that first came to mind about the SimSoc experience. The word cloud clearly indicates that students found the activity *fun*, *challenging*, and *active*.

Course Redesign Initiative: Finding and Developing an Adaptive Component for the Textbook

A second CRI project I completed involved my High Impact (HIP) designated Service-Learning course. In Spring 2019, I selected a new text for my SOP 3742 Psychology of Women class, and students struggled with the level of material in the textbook. I applied for a Digital Course Redesign as part of the original Course Redesign Initiative (CRI) to assist me in

implementing an adaptive component to the textbook that could assist my students in understanding the content. Specifically, my goal in creating this adaptive piece was to increase the students' self-monitoring as they read. My hope was that this would provide a more active learning experience for students and increase their engagement and success.

Student Outcome

In Spring 2020 and Spring 2021, students piloted a free adaptive learning e-book from Acrobatiq, a branch of VitalSource. This adaptive component involved students being asked computer generated questions while reading the text to help them self-monitor comprehension of the material. I found that student scores increased on each exam when using the adaptive version of the text. Although the ranges stayed the same, the mean and median scores for each test improved almost 10 percentage points when using the adaptive e-text. I also surveyed students on their perceptions about the adaptive e-book. Both semesters, most students felt that the adaptive e-books help in some manner. Student perceptions were overwhelmingly positive. Over Summer 2020, I wrote formative questions for Acrobatiq to address each learning objective in the textbook. I also wrote some new items for the post-chapter quizzes that map to each learning objective. And I developed *Personal Practice Exercises* for three of the more difficult chapters to assist students. The Personal Practice items used AI with branching to assist students with understanding more challenging material. Again, test scores improved. And more importantly, student satisfaction improved. The results of a student survey on their perceptions about the adaptive e-book indicated that over 85% of students felt that the Acrobatiq courseware helped them learn the material and 70% of students said the Personal Practice courseware was useful. Interestingly, students also found the Acrobatiq courseware comparable to other publisher courseware.

I share these examples because they show the value of the Pegasus Innovation Lab's (iLab) Digital Course Redesign Initiative. You don't have to do what I did for your own course redesign. Taking advantage of this initiative gives you the chance and resources to put your own course design aspirations into action.

Reference

Gamson, W. A. (202). *SIMSOC: simulated society: Participant's manual, with selected readings, 5th Ed*. New York: Free Press.

Personalized Adaptive Learning in Lodging Courses – No More Sleeping Through Foundational Concept Reviews
Amy Gregory

Dr. Amy M. Gregory is Associate Professor in the Foodservice & Lodging Management department at UCF's Rosen College. She teaches upper-level undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral courses in Lodging with the goal of bridging academia and practice through the development of contemporary and dynamic critical thinking, problem solving, and analytical methods.

Students enrolled in lodging-related coursework and certificates at UCF's Rosen College of Hospitality Management are introduced to several foundational concepts and terms that are recurring throughout their studies. As students progress from generalized to more specific coursework, they learn more advanced applications of repeated concepts. Until recently, it has been incumbent on the various faculty teaching the courses to spend time reviewing, refreshing, or re-teaching the same foundational concepts and terms to ensure student success in their degree coursework, but also in their future careers. This review, while meaningful, occurred in a very linear fashion with all students and faculty spending time at the beginning of each semester working through common content. While this was "good," there had to be a better way… and there was/is!

UCF's Personalized Adaptive Learning initiative was well-suited to the challenges that faced students and faculty spending time on review of previous content. Not only did this platform allow for consistency of information, it allowed faculty and students to readily see where the students were in terms of their mastery of repeated concepts. The highly interactive and engaging multi-media platform is designed with a "Knowledge Check" from which the students could choose to jump into a brief review or in-depth learning based upon their individual mastery level, interest, and need. Students see their mastery levels and have the option to continue working to improve their mastery with concise learning modules, dynamic questions or scenarios, and alternative content. Faculty see a dashboard of student progress and mastery, allowing us to intervene, if needed. In our lodging coursework, the content can be used for initial or remedial learning.

With remediation requiring intense ongoing effort, the other lodging faculty members and I collaboratively developed a "road map" of foundational and recurring concepts that were consistent among our seven different lodging undergraduate courses. This exercise allowed us to highlight the common

content that "stole" our time during the semester once students had progressed beyond the required "Introduction to Lodging" coursework. Next, we identified the primary learning outcomes or objectives that each student should master while completing their degree coursework and preparing for a management career in the lodging industry. This developed the framework for what became the five areas of our Lodging Foundations:

1. Characteristics & Categorizations of Lodging Properties
2. Key Performance Indicators in Lodging
3. Roles, Goals & Success Measures of Lodging Management
4. Lodging Finance
5. Lodging Profitability

Despite how good, interested, or motivated students are, they often need reminders or re-teaching of previous concepts since time between courses often results in various degrees of recollection and/or understanding. Our PAL project provides common content that educates and allows students to self-assess understanding and interest within the lower-level courses, and also forms the content for students' own remediation as they remind/refresh themselves on the common concepts in more advanced applications in upper level (including graduate) coursework. The content is positioned at the start of the semester, but it can also be accessed (or referenced) continually throughout the term. The early-semester timing satisfies the University's requirement for confirming academic activity, provides a time buffer while students' textbooks and materials are being secured, and allows faculty early insight into the composition of the class. Students are now able to take the time that they need or want to master the foundational concepts while faculty are freed up to focus on the appropriate level of application, knowledge, and understanding within our coursework. In addition, the commonality of core concepts and consistent delivery of content, terminology, and application builds a familiarity for students that seems to have improved their knowledge and mastery.

Because the content is used in as many as seven courses, students who continue with a lodging focus will see the content more than once. The system remembers them and the work they did prior. After completing the "Knowledge Check", the student's current mastery is recorded, and the student has the option again to review or re-learn the content. Feedback from students who have been in the content more than once is favorable. They report that they "appreciate the opportunity to refresh themselves at their own pace" and that "the familiar content and format are a welcome start to new courses."

As a faculty member, I appreciate the individualized and interactive paths that the platform allows. In addition to using it as a remediation tool at the beginning of the term, I also use it to engage and assist students that may be struggling during the term by reminding them to revisit the modules again before the concepts appear later in the term. Though very labor intensive to create the content, the commonality of core concepts and consistent delivery of content, terminology, and application builds a familiarity for students that seems to have improved their knowledge and mastery over the last two years. In addition, it has increased faculty collaboration and provided a solid common core from which we can each develop our courses.

CRI Spotlight Ends

Exactly What Counts as the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning?
Ann Miller

Ann Neville Miller is Professor in the Nicholson School of Communication and Media. From 2018 to 2021 she oversaw the UCF SoTL award application process in her role as Interim Director of the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning.

Each year five Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) awards are available for award to in-unit faculty at UCF, and one additional SoTL award is designated for the College of Medicine. And each year a number of faculty wonder whether they should apply for the award, because they aren't sure whether their research would be considered SoTL.

To answer that question, this article will look at what SoTL is, what it isn't, and what kinds of research questions SoTL projects can answer.

What SoTL is
According to Hutching and Shulman (1999) SoTL "uses discovery, reflection, and evidence-based methods to research effective teaching and student learning in higher education." That is, SoTL's method is rigorous and evidence-based, its topic is teaching and learning, and its context is college/university education. Like other research, SoTL is meaningful if it is disseminated through presentations, publications, or other means so as to advance teaching beyond just the instructor who conducted the research.

What SoTL is not
Listed below are some common misperceptions about SoTL, with contrasting, correct information about SoTL following. Notice all of the misperceptions are important things that should be done, but they don't qualify as SoTL.

Misperception: SoTL is teaching based on evidence.
Correction: SoTL is producing evidence for specific teaching and learning practice.
Misperception: SoTL is conducting and publishing research about K-12 education.
Correction: SoTL is conducting and publishing research about post-secondary education.
Misperception: SoTL is simply doing research with students.
Correction: SoTL is doing research with students ONLY IF that research specifically investigates teaching and learning at the university level.
Misperception: SoTL is improving my class based on information I gathered informally from previous classes.
Correction: SoTL is using rigorous, systematic research methods that would be appropriate for publication in respected peer reviewed journals in my discipline, and disseminating my findings to improve general knowledge about the topic.

Kinds of research questions SoTL could answer

One way to test if your research is SoTL is to check to see if it is answering any of the following categories of questions about teaching and learning at the college level. The table below gives seven categories of SoTL objective, a description of each, and at least one example of that type of study by UCF faculty

SoTL Question	Description	UCF Faculty Example(s)
What works?	Classic SoTL research; provides evidence about the relative effectiveness of different teaching approaches	Beile, P., deNoyelles, A., & Raible, J. (2020). Analysis of an open textbook adoption in an American History course: Impact on student academic outcomes and behaviors. *College & Research Libraries, 81*(4), 721-736. Donnelly, J., & Hernández, F. E. (2018). Fusing a reversed and informal learning scheme and space: student perceptions of active learning in physical chemistry. *Chemistry Education Research and Practice*, *19*(2), 520-532.
What does it look like?	Systematic, rigorous descriptive evidence about how a teaching practice is implemented (e.g. perhaps differently than the ideal as described in literature) but without evaluation of the effectiveness	Keiffer, M. (2019). Nurse practitioner student clinical placements: A rural community immersion. *The Journal for Nurse Practitioners*, *16*(1), 1–4 Hou, S. (2018; online first 26 Oct 2017). A Taiwan Study Abroad program on Aging, Culture, & Healthcare. *Educational Gerontology, 44*(1), 18-27.
What would it look like?	An essay—likely by someone highly experienced in the field—that makes an argument for goals of teaching and learning that have yet to be met or are new to SoTL research	Kourova, A. (August 2020). Creativity in teaching Russian: Challenges, prospects, methods. *CARTA Research Journal (Central Association of Russian Teachers of America)*. Zraick, R.I. (2020). Standardized patients in communication sciences and disorders: Past, present and future directions. *Teaching and Learning in Communication Sciences and Disorders*.
What theory could describe it?	Argues for a theoretical framework for the scholarship of teaching and learning. May or may not be accompanied by data.	Akiyama, Y., & Woodill, S. (2020). Integrating User-Centred Design Approaches for a Course Design Framework for Interdisciplinary Studies Teaching and Learning. *Journal of Teaching and Learning*, *14*(1), 93-107.
How is it best measured?	A method piece. You develop instrumentation or method for SoTL research.	Zemack-Rugar, Y., Corus, C., & Brinberg, D. (2019). The academic response-to-failure scale: Predicting and increasing academic persistence post-failure. *Journal of Marketing Education, Online First*. Katt, J., Sivo, S., Miller, A. N., Brown, T., Scott, A., & Neel, S. (2018). Refinement of the Classroom Citizenship Behavior scale. *Communication Research Reports*, *35*, 282-291.
How do students learn?	We don't always think of this possibility, but examining student learning strategies and practices is also scholarship of teaching and learning.	Hamann, K., Pilotti, M.A.E., & Wilson, B.M. (2021). What lies beneath: The role of self-efficacy, causal attribution habits, and gender in accounting for the success of college students. *Education Sciences, 11*(7), 333. Pilotti, M.A.E., El Alaoui, K., Hamann, K., & Wilson, B.M. (2021). Causal attribution preferences and prospective self-assessment: The unknowns of the Middle Eastern learner. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science, 7*(1), 265-286.
What is the role of SoTL in your disciplinary area?	Investigation of how SoTL research is treated in in your specific discipline	Feldmann-Jensen, S., Hackerott, C., Knox, C.C., Ramsay, J., McEntire, D.A. (In Press). The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Emergency Management and Homeland Security: Trends, Gaps, Barriers, and Opportunities. *Journal of Emergency Management*. Haupt, B., & Knox, C.C. (2018). Measuring Cultural Competence in Emergency Management and Homeland Security Higher Education Programs. J*ournal of Public Affairs Education*, *24*(4), 538–556.

The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning has some great resources about SoTL on their website. Also, check out current and previously spotlighted faculty from departments all over campus. Finally, for more information about SoTL, skim through tables of contents and abstracts in the Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

Reference

Hutchings, P., & Shulman, L. S. (1999). The Scholarship of Teaching: New Elaborations, New Developments. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, *31*(5), 10–15.

Zoom! Zoom! Flexible Strategies to Support Online Teaching and Learning in the COVID Era

Aimee deNoyelles and Shelly Wyatt

Aimee deNoyelles is a Senior Instructional Designer at the Center for Distributed Learning. Her role is to promote the quality of online instruction at UCF through faculty consultation, faculty development, and classroom-based research. She co-designed and developed the BlendFlex training course for faculty.

Dr. Shelly Wyatt joined the Center for Distributed Learning at UCF as a full-time instructional designer in November 2016. Before joining CDL, she spent more than 15 years teaching courses in the humanities at several colleges, including DeVry University, Valencia College, and Seminole State College. In addition, Shelly worked at Rollins College (Olin Library) and at the American Psychological Association (book publishing division).

The last 18 months have dramatically impacted the nature of teaching and learning online. Required to suddenly "pivot" online during Spring 2020, teachers relied on web conferencing tools like Zoom to hold live class meetings. While Zoom made the transition to remote teaching and learning possible, the use of live video created as many challenges as it solved. Nevertheless, many important lessons have been learned by faculty during this remarkably challenging time period and can be applied to fully online teaching.

In this article, we highlight some peer-reviewed online teaching strategies that have recently been added to the Teaching Online Pedagogical Repository (TOPR). Hosted by UCF's Center for Distributed Learning, TOPR is an online compendium of more than 100 online/blended teaching practices, submitted by educators from around the globe. Each entry describes a strategy drawn from the pedagogical practice of an online/blended teaching faculty, includes artifacts (e.g., syllabi, assignments) from actual courses, and aligns with findings from research literature. Entries are designed to be replicable, with the hope that you will adapt them for use in your own courses. All entries are openly licensed, and recent submissions are peer-reviewed. TOPR has been inspiring faculty contributors and users for more than ten years; in the last year alone, TOPR has been visited by 117,578 unique users!

TOPR Press Release: July 2021

Each year, the TOPR Editorial Board publishes a press release which curates the newest entries. In July of this year, 19 entries were published, nine of which were penned by UCF teaching faculty. The two main themes that emerged from UCF contributors include **synchronous online teaching and learning** and **designing more flexible online learning experiences.**

Synchronous Online Teaching and Learning

Synchronous online means that class participants are interacting at the same time and sharing some kind of virtual space like a Zoom room. This kind of interaction had been happening prior to the pandemic, but it dramatically rose due to the sudden closing of physical classrooms. Consider these powerful teaching strategies that harnessed the affordances of the synchronous virtual environment:

- *Have a predictable method to access resources* (Wenzel, 2021a). Managing an online classroom in real time can be overwhelming. Consider adding a single link in the Zoom chat that serves as a launchpad to the other materials, such as presentation slides and activities.
- *Utilize collaborative documents to work together in real time* (Wenzel, 2021b). Virtual collaboration is challenging; how can a teacher facilitate the student work happening in Zoom breakout rooms, for instance? One effective strategy is to share a link to a collaborative document. Each breakout room number is aligned to linked templates within the document. Students can work on their assigned slide, and the teacher can see the work as it unfolds.
- *Gauge student understanding through polls* (Salter & Albrecht, 2021). Zoom polls can be leveraged as a "live quiz" to engage students by soliciting ongoing feedback and to shift the direction of one's teaching by responding to this feedback.
- *Redesign a final assignment into a project with smaller assignments which incorporate a peer review element* (Trinquet du Lys, 2021). Pair up students and provide feedback about their semester-long projects during the live online meetings.

Designing More Flexible Online Learning Experiences

Suddenly, students and teachers were placed in distant locations and were coping with personal pressures and changing schedules. The following strategies are examples of how UCF faculty incorporated more flexible online course design in order to support students.

- *Give students options for assessment* (Eadens & Eadens, 2021). The authors describe an assignment in which *Contemporary Issues in Leadership* students explain their personal leadership philosophy. Students had the option to submit a traditional philosophical statement (written or in video format), or they could describe how they developed their personal leadership philosophy.

- *Consider mastery paths to personalize learning design* (Paradiso & Chen, 2021). Online students may go directly to work on an assignment and only refer to the learning materials as needed, which may hinder their performance. A feature like Canvas MasteryPaths can be considered in order to help personalize the student learning experience through frequent (ungraded) diagnostic tests and targeted content scaffolding based on students' performance. The authors demonstrate how to implement a mastery path design in Webcourses@UCF. In their example, the mastery path conforms to a single-module design, with a template that is open-source and available for anyone to use.
- *Incorporate adaptive elements in exams* (Cavage & Chen, 2021). To measure the English language competency of learners at different levels, the Canvas Mastery Paths tool was used to create an adaptive, multi-directional exam.
- *Model spaced repetition in course design* (Lahcen & Mohapatra, 2021). Informed by studies in memory, this strategy offers learners multiple opportunities to reactivate their knowledge throughout the course. The entry includes two examples of spaced repetition, along with an explanation of diagnostic assessment and "just in time" reviews and content.

To review these strategies and explore the artifacts in more detail, visit the entries linked in the Press Release.

Want to Share?
What strategies have you found to be successful in this new age of online teaching? Consider sharing them in TOPR! While submissions are accepted on a rolling basis, they are typically reviewed and published once a year. The TOPR editorial board will announce a call for submissions in January and proposals will be accepted until mid-March. Authors will then receive peer-reviewed feedback on their submissions by the end of April. A press release with nominated articles will be publicized over the summer.

Join our mailing list to receive press release updates and calls for submission for TOPR. The list is on the home page: https://topr.online.ucf.edu/.

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Mentoring New Faculty through Departmental Launch Communities: A Case Study from Biology
Linda Walters

Linda Walters is Pegasus Professor of Biology, Director of Fellers House Field Station in Canaveral National Seashore, and Chair of the UCF Research Council through Faculty Senate. Walters has spent the past 20+ years as a member of the UCF faculty, and her research incorporates marine conservation, restoration, and education. Having had some amazing mentors, Walters has mentored and advocated for students and faculty throughout her career.

Background & Description of Launch Community
The 2018 UCF COACHE faculty satisfaction survey results and many other faculty surveys suggest that new Assistant Professors are a cohort where mentoring efforts are urgently needed and have the greatest impact on retention, job satisfaction, and productivity. Likewise, about 50% of the new women faculty at UCF surveyed stated they had a "buddy" in their department, but less than 10% felt they had a mentor. All adamantly wanted more at the department level, while they were satisfied with the level of campus-wide mentoring opportunities available. Specifically, they wanted details on how their department perceived topics of interest, as well as information on grant writing, networking, advocating, and work/life coordination. Additionally, new faculty at UCF wanted excellent mentors who wanted to mentor, and most were more positive

about team/cohort mentoring above one-on-one mentoring models.

With this background information, the goal of this project was to run a semester-long Biology Faculty Launch Mentoring community. It was funded by a COACHE 2019–2020 mini-grant to improve departmental relations/mentoring. In addition to the new faculty and myself, I recruited two colleagues from within the Biology Department (one senior member with an administrative role, one mid-career who was recently promoted) and one senior faculty member from outside of the department who had experience with the University Tenure & Promotion Committee.

All five tenure-earning Assistant Professors in year one or two of their contracts agreed to participate in our Launch Community. One faculty member had previous faculty experience (one year at a small college). The remainder arrived at UCF directly from post-doctoral research positions. The group met five times over the course of the spring 2020 semester for 1.5 dedicated hours for each session. Prior to the first meeting, I asked the cohort to respond to a list of 33 potential topics and rank each as high, medium, or low importance to them. The top five ranked topics became the focus of our meetings.

The topics chosen were:
1. "Defining mentoring" and "how to juggle your life as an early-career faculty member".
2. "Tenure and promotion policies at the university, college and departmental levels", including discussion of what faculty mentors consider "success" for pre-tenure faculty.
3. "How to complete your CPE (Cumulative Progress Evaluation) correctly and most effectively".
4. How and when to say "yes" and "no".
5. "What to include in your annual evaluation, who evaluates you, and the difference between CPEs and annual reports".

Lower ranked topics that were not included in this programming included longer-term professional development (e.g., career mapping); marketing yourself; and better understanding of campus faculty organizations and divisions. Obviously, these are important topics for professional success, but timing is everything, and these were topics that the Biology Assistant Professors felt could wait until they were more settled in their positions.

At the first meeting, all participants signed confidentiality waivers, and we discussed what that meant. We also had critical introductions with the cohort discussing their concerns and the mentors discussing their thoughts on new hires (collectively, not as individuals). It was a good ice breaker to document that this was a "safe space" for all. The launch community members gained a sense of not being alone as many realized they all had similar concerns. One positive aspect of the community was that the senior faculty frequently shared different opinions on important topics. Launch community participants stated that they appreciated hearing multiple points of view to help them achieve the best possible outcomes.

Results

At the end of the semester, a survey was electronically shared with the launch community to better understand their experience. Collective results and quotes are presented here.

Topic	Pre-session (0 – 100%) Average Understanding	Post-session (0 – 100%) Average Understanding	Average Increase	Average Percent Change
Juggling expectations	68	88	20	+29%
CPEs	30	90	60	+200%
Tenure & Promotion	61	87	26	+43%
When to say yes/no	68	88	20	+29%
AESPs/Annual Reporting in Biology	59	91	32	+78%

<u>**Open-ended survey questions and responses**</u>
Overall, did this community deliver on what it promised?
All replied yes, with an additional comment of, "Yes, this is probably the most helpful group I've participated in so far at UCF."

Do you feel more comfortable as a faculty member in the Biology Department because of this community?
All replied yes with, "Yes, made me feel more comfortable approaching senior faculty members with questions".

Do you feel more comfortable at UCF because of this community?
All replied yes, with, "Yes, this group gave me confidence and assurance that I'm on the right track."

What additional topics would you like to see included in future new faculty launch communities?
The list included: 1) How to run a lab and lab management strategies; 2) How to motivate students; 3) Navigating College and University Grants Offices—especially how to advocate for yourself when things go wrong; 4) How best to recruit students; 5) Hiring processes for technicians, students, postdocs.

Should participation in launch communities be required for new faculty?
This cohort felt that all new faculty should partake in mentoring communities, but which community and the timing of when they participate should be up to the faculty member. Many additionally commented that hearing about topics like CPEs at New Faculty Orientation was more stressful than helpful. They repeated that information is most helpful when they received it when they needed it.

We met 5 times during the semester for 1.5 hours each time. In terms of time commitment, would you suggest increasing, decreasing, or keeping this the same?
One person suggested adding 2 more sessions, while the remaining 4 wrote that 5 was "just right".

Final Thoughts
We created a highly engaged community with a good balance of faculty, and strategically included only senior/mid-career faculty who were already passionate about mentoring. We discussed with the cohort at the final meeting if they thought that a community like this would work at the college level or by combining a few departments, and this cohort stated that they really wanted their questions answered by their departmental colleagues and would rather not have to spend a chunk of time listening to, "And this is how we do things in x department." They also worried that getting to know new departmental colleagues would also be diluted if multiple departments were

represented. This response might have been different if the community was set up initially at the college level, as our group of faculty might not yet be aware of what and how they could learn from faculty in other departments. I would venture to say that our process, experience, and scope were very successful and should be repeated across campus. It was one of the most impactful mentoring communities in which I participated, as we really did engage faculty and provide critical information **WHEN** the cohort members needed it.

Getting Back to "Normal": Increasing Policy Acceptance in Students Post-Remote
Amanda Main

Dr. Amanda M. Main is Lecturer of Management in the College of Business Administration and a UCF doctoral alum in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. She teaches 500–700 undergraduate students in the capstone Strategic Management course and instructs in leadership and negotiation for the Professional and Executive MBA programs. Her research focuses on workplace mistreatment with an expansion into broader occupational health.

For the past year and a half, students and faculty have met through their computer screens from a variety of locations: living rooms, back yards, cars, and even vacations. Everywhere but the classroom. And while there were certainly drawbacks to the virtual world we found ourselves thrust into, there were also undeniable benefits. The convenience factor probably comes to mind: we are all familiar with seeing students wearing pajamas to Zoom, followed closely by the frequent guest appearances of pets and babies across shared screens. But students also developed new skills in terms of working in a virtual environment and learning new software and new ways of conducting business, and these skills will benefit them throughout their careers. However, there were other, less visible changes in the college environment, and those came in the form of relaxed policies. Many articles, workshops, meetings, and conferences shifted the focus of faculty effort from ways to enhance rigor to ways to accommodate student needs through increased flexibility. Of course, these were—yes, I'm going to say it—unprecedented times; and these changes were necessary to keep the system running. But as with any large population of humans, the outliers existed in the form of students who found the loopholes and pushed the boundaries, and we relaxed standards further to remain consistent with institutional policies. And the "new normal" has transformed into a new "norm."

Now we find ourselves transitioning to more in-person operations, and many at all levels of the university are excited to be back on campus, to reunite with peers, classmates, colleagues, and friends, and to have the full college experience available once again. We see the Student Union is buzzing with activity, the Rec and Wellness Center events are filling to capacity, and the Spin scooters are, well… scooting all about campus. But with a return to normal operations comes an attempt to return to standard operating procedures regarding policies and rigor, and many students were not prepared for that. Faculty across the university are experiencing a striking uptick in student demands for leniency and exceptions, and faculty are caught between wanting to help students in actual need and trying to provide high quality education and real-world preparation.

So how can we ease our students back into the mindset of hard work, determination, and grit being the markers of success? It has been a challenge for as long as institutions of learning have existed to encourage students to adopt the value of a rigorous, difficult, and stringent curriculum, and that challenge has become even more critical now. I believe that it is possible to move that needle, but it must be done deliberately, and in stages.

In organizational psychology, we know that when enacting organizational change, the first step is to unfreeze people from their current mindsets. One effective method is to demonstrate to people that the pain of remaining the same is worse than the pain of changing, or, more positively stated, that the benefits of change far outweigh the benefits of stasis.

For many, the biggest loss from the transition to remote teaching and learning was social connection and community. Zoom fatigue is real, and many students and faculty have complained of generalized technology burnout. But recently we have seen, at least in students' extra-curricular activities, a deep yearning for straightforward, in-person connections with others. Also, we know that the experience of "relatedness" is one of the primary needs for intrinsic motivation. I find it worthwhile to explicitly address this issue in class, to take time with students to create an intentional learning community. I ask them: what do you want this space to look like? What do you desire from sharing this space and time with the people in this room with you? I believe it important to design opportunities for students to recognize and support each another so that they experience a sense of the community on a regular basis.

So, what might happen if we turned off the slide show occasionally and, instead, shared the lessons as narratives, person-to-person? Would it be beneficial to have explicit discussions with students about which elements of digital learning they want to retain and what have they realized that they missed from traditional classroom settings. By allowing them to generate the benefits for themselves of participating in a face-to-face learning community, they might experience some productive cognitive dissonance between their memory of remote learning on a comfy couch wearing fuzzy slippers and their experience of relating to others in a significant way.

The transition from relaxed policies to a greater focus on rigor will depend on what students are actually doing in the learning environment. They need help to unfreeze their remote-learning selves and to see the benefits of moving toward a new way of doing things, or in this case, moving back to an established way of doing things. An easy first step could be, instead of relying on pre-articulated course policies followed by frequent replies to student questions with, "It's in the syllabus," we take some time to actually have a conversation about policies and procedures and why they are important. What may be obvious to us as being in a student's best interest may not be readily obvious to them. To take this idea to a professional level, let's look to Gary Yukl's work on influence and persuasion in the workplace and try out the tactic of consultation, where the manager requests suggestions to improve a plan in order to gain buy-in. I suggest asking students to help generate class policies and the rationale for each. This reinforces the learning community, allows them to feel autonomy over their experience while considering consider the policies from all angles. Plus, it becomes very difficult for them to push back against policies they helped create.

There is no silver bullet solution to getting back to business as usual. But we are Knights, and we will find ways, learn as we go, stumble, and improve. At the end of this process, we will have grown as a university, as a community, and as a society from the lessons we learn. Together.

Transfer, First-Generation, and Underrepresented Students: Their Challenges and Creative Ways to Support Them

Shahram Ghiasinejad

Shahram Ghiasinejad is Associate Lecturer in the Psychology Department. He holds a B.A. in Computer Science from the University of Texas at Austin, and an M.S. and a Ph.D. in Cognition and Neuroscience from the University of Texas at Dallas. His research interests are broadly concerned with understanding human language comprehension through a combination of experimental and computational modeling approaches.

I teach at the Sanford/Lake Mary regional campus, where most of my students are transfer, first-generation, and underrepresented students from the community colleges in the area. After many years of interacting with them, I have identified the following general areas of concern:

My students are not adequately prepared for the UCF academic demands.

They lack the knowledge and family resources needed to support their success at UCF.

They face financial hardship, family, and other responsibilities outside the classroom.

Five years ago, I developed and implemented a plan to address these challenges. At the core of my approach was the idea of addressing not only the academic needs in the classroom, but also the various challenges that my students face outside the classroom before, during, and after taking a class with me.

I have outlined below the steps I took to address each of these areas of concern.

Inadequate preparedness of transfer students for academic demands at UCF. I begin the semester by reviewing the prerequisite materials for the course. I encourage students to participate in various discussions to assess their existing knowledge. I use that information to prepare my lectures in ways that are more accessible. I have developed a rich and free collection of resources aimed at helping transfer students.

Lack of knowledge and family resources needed to support activities outside the classroom. I allocate time on the first day of class to discuss topics related to the theory of knowledge and the role of education in their lives, a theme that I carry throughout the course. I incorporate most of the psychology club activities into class time, including guest speakers, career advice, and graduate school options and application processes. I assign individual research projects on topics dealing with their daily challenges. This allows me to learn about their struggles. I encourage them to continue their research by enrolling in independent research with me.

Financial challenges and family responsibilities. I reduce the cost of course materials by allowing older editions of textbooks and developing my own supplemental resources and content for the lab components of my courses. I worked closely with our library liaison to develop research guides that are freely available to students. I offer a mixed-mode version of my classes to accommodate students with busy work/family schedules. I provide more flexibility on course policies and deadlines to increase the likelihood that students can successfully fulfill the course requirements.

To implement these steps more effectively, I reached out to several offices at UCF for advice and support. Below, I have provided the links to the offices that I found helpful in supporting my initiatives. These sites include the list of resources and workshops that they offer. Collectively, these offices provided me various tools and resources that I could use to modify my activities to increase student engagement.

[Office of Transfer and Transition Services](). Their mission is to ensure transfer students transition to UCF successfully. They advised me on the many challenges that transfer students face and ways to support them through the transition process.

[Office of Diversity and Inclusion](). I attended many workshops and talks on promoting diversity and inclusion in our classrooms and more broadly at the university level.

[Multicultural Academic and Support Services](). I participated and volunteered as a faculty advisor for the [First Generation Program](). This office also offers a [Multicultural Transfer Program]() that addresses the additional challenges that multicultural transfer students face upon their transfer to UCF.

[Office of Undergraduate Research](). They advised me on the specific ways to encourage transfer students and underrepresented students to engage in research.

Monitoring Advising Analytics to Promote Success (MAAPS). I joined MAAPS as a faculty advisor and mentor. This program was a four-year multi-institutional project developed to work with first-time, low-income, and first-generation students.

I also reached out to outside organizations (see below) to learn about the latest research on the topic and the evidence-based strategies available. Through networking with faculty and administrators from other institutions, I learned about their experiences and best practices in providing support for under-represented students.

- [Council on Undergraduate Research](#)
- [Students Affairs Administrators in Higher Education](#)
- [CASCO Conference - Collaborative for Access and Successful College Outcomes](#)
- [National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students](#)

To illustrate the effectiveness of my approach, I have listed below the activities and the outcomes attributed to those activities achieved by transfer, underrepresented, and first-generation students over the last two years.

Psychology club activities, developing library and research resources, offering research and TA opportunities, and offering student-centered research projects:
- Five Honors-in-the-major theses.
- Three co-authored presentations with students at the Southwest Psychological Association.
- Five student presentations at the Showcase of Undergraduate Research Excellence.
- Two Honors-in-the-major Scholarship Grants.
- One Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) Grant.
- One Student Award at the Student Scholar Symposium.

Addressing the individual needs of my students:
- Increase in the average enrollment in my face-to-face classes from 20 to 40, attendance from 25% to 50%, participation and engagements from 10% to 50%.
- Noticeable improvement in the quality of students' projects.
- Numerous unsolicited letters and emails from my former students sharing positive feedback about their experiences in my classes.

Developing and providing most of the supplemental resources used for my course at no cost:
- No more concerns regarding the cost of the material. All my students now have equal and timely access to all the course materials and supplemental resources.
- Noticeable improvement in the performance and the quality of work among students who face financial difficulties.

The increased student engagement is encouraging to me, especially because most of the gains have been among the transfer and underrepresented students. Witnessing my students engage more fully academically has motivated me to continue to explore creative ways to make a more meaningful impact on their lives. In light of the recent tensions surrounding social inequality, it is crucial that we explore new innovative ways to support our transfer, first-generation, and underrepresented students and to enhance their educational experiences at UCF.

Up&Up: How to Stay Positive During "COVID-classes" and Beyond
Sandra Sousa

Sandra Sousa is Associate Professor in the Modern Languages and Literatures Department, where she teaches Portuguese language, Lusophone and Latin American Studies. Her research interests include colonialism and post-colonialism; Portuguese colonial literature; race relations in Mozambique; war, dictatorship and violence in contemporary Portuguese and Luso-African literature; and feminine writing in Portuguese, Brazilian and African literature.

Music is a powerful tool in many realms of life. It can definitely empower people and be a source of inspiration. In many phases of my life, I have turned to music to help me face and overcome obstacles. The first part of the title of this short piece is borrowed from one of those songs that I began, almost obsessively, to listen to when we got hit by this devastating pandemic. It inspired me to keep myself upbeat and to think about what I could do to keep my students in the same wave. The last sentence of the song reinforced and gave a new meaning to a motto that has been guiding me throughout life: "Don't ever give up!" I had never given up, and it was not now that I was going to, despite the horror movie that had take over everyone's life, leaving no one untouched.

As I was beginning to plan for Spring 2021, and besides the fact that my students and I had survived already one full semester sitting in front of our computers doing our best to deal with dramatic changes in our ways of learning and teaching, I knew that I needed to come up with something new and refreshing. One can just keep their spirits up for so long in a situation that seems to have no end, despite the new hope given by the massive effort of vaccination. It was then that a phrase kept insistently showing up in my mind, "Up&Up," meaning Positivity! "What we need is to keep positive," I thought. "If we can keep positive and look at our lives in different and more meaningful ways, we can do this and maybe gain something from it." "Different and meaningful ways" came to me as taking a weekly moment to think about not only something positive in our daily routines, but also to celebrate our small (actually that should read "big," if we want to achieve fulfill-

ment) achievements. It was then that I decided to incorporate in my classes a weekly discussion on Webcourses that I called "Time to celebrate yourselves & be positive!" This would be a weekly discussion where I gave students directions to stop a few minutes every week and think about something positive that had happened during their week and to mention one achievement. I gave them the following directions:

We are living hard times and many times we can get down and start believing that we do not do anything good in life or that we do not accomplish anything at all, which is usually not true.

So often, in life, we downplay our accomplishments because we do not want to be irritating, sound braggy, or take too much credit for making big, exciting things happen. But in doing so, we are behaving like real bummers. "Energy vampire" is a phrase that comes to mind.

> The truth is that people enjoy hearing good news. People are always looking for a reason to celebrate. Your friends, your colleagues, your future employer, new people that you meet—they would all love to hear something excellent and inspiring, like I do!

> So, do not hold back. Deliver the good news. If you are proud, then say so!

> This space was created for you to stop for a few minutes every Friday and share your accomplishments of the week. They do not need to be many or big (it can be something like, "I finally remembered to water my plants"), but it is important to remember that every positive thing in our lives and in the lives of others should be celebrated.

> Celebrate yourselves and be inspired by others! Be positive!

As always, I was unsure about what would come out of this. I was afraid of students' reactions, especially since I made the assignment mandatory. I was already imagining some type of strike, or complaints, people dropping out because they thought I was being silly or asking too much. I was surprised to read right in the first week a "Thank you for creating this space to celebrate ourselves!" and see all the exciting posts. Students were actually catching the positivity wave and celebrating not only themselves, but each other. As weeks went by I noticed them opening up and sharing also their struggles and how they were overcoming them; they shared pictures of some of their activities and piano music pieces that they were practicing; they shared stories of their personal lives and good deeds towards people; the postings were going from the most mundane things like "I am happy that I passed a quiz" to inner thoughts and self-reflection such as "This reminded me

of my friend who once told me, 'when you're feeling down, do something good for someone else.' This goes to say when we're feeling down it's usually because we're hyper focused on ourselves and our own problems, but when we shift our focus from us to other people we can regain hope by helping others." During fifteen weeks of "Time to celebrate yourselves and be positive! 1, 2, 3, 4…", I went on Webcourses every single day to check their postings, since the assignment was opened for a week and some would post right on Monday, and comment on every single posting. By week 13, I was amazed to read, "Today I celebrate you guys. I love coming to this discussion and read what you guys are up to! I'm going to miss this."

At the of the semester, I did a survey where I asked the students if this assignment helped them in any way going through the semester, feeling more connected with their colleagues, and anything that they would like to express, including if I should keep using it. I must admit that as much as I enjoyed it, I was secretly hoping that they would say that I did not need to bother with it, since it was quite time consuming for me. Here is just a small sample of the positive comments:

> I think, more than the act of sharing, taking a moment each week to think about what I could post was a nice reminder of the good things that happened or that I accomplished over the week.

> Not only did I feel motivated to share about my life but even more so, to read about my classmates' experiences. It was great to see what everyone had going on. What accomplishments were being achieved? What we found appreciation in? It was a unifying experience. This weekly conversation was inclusive and very positive and rewarding.

> This assignment was my happy place during this semester. I feel that it not only helped to go through the semester but also helped me feel connected with my colleagues. Every chance I had during my day, I would log in to canvas on my phone and check this discussion just because it brought positive vibes to my day.

> I felt a like a cheerleader on the sidelines and their positive moments made me feel good too! I feel adding that helped us get a sense of unity as a class. An online family class. Another thing this discussion pointed out to me was how easy it is to overlook the good things that happen to us. All the little blessings that we don't notice or take for granted because we get caught up in the day to day craziness. There is a lot of negativity and stress in the world today. We need to focus on the good things that happen to us and to others! In celebrating others successes and blessings we not only lift them up but we lift ourselves as well.

As I reflect now on this special and amazing semester, I realized that while I thought I was doing something for my students, I was the one who end up gaining the most out of it and all the time spent on it was more than worth it, more than words can describe it!

Incorporation of Howard Gardner's Linguistic, Visual-Spatial, Interpersonal, and Intrapersonal Intelligences into First-Year Spanish-language Courses
Esmeralda Duarte and Valerie Mann-Grosso

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The first year of introductory Spanish at UCF consists of SPN 1120 and SPN 1121, Elementary Spanish Language and Civilization I and II respectively. These two courses are crucial in our department because their successful completion influences students' motivation to further their Spanish-language studies. Our lower-division Spanish team has worked on different strategies to create a curriculum that engages students and incorporates their diverse learning styles. One of these efforts translated into the study of Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences. Gardner (2006, p. 6) defines intelligence as a "computational capacity—a capacity to process a certain kind of information—that originates in individual human biology and psychology". Gardner proposes that there are multiple intelligences that educators should consider in their design of assignments and assessments. These are logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, linguistic, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, and existential intelligences. According to Gardner, the education system has focused on the logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligences. This limited approach excludes students who are strong in other intelligences. Based upon these precepts, we have designed a curriculum that includes not only linguistic, but also visual-spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences to optimize Spanish-language acquisition.

Students with **linguistic intelligence** possess the ability to grasp, process, communicate, and use language effectively in oral and written form (Gardner, 2011). Students in our program use their linguistic intelligence in a variety of reading, writing, speaking, and listening assignments that facilitate Spanish-language acquisition. However, we have enhanced these activities with components that support other intelligences as well. One of these is **visual-spatial intelligence**, the ability to "perceive the visual world accurately, to perform transformations and modifications to it, and to re-create aspects of one's visual experience" (Gardner, 2011, p.182). For this component, we have incorporated the use of multimedia to facilitate associations of visual representations with spoken Spanish. One of the assignments that support visual-spatial intelligence consists of an asynchronous video project in which students speak in one hundred percent Spanish. The topic, in SPN 1120, is their favorite person and, in SPN 1121, is a special trip they took. In this constructivist dynamic, students select pictures about themselves and compile them in sequential order using Wevideo. As they narrate their stories, they associate personal images with their spoken Spanish—enhancing their language acquisition.

Students are then required to listen and respond to their classmates' videos. This, and six other assignments in our curriculum, give students the opportunity to interact and develop their **interpersonal intelligence**, which according to Gardner (2011), reflects an ability to communicate well, to understand social cues and relationships with people, and to engage in interpersonal relationships with ease. Since online classes do not meet in person and mixed-mode courses have a reduced meeting time, our courses have focused on transferring interpersonal interactions to an online setting. Using Flipgrid and Canvas discussion boards, these assignments intentionally simulate social media interactions that truly interest today's students. They share pictures and video recordings to communicate with their classmates in the same way they do with friends in their real lives. These in-Spanish-language interactions meet the communicative objectives of our program while creating a pleasant learning environment for all students.

In addition, one important aspect of our curriculum is that it provides opportunities for students to make meaningful connections with course content. According to Gardner**, intrapersonal intelligence** (2011) is the ability to work alone, to

be introspective, reflective, and in tune with oneself. All assignment topics require students to reflect about their life and goals, interests, and meaningful past experiences. As students practice Spanish, they engage in a process of constant self-reflection. In an open-ended question requiring students to reflect upon their learning, they reported positive perceptions. Below are some student feedback examples:

Visual-Spatial:

- Working on this project helped me pronounce words better, and **it helped me remember more Spanish words and phrases because I was pairing them with my own pictures**.
- I have a very photographic memory and **associating an image to the words helped me to remember the meaning of the words.**

Interpersonal:

- I really enjoyed communicating with my classmates through videos, and **it has allowed me to get to know some of my classmates on a personal level.**
- This assignment, **especially responding to classmates, has allowed me to be able to understand Spanish more when I hear it.**

Intrapersonal:

- I enjoyed this assignment because **it helped me practice fluently speak Spanish in a way that is relevant to me. It is fun to talk about things you are interested in** and very rewarding to be able to do so in another language!
- I had such a great time creating this**, it really made me get to know the person that I cared about.**
- This project helped me improve my knowledge about topics like adjectives and conjugating verbs in Spanish, for example. In addition, **I learned a lot about my dad as well.**

Given the positive feedback received from students, our objective is to continue incorporating other intelligences outlined by Gardner, specifically musical and logical-mathematical, into our program. We believe that a curriculum blending technology, communicative approach methodologies, and multiple intelligences is essential to meet the diverse educational needs of language students.

References

Gardner, H. (2006). *Multiple Intelligences, New Horizons.* Basic Books.

Gardner, H. (2011). *Frames of Mind.* Basic Books.

"It really allows you to understand the mistakes you made and solve them for future tests:" Metacognition Exam Analysis Exercise
Ann Gleig

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One of the challenges I faced when joining UCF in 2012 was adapting my course assignments to best fit the class sizes. I had previously taught at Millsaps College, a liberal arts school in Mississippi, which has a student-faculty ratio of 9:1 and an average class size of 14. With such small class sizes, I had the privilege of prioritizing different forms of writing assignments, often scaffolding these to build up to the traditional research paper. At UCF, however, I encountered a very different institutional context: a student-faculty ratio of 30:1 and with only 26% of classes having fewer than 20 students and some classes having up to 200–300 students. My own course load is 3/3 with class sizes typically between 35–75. With these student numbers, I, like many of my colleagues, have found it necessary to adopt a somewhat contentious assignment: the multi-choice exam.

The limits of multi-choice exams are well-documented. Numerous studies have problematized multi-choice exams on the grounds that they rely on sterile and rote forms of learning and do not assess student performance adequately. In order to mitigate some of these limits, I have attempted to infuse the multi-choice assignment with the more inspiring pedagogies of student-centered learning and metacognition. First, I focused on making multi-choice exams a more interactive, student-centered process by designing an exam preparation exercise called "You're the Professor," in which students write and respond to exam questions in small groups.[1] After noticing students were making common and reoccurring mistakes across their exams, I turned my attention to adopting metacognition strategies to improve exam performance. I developed a post-exam exercise, "Metacognition Exam Analysis," which I first employed in several courses as an extra credit option. After receiving positive feedback from students, I decided to adopt it as a required course assignment in my Spring 2021 course REL 2300 World Religions, which had 75 stu-

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[1] Ann Gleig, "You're the Professor: Infusing Multi-Choice Exams with Authentic Assessment," *Faculty Focus* (August 2016).

dents. The course is structured around four modules with each module having one exam, one exam preparation exercise, and one post-exam analysis exercise.

Applying Metacognition to Exam Analysis
I open the assignment with a short and clear description of what metacognition is and why it is so helpful for student learning. I adopted this material from my colleague Dr. Jeanine Viau's Obojobo modules on Learning to Read Deliberately. She drew directly from OER material published by Vanderbilt University's Center for Teaching.

As Geoff Colvin points out, continuous self-evaluation is part of deliberate practice and key to the learning process. Am I dedicating focused time and effort? Do I have a clear process? Do I keep going when the work is challenging? What areas still need improvement? Other teaching and learning experts refer to this practice of self-evaluation as metacognition. Nancy Chick defines metacognition as "processes used to plan, monitor, and assess one's understanding and performance" (2020). Take a couple of minutes to watch the video below created by designer and learning expert John Spencer about the metacognition cycle, "What is metacognition? (Exploring the Metacognition Cycle)" located at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZrUWvfU6VU

Metacognitive learners gain a level of awareness ***above the subject matter***, meaning they also think about the tasks and contexts of different learning situations and themselves as learners in these different contexts. For example, students who think above the subject matter aren't just thinking about the specific vocabulary they are trying to learn for their anthropology midterm. They are thinking about and applying effective strategies for memorization that they use across academic disciplines and in other areas of their lives. As Zohar and David explain, there must be a "*conscious* meta-strategic level of [higher order thinking]" (2009, 179).

Metacognitive practices help students become aware of their strengths and weaknesses as learners, writers, readers, test-takers, group members, etc. A key element is recognizing the limit of one's knowledge or ability and then figuring out how to expand that knowledge or extend the ability. Those who know their strengths and weaknesses in these areas will be more likely to "actively monitor their learning strategies and resources and assess their readiness for particular tasks and performances" (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 67). [2]

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2   Terms of use: "Thinking about One's Thinking" licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0. It is attributed to Nancy Chick, Center for Teaching, Vanderbilt University, and the original version can be found here.

Having provided background context and rationale, I then move into the specific assignment instructions:

One of the main assignments in this course is a **metacognition exam analysis**. This will involve a self-evaluation of both **your exam preparation (**what strategies did you use to study for the exam, and which were actually helpful?**) and your exam performance** (why did you make the choices you did, and how you can improve on your exam performance going forward?).

Exam Analysis Instructions:
1.   Identify five questions you got wrong
2.   Write the question out in full
3.   Explain why you answered the way you did. What made you think this was the correct answer?
4.   Explain why the correct answer is correct. Reference the Powerpoint (give slide number) or reading (give the title and page number) where the correct information is located.

After you have completed the above:
5.   Reflect on how you studied for this exam in general: can you identify one strategy that was successful and one that could be improved?

Guidelines: For each question, it must be clear to me that you understand **both where you went wrong and what the correct answer was (and why).**

What if I didn't get 5 questions wrong?

If you didn't get any or up to 5 questions wrong, do the same exercise with questions that you hesitated on. Explain why you chose the (correct) answer you did and how you found the information. The important part is that you are showing me that you have reflected on your exam process: why you chose the answer you did and why that was the correct choice.

See the formatting example below before you write up the exercise. Please follow the below format so your assignment is clear.

Metacognition Exam Analysis Impact
Given that this was the first course that I have adopted this exercise as a required rather than optional assignment, I would need to gather much more data across a variety of classes to draw definitive conclusions around the success of it in terms of improving exam scores. The initial results, however, were positive. On a quantitative level, I compared Module Exam Two and Module Exam Three because they were the same in terms of the amount of multi-choice questions (60) and the time of exam (95 minutes). I was heartened to see a significant

increase of over 10% for both the class average and the lowest score:

Module Exam Two:
Average 70%   Highest score 100%   Lowest score: 30%

Module Exam Three:
Average 82%   Highest score 97%   Lowest score: 43%

To gather quantitate feedback, at the end of the course, I offered an extra credit assignment "Metacognition Exam Reflection," which asked students to reflect frankly on the impact of the metacognition assignments over the course of the semester. First, I was impressed by student engagement with the extra credit assignment. 27 students completed the assignment, which was nearly double the amount of engagement of my other extra credit assignment, which only 16 students completed. Second, I was impressed by the quality of responses with students showing a real engagement with the questions asked. Students were very positive on the impact of the exercise on both their exam performance and study performance. They commented that they were able to identify and correct common mistakes such as not reading the exam question properly and making careless mistakes because of rushing through questions too quickly. Many students commented that the exercise had raised their awareness of limits in their study habits and that it had positively impacted their study strategies. 26/27 students recommended that I adopt the exercise in my other classes, and a large majority of students said they planned to utilize the exercise as a learning strategy in their other classes. Only one of the 27 students felt that it was not helpful as an assignment.

As with the quantitative results, these comments must be treated cautiously. As the reflections were not anonymous, students might, for instance, have felt pressure to report positively. Nonetheless, taken together, the grade increase and reports encouraged me enough to adopt the exercise for two other online classes this fall. The only change I plan to make is not to require the exercise after the final exam as I think the motivation for improving is diminished significantly and makes the exercise feel more like "busy" rather than "helpful" work.

Submissions

The *Faculty Focus* is a publication for all instructors at the University of Central Florida. This includes full-time and part-time faculty and teaching assistants at all UCF campuses. Its purpose is to provide an exchange of ideas on teaching and learning for the university's community of teachers and scholars. It is envisioned that this publication will inspire more dialogue among faculty whether in hallway discussions, departmental meetings, or in written articles. This represents an opportunity for faculty members to reach their peers throughout the growing UCF community. The *Faculty Focus* invites you to contribute your ideas on teaching and learning in a short essay. See the guidelines for submission online at https://fctl.ucf.edu/teaching-resources/faculty-focus/. Please send your submissions to fctl@ucf.edu.

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