Faculty Focus

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Role-Playing, Simulations, and Game Design Techniques to Increase Student Engagement and Motivation

Peter Telep

Peter Telep is Associate Instructor of English and was a Faculty Center Fellow during the 2016–17 academic year. His project focused on how game design techniques can create deeper levels of engagement and motivation in undergraduate courses.

In this special section of the *Faculty Focus*, we wanted to share some of the game design techniques we're using at conferences and in our courses to increase engagement and motivation. We hope that after reading this collection of articles, you'll be inspired to experiment with some of these techniques in your own classes.

But first a little context.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education as we know it is undergoing major shifts in pedagogy and curricular design. The one-size-fits-all model featuring a sage lecturing on the stage has already been replaced by fully online, mixed-mode, and flipped courses where students work on projects rather than sleeping through your brilliant slide presentations.

As committed instructors, we're always seeking ways to bridge the gap between our students and the material we want them to master. Alas, it's not easy.

In his book *Minds on Fire: How Role Immersion Games Transform College*, author Mark C. Carnes cites a UCLA study that reports roughly forty percent of freshmen are deeply disengaged from the academic life of their institution, frequently skipping class and rarely studying.

Approximately a third of students, according to some measures, demonstrate virtually no improvement in writing or reasoning or critical thinking skills while in college.

Think about that. Is it possible that our graduates have gained so little from their experience? And if asked, what courses or professors would they even remember?

STUDENTS AS PLAYERS

Students who come to class expecting a boring lecture are already disengaged before you've even started. So how do we win them back? We can begin by creating a sense of play in our classes. Most of us are familiar with the puzzles and games our own teachers used, and perhaps we found those moments the most enjoyable because when you're playing a game, you don't believe or realize that you're learning; you're just having fun. Moreover, if you're competitive in any way, then your level of engagement might deepen as you rush to finish the puzzle first or provide the final *Jeopardy* answer for your team. Playing the game seems different, less formal, less… boring.

Enter our contemporary students who've grown up playing video games. Many are more tech savvy than we are and have spent countless hours leveling their way through their favorite fantasy worlds. They play because they want to relax, explore, fantasize, interact, socialize, and brag to their friends about their achievements. Their gameplay is a deeply rich, memorable, and emotional experience. In fact, their gameplay is a narrative fully alive in their heads, and if you eavesdrop on them, you'll hear passionate discussions of how they beat a level by using a particular set of characters with special abilities.

So we ask, wouldn't it be exciting if students felt the same way about our classes? But what are we supposed to do? Stoop to their level? This is college, you might say. This is serious business. We're not playing games here (can you blame me for a pun that golden?) Seriously, perhaps we're not stooping… but reaching out. What if your syllabus began with a message: **WELCOME HEROES!**

Imagine the students in your class playing the role of a hero as they embark on a quest for items (knowledge or skills) and uncover Easter eggs (surprising discoveries) that allow them to unlock achievements and earn experience points. Yes, my friend, in your class guilds compete for badges and rise up the leaderboard, earning bragging rights as they prepare to fight the ultimate boss battle that is your final exam.

Does this sound weird, different, possibly fun? Students will be caught off guard by your approach. Remember, they expected the boring lecture course. They didn't realize they were becoming heroes on a fantastical journey through your class. At this point, you might actually have their attention.

What's more, you can achieve effects like this with no technical knowledge. You don't even need an actual game. You can use the structure and terminology from popular role playing games (RPGs) like *World of Warcraft* and others to design your class without revising the core content you want students to learn. Any course can benefit from this increased sense of play, and, at the very least, your students will thank you for acknowledging how they learn in your course. You might even keep a few more awake.

BEWARE THE DARK SIDE

In "The Looming Gamification of Higher Ed," Kentaro Toyama, associate professor in the School of Information at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, argues that game design techniques may rely too heavily on students' extrinsic motivation:

> "People have different expectations of education. Some seek knowledge for its own sake; others want vocational preparation. But whether the goal is a life of the mind, a good job, or some of both, the ability to motivate oneself — even in the absence of game design — is essential. To be a scholar, one needs to appreciate the subject matter for its own sake. But even to thrive in a corporate office, generating self-motivation is critical. There will always be elements of work that are unrewarding, unrecognized, or just plain tedious. Good leaders push through those dry patches without an external motivating framework."

Toyama goes on to argue that some of the world's biggest problems can't be solved with solutions that offer short term rewards. "Whether we flourish will depend not only on whether we have the requisite knowledge — which could very well be learned via games — but also on whether we can motivate ourselves to do the right thing even when the solutions don't offer cognitive candy or a billion experience points."

THE CALL TO ADVENTURE

It's true that game design techniques can focus too much on achievement rewards and that students might forget that their primary purpose is to master the material for understanding. However, if our delivery method does not reach them in the first place, they *will* fall into that one-third of students cited in Carnes's text.

Literature reviews of empirical studies on gamification (like those conducted by Juho Hamari, Jonna Koivisto, and Harri Sarsa presented at the Hawaii International Conference on System Science in 2014) suggest that gamification "provides positive effects; however, the effects are greatly dependent on the context in which the gamification is being implemented, as well as on the users using it."

We can agree that game design techniques will hardly solve all your challenges; however, if your course becomes a bit more fun, there's a great chance that students' engagement and motivation will deepen beyond your wildest dreams (or at least get a little better).

And now, without further ado, I leave you with the rest of our faculty adventurers who will share their achievements and tales of some hit points lost to mishaps along the way. With this lore in your inventory, you, too, might answer the call and depart on the ultimate quest to improve your courses.

Peter Telep, Associate Instructor of English
Faculty Fellow (2016–17)

Hello, My Name Is Sigmund Freud: Using Role Play Discussions to Facilitate Learning

Jessica Waesche

Jessica Waesche is Lecturer in the Department of Psychology. She teaches a mix of undergraduate and graduate courses, largely focused on topics related to Clinical Psychology. She is interested in developing and studying techniques to improve the educational experience, particularly in large online classes.

Like many other faculty members, I am always looking for new ways to increase engagement and facilitate student learning, particularly in the online learning environment. For this reason, I joined a Faculty Center cohort that focused on the text *Minds on Fire* (Carnes, 2014). In his book, Carnes focuses on the Reacting to the Past framework of engaging students in small, face-to-face classes through multi-day role playing "games" that allow students to take on the role of historical figures and work through a specific historical event or time period. Students find these "games" engaging and fun, but they also facilitate a deeper understanding of course material that often results in higher exam grades.

As an instructor of a large section (125 students) of an online undergraduate abnormal psychology class, my goal was to find a way to realistically transfer the role play experience to the online environment. Trying to come up with 125 roles and figure out a way for 125 students to interact with each other online seemed overwhelming. During previous semesters, I had employed the strategy of assigning students to small discussion groups (10–11 students per group) and asking them to discuss questions relevant to the material in each module. In addition to wanting to increase student engagement, a secondary problem that I was facing was that my "traditional" discussion activity felt boring and stale, particularly when grading 100+ student responses that were all very similar. I realized that these small discussion groups provided the perfect opportunity for mini role play activities. Creating 10–11 roles and repeating those roles across separate small discussion groups seemed to be a much more manageable prospect.

With help from my Faculty Center cohort, I worked on developing a new role play based discussion assignment to implement in my next online abnormal psychology class. I also workshopped the assignment at the Winter Faculty Development Conference at FCTL and received valuable feedback. My online abnormal psychology course is divided into seven modules, each spanning a two-week period. Assignments in each module included a multiple choice exam and a small group discussion. During the next semester, I implemented the new role play discussions. Modules 1 and 2 cover foundational information and do not contain any discussion of specific disorders. Therefore, in these two modules, students were asked to take on the role of a famous person from the history of psychology and discuss a topic from that person's perspective. Historical figures for these modules included Hippocrates, Aaron Beck, Sigmund Freud, and B.F. Skinner. The groups discussed topics such as causes of mental illness and the merits of the current DSM-5 classification system. For modules 3 through 6, which cover various disorders, students were assigned to portray either an individual with a mental illness being covered during that module or a therapist from a particular theoretical orientation. Students who were assigned to portray a client with a mental illness had the option to create their own persona or use a provided case example. Students who were assigned to portray a clinician were given a theoretical orientation (i.e. behavioral therapist, family therapist, psychiatrist) and then could create their own persona or take on the role of a specific person from that orientation. In these discussion groups, clients were to discuss their symptoms and seek advice about treatment options, and clinicians were to suggest treatment options and ask additional questions of the clients. In order to allow the students to explore the material more broadly, roles were rotated for each module. During module 7, instead of a discussion group, students were asked to write a reflection paper discussing what they learned from these discussion groups. Specific questions were given for students to address in their papers, including how it felt to take the role of a client and whether or not the assignment helped them to learn the material.

At the end of the spring semester, I was able to compare grades on the module exams for this class with the grades from a previous semester (which had engaged in traditional, non-role play discussions). I found that exam grades were significantly higher for the class that had experienced the role play discussions on four out of the seven module exams. In addition to displaying higher exam grades, it is also important to note that the class that engaged in the role play discussions provided very positive feedback regarding the discussions. Review of the reflection papers submitted during module 7 indicates that the students enjoyed the role play discussions and felt that they helped in learning the course material. One question that students were asked was whether this assignment should be given again in future semesters. A substantial majority of students (over 90%) agreed that the assignment was beneficial and should be repeated in the future. Several students commented that they wished that other instructors would adopt this strategy as well.

Based on my experience and the feedback from students, I have implemented this discussion group activity again this semester. One comment made by past students was that they wished they had been able to portray a client more frequently. Groups were structured with 7 "clinicians" and 3–4 "clients," so most students only had one opportunity to portray a client. This format also resulted in problems when the students who were assigned to be "clients" were less active in the discussion group. To remedy this problem, I have made the groups larger (approximately 12–14 students) and have a more even balance of clinicians and clients. This will allow students to portray clients twice during the semester. For the future, I plan to keep using this activity. While I am pleased to see the increase in exam scores, the next question that I would like to address is whether this activity increases students' empathy and understanding of individuals with mental illness.

Gamifying a Coding Course using Challenge, Choice, and Competition

Joey Fanfarelli

Joey Fanfarelli is Assistant Professor of Digital Media. He primarily teaches in the web design track. His research specializes in the interaction between games and learning, with a dual focus on using games to improve learning and examining games to better understand how they teach players.

Group work is a way for students to expand their abilities, swap ideas, and learn social skills and teamwork by working with their peers. My Media Software Design course teaches students web coding (PHP) twice a week, and asks them to engage in group work during class time once a week. The work is ungraded, and students are strongly encouraged to find a new partner every time they engage in group work. Informal and formal surveys show that the majority of the students enjoy the group work, but challenges exist. For one, students have sometimes mentioned that they felt as though the assignment difficulty was too high, while others have felt that it was too low.

Of course, it's difficult to maintain appropriate challenge with a class of 60+ students, each at a different stage of learning. Additionally, supporting engagement and motivation, two complementary constructs that result in deeper, more enjoyable learning, is a consistent challenge in teaching. Unless students are jumping at the opportunity to learn, more can always be done in this area. As a video games and gamification researcher, I have decided to leverage some lessons learned from gaming to address the variability of difficulty and attempt to improve engagement and motivation in my courses, both in group work and beyond. Specifically, this fall semester, I am gamifying my course by incorporating appropriate challenge through choice, points, leaderboards, and rewards.

While we often only think of gamification as badges, points, etc., games are not successful because of these surface-level features, but moreso because of how they address our psychological needs. For example, appropriate challenge is a key construct in gaming that facilitates motivation. When challenge is too far below player skill level, players become bored. When challenge is too high, players experience anxiety, but when challenge is appropriate to the player skill level, students are more likely to experience a state of flow (Csíkszentmihályi) and develop without the explicit aid of the teacher (see Vygotsky's zones of proximal development). To facilitate this, I leverage another common construct in gaming—choice.

Choice allows a player to feel autonomous, as if she has a role in her fate. Autonomy is one of the main components of intrinsic motivation (as described by self-determination theory). For each group work day, I offer multiple assignments of varying difficulty. Students can freely choose the one they wish to pursue. As these are ungraded, the students are completely free to choose the easiest option if this is what they seek. However, each option is given a specific point value (not grade points). Another common feature of games is the use of rewards, which enable recognition and validation of a player's effort. These frequently take the form of points. That said, points alone are relatively meaningless and unlikely to be effective.

Social status and recognition are major motivating factors in multiplayer games. At the beginning of each class period, a points leaderboard is shown. Each student creates a private alias at the beginning of the semester to protect privacy, but also for fun; students are encouraged to be creative and ridiculous with their aliases. This alias is used for the leaderboard. Only the top students are shown on the leaderboard to provide encouragement and social recognition (motivating them to pursue even greater challenges), while avoiding discouraging those who are not on the leaderboard.

Individual differences research shows that not all people are motivated by social status. To account for this and the fact that not all students are on the leaderboard, I award extra credit to all students who have attained points at the end of the semester in a ratio factoring in the number of points they received. Thus, all students will be rewarded, with the extent dictated by the amount of challenge they pursued throughout the semester.

Points are also awarded for other achievements in the course. For example, I encourage my students to present personal projects in class to motivate classmates to pursue extra practice beyond coursework. Students who do so receive points. Students will also earn bonus points for the following:

- Documented attendance at coding events (clubs, community meetups, competitions, etc.),
- Submitting exceptionally creative projects that demonstrate strong effort and evidence portfolio-quality work,
- Altruism and mentoring, tutoring, or encouraging peers,
- Completing the greatest number of challenging group work assignments by the end of the semester, or
- Other acts of exceptionality.

Ultimately, points will be given to any act that enhances a student's skillset beyond the minimal level of effort to receive a perfect score on an assignment. The goal is to motivate students to challenge themselves beyond the norm.

To evaluate effectiveness of the gamified course, I conduct an assessment at the end of the semester. With an anticipated sample size of 120, n = 60 per group, I will conduct a t-test to evaluate significant differences between grades from the fall semester and grades from the previous fall semester. Extra credit will be subtracted from the grade prior to analysis to avoid confounding the data. Additionally, I will closely monitor group work and take note of how often students choose options that were more difficult than the assignments used in previous semesters to assess if students are challenging themselves more with the new format. This, alone, would be a worthwhile finding; students who are more willing to challenge themselves are more likely to learn.

I hope to report back on my experiences and lessons learned in a future *Faculty Focus* article. In the meantime, I'd love to hear your suggestions or experiences from implementing similar strategies in your courses. Please feel free to reach out to me via e-mail at joey@ucf.edu.

"Setting their Minds on Fire": Role-Play and Interactive Learning

Keri Watson

Keri Watson is Assistant Professor of Art History in the School of Visual Arts & Design. The recipient of three National Endowment for the Arts Big Read grants, an Institute of Museum and Library Services grant, and a Fulbright-Terra Foundation Award in the History of American Art, she teaches courses in modern art and the history of photography and specializes in twentieth-century American art.

Researchers agree that students retain more when active, student-centered learning techniques are employed. When faculty facilitate involvement in activities such as simulations and games, and students work collaboratively through role-play and debate, deeper learning and transfer occurs. As part of my efforts to include more active and student-centered learning opportunities into my courses and to encourage knowledge, skills, and attitudes that support higher-order thinking tasks such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, I added a Reacting to the Past role-playing game to one of my art history courses. During the fall 2015 semester, students who enrolled in ARH 4430: Nineteenth-century Art played the Reacting game "Modernism vs. Traditionalism: Art in Paris, 1888–89." Although some research has been conducted on the use of Reacting games in first year seminars, and I had previously employed the game in smaller classes at Ithaca College, little scholarship has addressed the applicability of this pedagogy to art history courses or its use at large public universities. Here, I reflect on my employment of the game, and how it was modified for use at UCF (see my forthcoming chapter, co-written with Patsy Moskal, in *Reacting to the Past: Research into Best Practices and Student Learning*, edited by C. Edward Watson and Thomas Chase Hagood. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017, for a longer discussion).

Reacting games, such as "Modernism vs. Traditionalism," use play to simulate real-world events, and although they can be entertaining, their main purpose is education. Although not often employed in higher education, games and play are essential to the development of creativity and support bonding, socialization, and community building. Stuart Brown has used brain mapping to illustrate that play activates the frontal cortex and assists in emotional regulation, mindfulness, and contextual memory. Cataloguing the play profiles of thousands of patients, he has determined that play is an active part of the lives of successful people and has shown the tragic consequences of a play-deprived life. As he argues, play is not only a transformative force, but it is necessary to human survival. Following the research on play and game-based learning, Mark C. Carnes began developing reacting games in the late 1990s. Since then they have been implemented by faculty at over 300 colleges and universities in the United States and abroad. Designed to show students how individuals determine events and how historical circumstances emerge from social contexts, reacting games use role-play to situate students in a defined historical moment. In the case of "Modernism vs. Traditionalism: Art in Paris, 1888–89," developed by Gretchen McKay, students become artists, critics, and dealers in late-19th-century Paris.

Game materials include an instructor's manual, pedagogy manual, student game book, and a slide presentation. The original game includes roles for 21 artists, 2 dealers, 5 critics, and 7 buyers. However, to be used in the class of 57 students, the game needed to be altered and expanded so that each student could participate. Additional characters were added depending on availability of historical information and overall balance of role types. The new game, scaled for a larger class enrollment, featured 34 artists, 2 dealers, 6 critics, and 15 buyers.

My class met for an hour and fifteen minutes twice a week. Five weeks were set aside for the game. On the first day of the game, I explained how the game would work and went over the schedule and grading scheme. The students' homework was to read the student game book. The second day I gave a lecture that provided historical context for the game, and I handed out the role sheets. The students' homework was to research their characters, write their introductory speeches, and post them on the discussion board in Webcourses. On day three, the students introduced themselves in character. The fourth day the classroom was transformed into the Salon of 1888 and students, playing members of the French Academy of Painters and Sculptors, led the class. They presented awards and gave speeches on the future of art. Characters, including William-Adolphe Bouguereau, Jean-Louis-Ernest Messoinier, Jules Breton, and Jean-Léon Gérôme, used their speeches to persuade the class on the value of Academic painting. During the next class period the future of art was debated. Students playing artists who supported newer styles of art and condemned the Academy as outdated, such as Claude Monet, Mary Cassatt, Edgar Degas, Vincent Van Gogh, and Paul Gauguin, gave speeches and presented their work. During this class period, it was announced that a seat had opened in the Academy and elections were held to fill the vacant seat. The role sheets for Gustave Moreau, Auguste Renoir, John Singer Sargent, and James Abbott McNeill Whistler instructed these characters to vie for the seat. Speeches were given and members of the Academy voted. After the induction of the new member, the Academy met to decide how to organize the Salon of 1889. The following class period was led by critics and dealers, including André Michel, Joséphin Péladan, Félix Fénéon, Georges Petit, and Paul Durand-Ruel, who gave speeches endorsing artists and expounding on their views of art. The critics awarded "Critic Tickets," which guaranteed sales for those artists who received them. The following class period the buyers, including William Waldorf Astor, Pierre Muston, and Louisine Havemeyer, introduced themselves and shared their collection policies with the audience. The next class period was reserved as a planning day. Students playing members of the Academy had to decide whom to include in the official Salon of 1889; students playing dealers had to solicit artists for their booths at the Exposition Universelle of 1889; and others had to plan whether they would band together for group shows, set up alternate exhibitions, show alone, or boycott the Fair. Students also had to determine how they would exhibit their work, advertise their shows, and lure buyers.

The game culminated with a restaging of the 1889 Exposition Universelle de Paris at the UCF Art Gallery. To help transform the gallery, a model of the Eiffel Tower was erected, Thomas Edison's film of the Fair projected, music by Claude Debussy played, and French pastries served. Faculty, staff, and students were invited to attend by posters hung around campus, through social media advertising, and through the Faculty Center listserv. Students playing Academy members projected the paintings included in their Salon via an LCD projector and large screen. The dealers were set up in alcoves with laptops to show their artists' images. Independent artists showed their work on iPads, tablets, or laptops. The students' presentations of their characters' work and their ability to persuade visitors to buy their art determined the winners of the game. Points were awarded for being elected to the Academy, for critic tickets, and for sales. There were several winners: the artist who sold the most work; the critic who endorsed the artist who sold the most work; the dealer who made the most sales; and the buyer who bought work by the winning artist. These winners received three bonus points. The day following the Fair was reserved for what Carnes terms the "post mortem." During this class period winners were announced and presented with certificates. There was a brief lecture on the actual circumstances of the 1889 Paris World Fair and on the fate of some of the artists. Students were then asked to share their thoughts and reflections on the game.

Students were assessed on the quality and persuasiveness of their speeches, the clarity, accuracy, and elegance of their written products, their performance at the Paris World Fair, and their overall participation in the game. For my class, I made the game worth 30% of the students' final grade. The following elements of the game were assessed: introduction in character (two- to three-minute speech worth 3%); persuasive speech delivered in character (five-minute speech worth 5%); persuasive paper posted to the discussion board (approximately 500–750 words, 5%); participating in the game and demonstrating historical understanding and embodiment of character (participation was demonstrated through in-class discussions, tweets, discussion board participation, and creation of didactic and promotional materials and was worth 7%); and a reflective essay (750–1000 words worth 10%). The reflective essay asked students to answer the following questions: how well did your character meet his/her objectives; what did you do in the game to try and meet these objectives; what research did you do to help you understand your character and the historical time period; what would you do differently if you had the chance to play the game again; was the game an interesting and effective way to learn about 19th-century French art; and how well did this game address the inquiries of your theme?

Student responses to the game were overwhelmingly positive. This was not only indicated in the reflective essays, but in the anonymous course evaluations as well, in which a majority of students referred to the game as their favorite part of the course. In the reflective essays students noted that they enjoyed the game and felt that they learned a lot. Students who played the game were able to recognize and explain the forms, techniques, and processes of 19th-century French art. They analyzed how art stimulated emotions, provoked thoughts, and guided actions. They articulated in written and oral discussion the role of the creative arts in the construction of 19th-c. France, and they discovered how artists transformed the issues of their world into visual art. They used primary and secondary sources to interpret art, and they investigated how different systems of philosophical, literary, religious, and historical thought shaped late 19th-century values. The achievement of these learning outcomes was measured by the students' performance in the game and the average score on the game was 93%, eight percentage points higher than the scores on the exams for earlier parts of the course. Thus, the game was not only more effective than a traditional slide lecture, but it was also more fun. "Modernism vs. Traditionalism" fostered a successful learning environment, one that was active and student-centered, and the game proved to be an effective addition to the art history classroom. Interested in incorporating a reacting game into your own course? Visit <https://reacting.barnard.edu/> for more information and resources.

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Can We Keep on Dancing? Role-Play in Online Courses

Sandra Sousa

Sandra Sousa is Assistant Professor in the Department of Modern Languages & Literatures and the Latin American Studies Program. Her research interests are colonialism and post-colonialism; race relations in Mozambique; war, dictatorship and violence in contemporary Portuguese and African literature; and feminine writing in Portuguese, Brazilian, and African literature.

As I sit at my desk chair to reflect on one more semester at UCF, my thoughts take me further back into the past. They return to Fall 2015 when I initiated what I now think of as a dance: some kind of waltz or tango where, as a new learner, I began awkwardly to try out some new steps, teetering off beat and feeling sorry for squashing my dance partner's feet. But since I was a motivated learner, I kept this dance going, and now I don't step as much on my partner's toes. I keep feeling that rhythm every time I plan a new dance performance; and I can even permit myself the audacity of trying my own new steps. What were the new steps that I now venture to put into practice?

Those who have read my past *Faculty Focus* articles no doubt have an idea of what dance I am referring to; those who didn't probably are thinking that I teach in the Performing Arts building. I am close by, but one parking lot separates us. The actual dance that I am referring to is my still quite new experiences with role-play mini-games in the classroom environment. Since I don't want to repeat here everything that I have already mentioned in past writings about the benefits of role-play (a pedagogy I continue to practice in the present), I am just going to reflect on my new experience (dance): the transference of role-play mini-games from face-to-face classes to an online course.

At the beginning of the semester I was nervous, anxious and fearful. These emotions arose from the fact that it was the first time I was teaching an online course. They were amplified by the further fact that I had decided to attempt something of which I had no idea concerning its workability online: namely, could I adapt in my new online course the same role-play mini games that I had successfully implemented in a face-to-face version of the same course a year before?

I worked closely with the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, in particular with Eric Main, seeking to figure out the logistics of the implementation of the plan. We felt I should give it a try, but we were not totally sure how to create an environment of discussion that could provide students a close feeling of being in the classroom. My strategy ended up as the following: students would write their speeches in character as usual and post them on a discussion board where all of other students could read them. In addition to posting the written speeches they would post a video of themselves reading their speeches. I created a rubric with which I tried to motivate students by offering more points to those who chose to dress up as, or use some prompt associated with, the character that was assigned to them. In order to facilitate discussion, I told the students that they had to reply to at least three other students.

The day of the first game was coming and I was expectantly waiting. Would my "dance" be a complete failure online? Would I have to change a big chunk of my course? Would the students understand what I was looking for? All of these questions and many more ran through my thoughts as I went to bed that Friday night (they had until midnight to finish the assignment). I had to control myself not to go take a peek at Webcourses because I wanted to read and to watch everything in succession, as if I were present in class listening to and watching them. I can't describe my excitement when I woke up the next morning and opened that specific Webcourses page. I was in a state of ecstasy while reading their speeches and watching their videos. For a first time, the results were much more than I expected. I had one of the best mornings of my life, even though it was Saturday and I was working. But it didn't feel like work. Mark Carnes, author of *Minds on Fire*, would probably say here that I was going through an inverted Reacting to the Past experience, since it is usually the students who feel like they are not working… until they realize they are actually working more!

From game to game student performances got better and better, and I could see that those who at first did not dress up were now following the example of more adventurous and less inhibited students. I could see that it was fun for them and certainly for myself. As time went by I started to think about the differences between role-play mini-games in a face-to-face versus an online classroom. Besides the obvious ones, I realized that the dressing up is actually the biggest one. I feel that, since students are at home and don't need to come to class, they are more likely to take the time to pick out and wear a costume. They probably feel more secure and comfortable than if they had to come to the university dressed as a queen and having to go through the embarrassment of having everyone looking at them.

Before sharing a few comments from my students, I would also like to add that, by the end of the semester, their interactions increased by at least 50%. How do I know and how did I measure this fact? Once in a while they were assigned a discussion post where I would ask them to share ideas, thoughts, etc. about the week's topic and to share it with everyone else. Initially, some would do it, others not so much; or they would go there, write something just because it was graded, paying no attention to or even reacting to their colleagues' postings. By the last discussion post, however, they were *talking* to each other. Most people would post more than one or two replies to the others, and the thread kept on growing. They were engaged with the material and with each other. I was amazed!

As usual, students wrote a reflective paper at the end of the role-playing experience. I would like to conclude here with a few of their comments:

"I did enjoy the new way of learning. At first I was like: 'really why do we have to make videos?' but then I got to like it. It's a great way to learn and interact with my classmates. I also like the fact that we had to respond to three speeches."

"It was not traditional, I enjoyed it, to be honest, this is one of my favorite classes at UCF, and other online courses should consider doing this method. […] when it came to an end, I was sad to know it's our last role play."

"The role-playing experience helped me understand more about Africans in Latin American and in the U.S. and the challenges they had to go through. Putting myself in the shoes of those who oppressed and those who were oppressed. I gained a new perspective and I know why African American and Afro Latinos are still outspoken about some of the injustices that they still go through. I think that role playing is a great learning tool that allows us to put ourselves in other people's shoes."

"These games really allowed the students to engage with each other and exchange opinions. When taking an online class, it could be frustrating because you don't have much contact with other students. By doing activities like this, students are able to connect and exchange ideas. I understood the topics much more in depth since I had to do more research than what the book had to offer."

"By far, role-play is the best way to reinforce comprehension in the classroom as it makes students think critically and outside the box. Overall, I had a very positive experience with these assignments and I hope to do them in another class that I will be taking at UCF."

I could include many more comments like these, but my hope is that you join me in this dance. I will certainly keep on making up new steps even if that involves having to plunge my feet into unknown waters once in a while.

Adding Role-Play Elements for Improving Engagement in Large Class Presentations

Anne Sullivan

Anne Sullivan is Assistant Professor of Digital Media in the School of Visual Art and Design. Her research focuses on the intersection of games, craft, and storytelling. Her most recent digital craft game, Loominary, was recently exhibited at the SAAM Arcade event at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Presentations in a large class setting can often go for two to three hours and require the students in the audience to have extended focus. In practice, I found that students had trouble paying attention, and unless attendance was taken at the end, students would often leave during break or after their own presentations. Giving peer review assignments worked to some extent, though the quality of the peer reviews often showed that students still weren't paying close attention—or in some cases even attending—the presentations.

In DIG4630C (Media Business Practices), there are ~150 students working in teams to create hypothetical digital media businesses. For the final, there are ~20 business pitches and information presentations, which takes approximately two hours for all the teams to present.

For the spring 2017 semester, we began to incorporate role-playing opportunities in the assignments in which students were given randomized scenarios of situations that might happen to a real-life business. Scenarios included situations such as receiving an offer from a venture capitalist with less than ideal terms, having to figure out a schedule to balance working a paying job with a pre-funding startup and with life, or having to choose whom to interview from a pile of resumes.

Students were assigned to research the scenarios individually and then work in teams to come up with a solution they would choose to implement along with their justification using the discussion boards on WebCourses. Each scenario came with one or two readings, but the students were invited to do more research on their own.

Following the role-play style of activity, we created a scenario to improve engagement of the students during the final presentations and announced it in class two-to-three weeks before the presentations were given. In the scenario, each student played the role of an angel investor with $5M. Students were allowed to invest in one-to-five of the companies being pitched, with the minimum amount invested being $1M. In return, 5% of the presentation grade was based on how much funding they had received by the investors.

On the day of the final presentations, each student was given an index card to list the teams they wanted to fund and how much funding they would give to each. At the end of the presentations, the students turned in their index cards.

We have only had the opportunity to use this once in class, but the outcomes were even better than expected. The quality of presentations was higher than in previous assignments and classes, with students dressing up in matching outfits and presenting with more energy. The presentations also showed more depth of thinking and were structured in a more engaging way. This observation was supported by the fact that all of the teams ended up receiving some level of funding.

Students stayed through all of the presentations since the cards needed to be turned in at the end, and the cards worked as a way to take attendance for the final. The total amount of funding worked well as a metric for peer review in that the students were more critical of spending their hypothetical money than they were with a more standard rubric. There were also a lot of discussions during breaks and after class as students discussed which teams they were thinking of or had funded.

Overall, the activity was well received by the students, and tabulating the results took less than an hour. It solved a number of issues with engagement and had positive effects that we had not considered. I'm looking forward to finding ways to adapt this exercise for other non-business-related courses.

Faculty Focus: Difficult Simulations

Anastasia Salter

Anastasia Salter is Assistant Professor of Digital Media. She is the author of *Jane Jensen: Gabriel Knight, Adventure Games, Hidden Objects* (Bloomsbury 2017) and *What is Your Quest? From Adventure Games to Interactive Books* (University of Iowa Press 2014), and co-author of *Flash: Building the Interactive Web* (MIT Press 2014) and the forthcoming *Toxic Geek Masculinity in Media* (Palgrave Macmillan 2017). She is a member of the Electronic Literature Organization Board of Directors and the Modern Language Association Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession.

As the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning fellows were involved in planning conversations for the 2016 Winter Conference, the discourse was already charged and debate occasionally intense. The highly contested and ideologically charged election season was at its peak, and political tensions were spilling over on campus and into the classroom. The theme of the conference—difficult conversations—seemed perhaps too appropriate, particularly as we waited to learn the outcome of the election and its potential impact on higher education and our students. It was in this context that I proposed running a simulation as a strategy to encourage frank conversations about the different types of privilege that intersect educational spaces and transform the classroom, which as a space is historically designed to best accommodate bodies that are white, cisgender, able, male, and heterosexual.

Simulations are not without risk to participants: while they use the trappings of games, and encourage playful competition and use apparently silly mechanics, they can also replicate abusive behaviors and power structures in ways that are designed to be uncomfortable. Running a simulation during the height of the emotionally-charged time of debate following the outcome of the 2016 election was an even higher-stakes activity than usual, and ultimately I decided to use a game about fairness and power at a very abstract level. The simulation was adapted from a game designed by Thiagi, an industry simulations leader whose games are often used as part of corporate development and training programs (see: *Simulation Games by Thiagi*, Sivasailam “Thiagi” Thiagarajan, 2004). His original game was a short and simple game about workplace sexual harassment: during the game, some players (the harassers) literally hold all the cards and are given a deck of cards at the start of the game. The goal of these players is to unload their “bad” (negative point) cards on other players. Those players (the victims) must take a card given to them by the harassers, but can protest the card by appealing to a third group of players, judges whose only role is to mediate disputes. The winner of the game is thus the player who successfully collects as many positive point cards as possible—an easy task for the privileged players, who just need to unload the negative cards while keeping hold of the positive cards they started with.

On the surface, a game like this is very low in stakes. Players meet in rooms with their teams and discuss strategy, then enter a shared space to quickly make transactions before regrouping for conversation and changes to the rules. The only physical interactions happen in the passing of playing cards, which are inherently without material value. Using this base structure, I made several changes to expand and play with the power dynamics of the groups, and particularly to feed into the idea that those with privilege often feel under attack. During the debriefing, Keri Watson, the leader of the team with privilege (empowered to initiate transactions, and loaded with cards at the start of the game, in addition to receiving several advantages throughout play) approached me to note that many members of her team didn’t feel like they had privilege: instead, they felt uncomfortable and at a disadvantage. Meanwhile, Peter Telep, the leader of the team in the role of victims, noted that many of his players had given up complaining about the rules and instead were disengaging completely. The judges, on the other hand, were frustrated: often, they weren’t approached at all because players perceived them as potentially biased and unhelpful.

These reactions may seem surprisingly tense if you weren’t a participant in the simulation: viewed objectively from the outside, the exchanges of playing cards in pursuit of points doesn’t seem to warrant emotional engagement. However, the power of simulations is in their ability to take a complex set of systems and interactions (like, say, the power dynamics at work in academic spaces, particularly with regards to marginalized members of the community) and distill them into a form that is abstract yet familiar. Thus, immediate debriefing of a simulation has to focus on sharing—and validating—the emotional reactions to a game, which are always about much more than what actually happened in the brief (~45 minutes) of gameplay. For players who’ve had difficulty reporting abuse or harassment within an institution, or who are used to having their experiences invalidated or ignored, even the abstract evocation of such a game can be all too familiar.

Perhaps the greatest challenge of running this type of simulation at a short conference is the impossibility of following up after the initial emotional reactions to discuss the pragmatic considerations that this type of simulation reveals: for instance, several of the participants on the privileged team discussed feeling under attack, but no one from that team spoke out during the event to suggest a change of rules that would make the game more equitable to all participants. Some players initiated their own small reform: several players, for instance, stopped selecting a card to offer and instead fanned out the deck, letting fate decide who would benefit from the transaction. However, these types of personal changes to gameplay are very different than advocating for systemic change, which can be a daunting task even within the structures of a game where rules changes are invited and far easier to implement than they are within large institutions. Ultimately, these types of simulations are used to encourage individual and collective reflection: for members of the privileged group, why did having the power in the situation feel like a burden? For members of the team that started with no institutional resources, what challenges did that present to initiating change?

Typically games are experienced as places that reproduce cultural norms, with rampant misogyny, racism, and other challenges well-documented within video games (see: Adrienne Shaw, *Gaming at the Edge*, 2015; Bonnie Ruberg and Adrienne Shaw, Queer Game Studies, 2017; Yasmin Kafai, Carrie Heeter, and Jill Denner, *Beyond Barbie & Mortal Kombat*, 2011). However, games can also be a starting point for confronting, analyzing, and understanding these systems and their consequences when scaffolded as part of an educational experience.

Gamifying the Capstone Project at the Florida Interactive Entertainment Academy

Rick Hall

Rick Hall is a 15-year veteran of the gaming industry with experience as a producer, studio head, programmer, and game designer. During his time in games, he has worked on RPGs, adventure games, RTS games, flight sims, fighting games, sports sims, and even a fishing simulation. He has worked on PC, PlayStation, N64, PS2, Sony PSP, Nintendo DS, and online platforms. He started his career at Paragon Software, a studio that eventually became the core development group for Take 2's initial 1994 startup. After leaving Take 2, he joined EA's Origin studio in Austin, Texas, where for 5 years he served as a live producer on Ultima Online, and later as executive producer on Ultima X Odyssey. In 2004, Rick joined EA's Tiburon studio in Orlando, Florida, where he has been a Senior Producer on the Madden Football handheld products.

At UCF's Florida Interactive Entertainment Academy (FIEA), one of our most fundamental principles is a commitment to *application* as both a precursor to, and a reinforcement of, theory. Our primary goal is to ensure that outgoing students are able to enter the industry with minimal ramp-up time. To this end, much of our coursework is aimed at real-world problems, with all of the messy, unpredictable, counter intuitiveness that comes with it. Our premise begins with the understanding that in the industry our graduates will be called upon to tackle complex, varying, constraints-based problems. Their ability to navigate unknown waters is paramount.

In the world of videogame development, incremental improvements to last year's products are often insufficient. It is a fast-paced environment where revolution trumps evolution; where it's not enough to make systems that simply *work*, they have to *feel good*; where real-world constraints like budget, schedule, marketing, and the competitive environment play decisive roles in product development; where objective reaction to critical feedback is an essential skill; and where accurate communication in a multidisciplinary team environment is a matter of survival.

With that in mind, the centerpiece of the program is known as the Capstone Project. As originally crafted, the two-semester project typically consisted of 10–20 person teams, including artists, programmers, and producers. Students would pitch their own, original game ideas, which were then vetted by faculty. Faculty then assigned teams, based on equal talent distribution and estimates of necessary specializations. The annual Capstone Project officially began in January, and went through to August. During this seven-month period, students provided faculty with bi-weekly status updates, and were given feedback and suggestions for methods of improving the project as well as making the process more efficient.

However, there were several issues with this model. All of the students were performing unique tasks every week which made standardizing grades nearly impossible. In the absence of individualized rubrics for each student for each week, it was difficult to justify poor grades; so, over the years, incoming students learned this and actively challenged the grading system. Students sometimes took advantage of the team structure to mask minimal efforts, and once projects were greenlit, effort levels could drop off dramatically until late in the project timeline. Also, during the development time, students tended to focus more on creating their favorite features than on planning and prioritizing with other team members, which resulted in the need to make painful cuts and often led to turmoil and resentment among teammates. It became clear that one of the root causes for these issues was lack of realistic consequences. We were trying to prepare students for industry by emphasizing the vital skills of teamwork, organization, professionalism, communication, and planning, but the students were not experiencing the realistic consequences of poor performance in these areas.

That’s when we decided to change things. We needed to make the process reflect reality more effectively. In the end we decided a “gamification” approach would better simulate an industry experience. Here’s how the process works now. All game ideas are automatically green lit, and teams are totally self-forming. We place no restrictions on team size or composition, nor do we create team hierarchies. Students decide for themselves how many members they need and who the leads will be. It is up to them to recruit the necessary team before Capstone begins. Each team then pitches their prototype to faculty during a “funding round.” Faculty members each have a virtual “budget” and can invest virtual money in as many projects as they like. Any project that winds up with no money after completion of the funding round is eliminated. Once funded, teams must then use those funds to “pay” their team members. Salaries are all identical, at $10 per hour, assuming 15 hours work weeks, and there is sufficient funding to pay all students for approximately six weeks.

Teams can award their members bonuses or overtime pay, or they can “contract” students from other teams to take on extra work. In this way, teams can temporarily obtain the talents of “specialists,” such as illustrators, etc., for whom they wouldn’t have a full-time job. And as long as students first provide their mandatory 15 hours per week to their own team, they are free to “moonlight” for other teams. If a team runs out of funds at any time, their project goes bankrupt, and is cancelled. Every two weeks after the funding round, teams must provide a status update to the faculty member, who has fresh funds to invest, based on current progress. In this way, teams can continually replenish their funds, as long as they continue to show forward progress. Consistent effort, from status update to status update is a necessity. Too many poor showings in a row could deplete a teams” funds, running them out of business.

Teams are allowed to fire their members. If all four leads agree, the student in question is called before a faculty advocate, who puts the student on “probation” for two weeks, explaining the nature of the problem and what steps must be taken to address it. If after two weeks, the four leads still vote to fire the student, the student is removed from the team and is free to pursue another team or work as a freelance contractor. Even team leads can be fired using the same process, with three leads voting to remove the fourth. Students can quit from their team by providing two weeks’ notice. Teams can fine their members if all four leads agree that a given student failed to provide their mandatory 15 hours per week. All disputes are arbitrated by faculty.

At the end of each semester, the amount of money each student “earned” will dictate his or her grade. Note that simply providing the minimum 15 hours per week, and never working overtime, contracts, or receiving a bonus, will only net a student a “C.”

At the end of the capstone process, a third party group of videogame industry friends will assess the “value” of each project. This will then be used to derive a “theoretical sales” figure. This figure is compared against each faculty member’s “investments” over the course of the capstone process. The resultant Return on Investment for each faculty member will dictate the amount of budget they have to work with in the following year.

The purpose of this new system is clear. It requires students to put forth a more consistent effort. It requires them to get along, both as teammates and leads. It places a greater emphasis on planning, prioritization, communication, and organization. It discourages wasted efforts. It forces students to think about the “real world constraints” of project development in addition to the 1’s and 0’s. It makes it much more difficult to “hide under the radar.”

Indeed, even the faculty are encouraged, by virtue of the ROI calculations, to be as objective as possible. Beyond the results noted above, students have expressed an excitement about having more control over their projects and more freedom to experiment. It is this enthusiasm that is, perhaps, the most valuable improvement of all, because, at the most basic level, student engagement is the engine that powers student success.

There’s a Games Research Lab?

Emily K. Johnson

Emily Johnson is a Postdoctoral Research Associate, Coordinator of the Games Research Lab, and Fun(ds) Seeker. She collaborates with faculty and staff from a variety of disciplines to plan, fund, conduct, and publish interdisciplinary games-related research. The lab is a hub for research on all types of games and game-related topics, from motivation and badging studies to virtual reality learning experiences, and everything in between.

The Games Research Lab is a new space, acquired a year ago, that is affiliated with the Games Research Group and designated for games-related research. The lab is located in the Orlando Tech Center (OTC) 500 building in Research Park and is outfitted with several high-performance gaming computers (for programming and playing games), a conference space, an HTC Vive, and, most importantly, yours truly, a postdoc coordinator who helps to plan, fund, conduct, and publish interdisciplinary games-related research.

The Games Research Group was formed a few years ago as an informal support group of sorts. The group—open to anyone who cares to attend—gathers biweekly to present research, set goals, encourage one another in scholarly pursuits, and share snacks. This has proven to be a fertile ground for the generation of ideas as well as research partnerships. As the group became more established, it was able to support a website (gamesresearch.cah.ucf.edu) and a Games Research Lab. Follow us @UCFGames for general updates and meeting times.

So far, my main focus has been to connect with others within the university who are interested in conducting research on games and gamification. As with most (all?) university labs and centers, I am *strongly encouraged* to seek external funding, so a good portion of my acquaintances have been made via cold-call or email with the enticing line, "Do you want to apply for this grant with me?"

As it turns out, connecting your introduction with even a slim possibility for research funding really helps people remember your name, and I have been able to collaborate with some amazing people here on a number of fascinating research projects. Since I report to the dean's office in the College of Arts & Humanities (CAH), I operate under a holistic interpretation of "games research" and often work backwards as it were, imagining potential projects based on specific advertisements for funding opportunities, then hunting down faculty and staff with the required expertise. I've also gone the traditional route, searching for funding that matches a faculty member's existing research. Some examples of projects I've assisted with as part of the Games Research Lab are described below, in no particular order.

One project that won an internal grant competition is designing training games to help children who are receiving prosthetic limbs from UCF's Limbitless Solutions. The College of Arts & Humanities awarded a "PLANT grant" to an interdisciplinary team of SVAD (Ryan Buyssens, Matt Dombrowski, Peter Smith) and Psychology (Clint Bowers) faculty (and me) funding additional research and development on the beta versions of these prosthetic training games. The SVAD faculty will improve the data mining, input sensing, and even the outward appearance of the electromyography (EMG) sensing controller that players use to make things happen in the games. The team has already applied for external funding of a game jam to help crowdsource the design of additional games for this controller (particularly this same controller adapted for people with paralysis—there are hands-free wheelchairs operating using the same EMG technology). The ultimate goal is to create a complete training program that will make it possible to mail the controller and a suite of games to future recipients of Limbitless prosthetics. This training suite would allow children to learn how to maneuver the prosthetic limb and condition the necessary muscles prior to receiving it, so that they would have near-immediate proficiency with the prosthetic the minute they received it. In addition to seeking funding, we have presented our design ideas and demonstrated the games at a few conferences this summer.

Another time, the Hillsborough County Public Relations approached my boss, Rudy McDaniel, to help create an interactive educational kiosk to teach residents about mosquito prevention, specifically the myriad of locations where mosquito eggs can be laid (such as the lid of a water bottle!). SVAD faculty Peter Smith, and I are in the process of designing the game so that it can be played by library patrons in a portable, kiosk-type apparatus.

One *unfunded* project that a group of interdisciplinary faculty and staff members and I have managed to move forward is an endless-runner style language learning game. Don Merritt (Office of Instructional Resources), Amy Giroux (Center for Humanities and Digital Research), Sandra Sousa (Modern Languages-Portuguese), Gergana Vitanova (Modern Languages-Second Language Acquisition), and I have wrangled a talented team of Computer Science majors who are working to take our ideas and make them into a virtual reality game as well as a traditional computer game as their capstone senior project. This idea was also proposed in the internal CAH PLANT grant competition and won the distinct honor of first runner-up ($0). We have faith that it is doable, fundable, and can contribute great knowledge to several different scholarly fields.

As an example of my broad operating definition of "games research," Amy Giroux (Center for Humanities & Digital Research) and I have embarked on a number of funding-seeking activities (including pilot studies and grant applications) around Ken Hanson's (Judaic Studies) engaging, self-produced (with amazing assistance from CDL) documentary-style video presentations that captivate the students of his online courses. While Ken is not technically utilizing games in their traditional sense (yet—he is open to the idea), I felt compelled to help him seek funding to produce additional and even higher-quality videos (I am a former middle-school teacher and still a pedagogy nerd at heart). His videos embody fun, which I maintain is within my realm as Games Research Lab Coordinator. His assignments take on an air of play, as one of the major course grades comes from an "Academic Issues List" consisting of two-to-three pages of bulleted issues stated as debatable issues or questions that can be argued in either direction. Students hunt the videos and other course documents to complete the assignment, which can lend a sense of scavenger hunt whimsy to the course.

I am also working with a number of other folks on a myriad of hypothetical projects—building castles in the air with grant applications and energizing ideas. From biology content-learning games to augmented reality applications to help young children learn to read, to teaching cultural norms and sensitivity in virtual reality and iPad apps that will encourage elementary children to exercise more and choose to eat more fruits and vegetables. It truly is all fun and games, and the possibilities are endless.

Anyway, sorry for bragging about my amazing job. If you have any research ideas relating to "games" that you think I can help turn into a reality, let me know!

Journaling Abroad: A Welcome Requirement

Anne Prucha and Kacie Tartt

Anne Prucha is Associate Instructor in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, where she teaches Spanish and TESOL. She has served as Faculty Director of three study-abroad programs: Spain Summer Study Abroad, Burnett Honors College Service Learning-Nicaragua, and *Journey Cuba*. She is an active participant in the Faculty Center's Summer Conference and is Co-Founder and Co-Director of the UCF-Hillcrest Foreign Language Club.

Kacie Tartt is Associate Instructor in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, where she teaches Spanish. *Journey Cuba* is her first foray into leading study abroad. At UCF she helped co-found and currently co-directs the UCF-Hillcrest Foreign Language Club in addition to leading a monthly Brown Bag Lunch series in her department related to issues facing faculty at the university as well as professional development. She also works hand-in-hand with CDL to further distance learning initiatives within the Spanish lower division at the university.

In spring 2017, we taught a one-credit course that accompanied a brand new short-term study-abroad program, *Journey Cuba*. The program included the course and an eight-day trip to Cuba over spring break. The course met once a week pre- and post-trip. Before embarking on our excursion, students participated in discussions on various topics presented by guest lecturers as well as research presentations and trip planning. After our visit, students presented journal reflections based on what they had recorded in their travel journals while in Cuba. The journals were a required component of the course and had to include *realia* as well as contemplations.

Since Cuba presents a unique situation in that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to access the Internet, all eight students had to rely on "old school" pen and paper, or so we thought! (Two students chose alternatives to this, as you will read below.) Blogs and posts were not an option. Typing was an option on a laptop or a tablet, but, interestingly enough, not one of our eight students brought these devices along. All (except one) brought smart phones and used their phone's camera feature to take photos. All in all, six students kept handwritten journals in a notebook, one student recorded his journal reflections using the notes feature on his phone, and one student kept his journal in a small sketch pad, drawing and illustrating what he observed and writing captions for these miniature works of art.

To be frank, it never occurred to us until after we decided to include the journal requirement in our syllabus that this might seem "old fashioned"—this, because we ourselves had kept travel journals during our study abroad experiences as students and, as program leaders, had observed a few students here and there doing the same, even though it was not a requirement for the programs we had directed previously. It was a pleasant surprise that none of our eight students balked at the idea or showed resistance. It was clear, however, that some of them had ignored the obligation, perhaps not thinking it an important or serious component of the course. While in Cuba it became apparent that a couple of them had completely forgotten about the assignment, and some had to be reminded to do it while there, hence the "sketching journal" and the "phone journal" among the traditional journals. This produced some humorous discussions among us.

During the trip, when we had free time, students would sneak off here and there to write in their journals, or they would announce that they were going to their room to write in their journal or that they had spent some time writing in it. It was clearly an agreeable activity and one that they relished doing. One could surmise that, due to the unique nature of our trip, and the feeling of isolation brought on by the sudden "tech disconnect," these quiet journaling moments might have allowed time to clear one's head and process the experiences.

A *Study Abroad* blog article, "Journaling Is More Than Just Jotting Down Memories," has some key points regarding keeping a journal while traveling abroad that align with the goals we had in mind for our students. For example, "Journaling helps you really think through your expectations and compare them to the realities of your experience as you live it, every day." This seemed to be the case with one of our students, who shared this with us:

> "Overall going to Cuba was a thought provoking experience. I've done a bit of traveling and kept a travel journal before, but I felt it was especially helpful to keep a journal on this trip. Being in a place so bizarrely different from my home creates a lot of thoughts and feelings that are hard to articulate and I think journaling facilitates putting those thoughts and feelings into words. It makes you pause, reflect, and digest everything you're experiencing."

Another key point from the article: "Writing about your experience helps you think through critical issues…the act of writing down your thoughts will naturally guide you to consider what you are experiencing in a more structured way." Our student, Adam Manno, had this to say about keeping a journal in Cuba:

> "It seemed more like a task at first, but the icing on the cake was sitting down at the end of each day and recounting my experience. It gave me time to think of the angles of what I was experiencing. It also forced me to question or reconsider the assumptions that come with any visit abroad, especially to a country with a vastly different economy."

After the trip, students did their journal presentations. These report outs were very revealing in some cases. It was remarkable how such a private act, even shared in part, helped to bond the group all the more upon our return. One student shared that the trip had made him question the entire future he had planned for himself. Another was so eager to share certain parts that she put her actual journal on the doc cam in the classroom, covering parts she did not want seen with her hand, while drawing attention to what she did want shared. Yet another student during the trip had said numerous times that he loved writing in his journal and that he wanted us to read it; well, actually, maybe just read some selected entries! His enthusiasm about what he had written and his desire to share it were truly gratifying to us and validated this requirement for the course, and we as instructors were incalculably gladdened hearing just how profoundly the journaling practice had affected our students.

Journaling allowed another student to reflect on his experience in a uniquely personal way as he had the opportunity to meet some family members for the first time on the trip and see where his father had lived as a child:

> "The following is a brief excerpt from my journal. To give context, my grandfather was born and raised in Cuba. He took his family and fled from Cuba when my father was 3 years old. He visited Cuba again roughly a decade later and my father tells me that when he returned he was deeply somber from the experience. The following were some of my initial thoughts when starting to journal on the trip. "…I can see why it made my abuelo so sad to come back. Havana looks like something that was just beginning to reach its potential, but then was left to rot. Some of the architecture still remains, but clearly nothing new has happened, and nothing old has been cared for. I can see my grandfather's perspective. He must have been so proud of what his country had the potential to become, but then all hope was lost...."

Even though the students didn't really know why journal writing was a requirement—it did not have any particular structure or explicit directions as do typical course assignments; it was just bring a notebook and something to write with—they did not question it. It was a new experience for our student, Caitlin Chong-Yen, who wrote:

> "My study abroad experience in Cuba was the first time I ever kept a journal during my travels. At the beginning, I wasn't exactly sure what I should be documenting and just kept a record of what we had done during the day. But soon it became a very reflective experience for me. At the end of each long day before I went to bed, I would spend a few minutes journaling, and often times I don't think I realized the full impact of what I had seen during the day until I took the time to think about it and write about it."

Clearly, journaling as a course requirement was a success for our program. Our intuition and past personal experiences told us that we should include it. Pedagogically, it made sense and our students' experiences and reactions confirm this. Keeping a journal during the in-country portion of the course and presenting on it post trip will continue to be a requirement for study abroad with the *Journey Cuba* program.

Shared Learning Outcomes: A Commitment for Curriculum Alignment

Harrison Oonge

Harrison Oonge is Assistant Dean of Academic Planning in the College of Undergraduate Studies. He oversees curriculum alignment efforts between UCF and DirectConnect partners, articulations, and the UCF Pegasus Path project. Harrison is passionate about college student access, persistence, and success of underrepresented minority groups.

UCF and DirectConnect partners have continuously engaged in curriculum alignment in the STEM disciplines since 2006. Premised on transfer student success and continued partnerships, the goal of curriculum alignment is to synchronize core content and learning outcomes of courses that are transferable within the partner colleges and UCF. This ensures that the competencies gained by students taking these courses are adequate for progression to a next level course at any institution, with the goal of a baccalaureate degree.

For over a decade the disciplines involved in curriculum alignment included mathematics/statistics, biology, physics, chemistry, and engineering. More recently, courses in speech (communication) and composition were added to this effort, but those alignment discussions are limited to UCF and Valencia. This past year alone, a total of 12 curriculum alignment meetings were held with a cumulative total of 184 attendees. Artifacts generated from curriculum alignment are archived for reference and can be accessed through the curriculum alignment website (<http://curriculumalignment.ucf.edu/>). We encourage all faculty and administrators of participating disciplines to visit the site for information on planned activities.

Role of faculty

Faculty play a critical role in alignment discussions. Combining their knowledge of subject matter, learning outcomes, and pedagogy with experience and research, faculty engage in collegial discussions that result in a common understanding. During these discussions academic freedom and individuality are acknowledged with a focus on shared values and canons about what should be taught and assessed within a particular discipline. As we continue with curriculum alignment, we encourage more UCF faculty participation.

Perceived benefits

The goal of curriculum alignment is student success. By achieving alignment, students at both UCF and DirectConnect institutions are exposed to comparable content and learning experiences for academic success. Additionally, curriculum alignment discussions continue to foster nuanced understandings of and respect for differences in institutional missions between UCF and the Florida College System (FCS). These differences are acknowledged during discussions but are not perceived as an impediment to the overall goals of curriculum alignment discussions. For instance, open-access institutions within FCS admit a wide spectrum of students with different abilities, whereas UCF competitively admits freshmen students who have higher HSGPA and SAT/ACT scores.

Curriculum alignment also creates space for UCF and DirectConnect faculty to exchange ideas and to network for further collaboration in research activities or grant opportunities. It offers faculty another way to make an impact beyond their classrooms by sharing their expertise with peers at FCS institutions. Whether it is opening the classroom for observation, sharing instructional materials, or exchanging discipline-related ideas, faculty are contributing to the community.

How can you be part of curriculum alignment?

Participation in curriculum alignment discussions is open to faculty teaching those courses under discussion. Administrators (associate deans, department chairs, and undergraduate program coordinators) are also invited to curriculum alignment meetings. Participation of administrators is a boon to the alignment process as they are well-positioned to communicate curriculum alignment deliberations to other faculty within programs. From the FCS institutions, deans of colleges/programs, department chairs, and faculty attend. In some instances, representatives from the K-12 system from Central Florida participate. Participation of faculty ensures that curriculum alignment decisions and questions are included in faculty senate discussions, curriculum committees, and departmental meetings.

Besides faculty, advisors regularly attend curriculum alignment discussions. This ensures that any advising recommendations made from the discussions reaches the frontlines and students. One such recommendation in the past has been that students should consider completing a course sequence (e.g., Calculus I and II) at one institution.

What is next for curriculum alignment?

Beyond the disciplines mentioned earlier, we are seeking to expand alignment to include more gateway courses. This expansion, however, has to be organic and informed by course-level student success data with individual departments/colleges suggesting which disciplines should be added. We are encouraging faculty members to review course-related data that compares FTIC to transfer-student performances in courses that require pre-requisite knowledge, and transfer students having taken those courses at an FCS institution. Such differences in performance, notwithstanding transfer shock and differences in student aptitudes, may suggest a need to collaborate with FCS faculty to review syllabi and pedagogy for possible alignment issues. The Division of Teaching and Learning and College of Undergraduate Studies in conjunction with UCF Connect (formerly UCF Regional Campuses) are eager to facilitate and coordinate any curriculum alignment with DirectConnect partner institutions.

Another possibility is inter-institutional faculty collaboration allowing for faculty from UCF and DirectConnect partner institutions to engage in peer observations of each other's classrooms, to share feedback, reflections, and to develop insights to further student success in either institution. There are also discussions of pedagogy and laboratory techniques, design of assessments, course modalities, and even student academic support for each discipline. The possibilities for curriculum alignment are endless, but as a faculty member, you can help us achieve better alignment starting with internal alignment and projecting out to inter-institutional alignment.

Citation Metrics and You: Tools for Measuring Research Impact

Sandra Avila and Ven Basco

Sandy is the Science librarian in the Research and Information Services Department at the UCF Libraries. Her research interests include emerging technologies in education, augmented reality and virtual reality, online learning, and anything library instruction related.

Ven is the subject librarian for Engineering and Computer Science in the Research and Information Services Department at the UCF Libraries.

The measurement of scholarly output is critically important to the world of academia, especially with regard to hiring, promotion, and tenure. Citation analysis is one tool for measuring and evaluating research impact by showing how a particular article, author, or publication is graded based on the number of times that author, article, or publication has been cited by other works. A citation search is a look forward in time from the publication of one item, to later works that reference that same item.

Citation Metrics and H-Index

This paper will preview three metric citation sources that will be useful to anyone doing citation analysis. Some of these tools are subscription-based and others are free. Each tool has its strengths and weaknesses and none of them covers the entire universe of scholarly publications.

Three citation metric sources available at UCF are 1) Web of Science (WoS), 2) Scopus via Scopus Preview using Compendex Web, and 3) Google Scholar. Each database is very different and it is important to remember that all the tools of citation metrics have their limitations. Faculty can choose to use only one of these tools without really understanding the differences on the back end that will affect their search results. To achieve the best results, multiple tools should be referenced.

The h-index, or Hirsch index, is an index to quantify an individual's scientific research output (J.E. Hirsch). "It is defined as the highest number of publications of a scientist that received h or more citations each...." An individual's h-index may be very different in different databases. This is because the databases index different journals and cover different years. For instance, Scopus only considers work from 1970 or later, while the Web of Science calculates an h-index using all years that an institution has subscribed to it. Using Web of Science at a different institution could alter the h-index measurement since their subscriptions are often different.

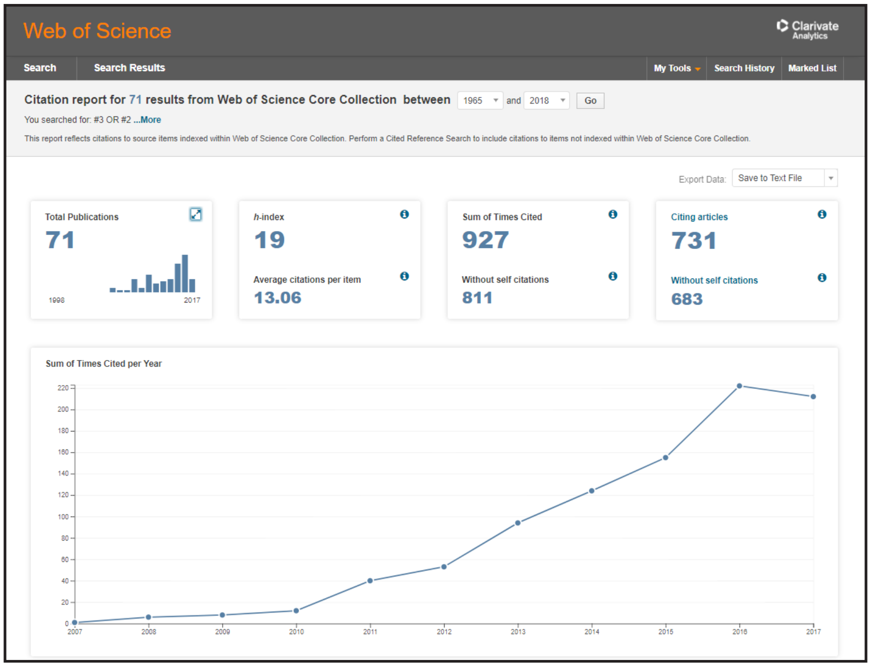
This paper will present and explain what to expect from the citation metrics resources by way of the citation counts of articles written by Dr. Dingbao Wang, faculty in Civil, Environmental, and Construction Engineering. Specifically, Dr. Wang's work that was cited in Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar will be highlighted. The h-index ratings provided by all three will also be noted. In looking at the results from each source, keep in mind that they should not be used to analyze whether or not one source is better than another, or whether one should replace the other, but rather as a means to identify a fuller picture of the scholarly impact of an author or journal in general.

Web of Science (WoS)

The one traditional, highly respected citation research source at UCF is Web of Science. It searches the citation references of scholarly articles in over 10,000 of the highest impact, well-regarded journals worldwide, including Open Access journals and over 110,000 conference proceedings. Web of Science contains authoritative, scholarly multidisciplinary content in the Sciences (1965+), Social/ Behavioral Science (1965+), and Arts & Humanities (1975+).

To get to the citation metrics and h-index using Web of Science, first an author search should be run to identify all the citations for a specific author. Then once all institutions and citations identified, a Citation Report should be generated using the "Create a Citation Report" function in Web of Science. Figure 1 illustrates a Citation Report which only analyzes the correct citations from the set of journals, books and conference proceedings within this database; variant-citations are not covered. These are the only citations that will be shown in this citation count in *Figure 1* below.

Note: Images provided for illustrative purposes only. Details may be difficult to discern but should not detract from the article's message.


Web of Science
Clarivate Analytics
Search
Search Results
My Tools
Search History
Marked List
Go
Export Data:
Save to Text File
1998
2017
Sum of Times Cited per Year
220
200
180
160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017

Citation report for 71 results from Web of Science Core Collection between 1965 and 2018

You searched for: #3 OR #2 ...More

This report reflects citations to source items indexed within Web of Science Core Collection. Perform a Cited Reference Search to include citations to items not indexed within Web of Science Core Collection.

Total Publications: 71

h-index: 19

Average citations per item: 13.06

Sum of Times Cited: 927

Without self citations: 811

Citing articles: 731

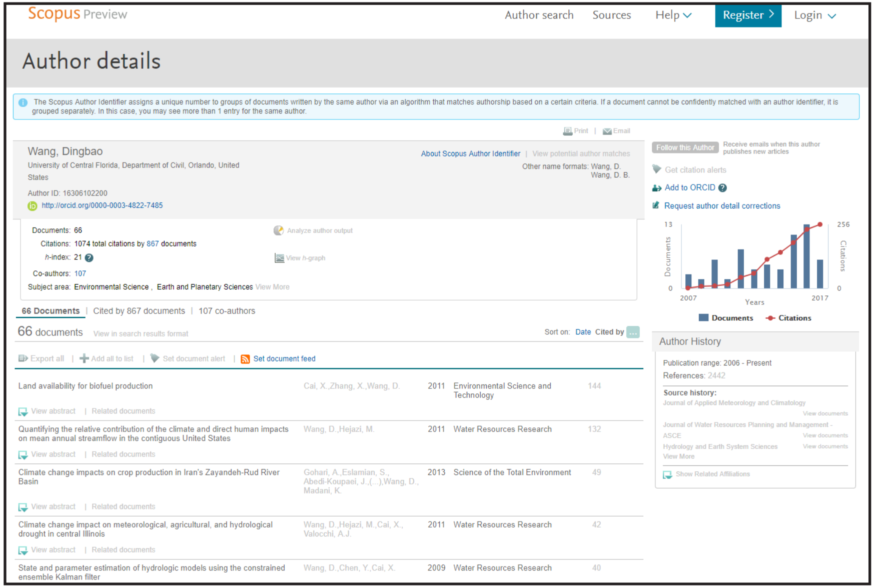
Without self citations: 683

Figure 1. Web of Science: Total Publications = 71; h-index = 19

Scopus via Scopus Preview Using Compendex Web

Scopus is the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature: scientific journals, books and conference proceedings. It delivers a comprehensive overview of the world's research output in the fields of science, mathematics, engineering, technology, health and medicine, social sciences, and the arts and humanities (*** see endnote**). Scopus provides citation counts for articles indexed from over 22,800 serial titles, 150,000 books from over 5,000 publishers across the disciplines. UCF does not subscribe to Scopus but by using our database Compendex, a citation count and h-index will appear in Scopus Preview.

Begin first by running an author search. Then once the results are shown, click on the article link to a citation that lists "Cited by in Scopus." Then on the right-hand side of the page under "Tools by Scopus" select the author name from the list that appears to open up the Scopus Preview screen which provides the citation metrics and h-index information. Figure 2 below illustrates what the Scopus Preview using Compendex looks like.


Scopus Preview
Author search
Sources
Help
Register
Login
Print
Email
About Scopus Author Identifier
View potential author matches
Follow this Author
Get citation alerts
Add to ORCID
Request author detail corrections
Analyze author output
View h-graph
13
Documents
0
2007
Years
2017
256
Citations
0
Documents
Citations
View in search results format
Sort on: Date Cited by
Export all
Add all to list
Set document alert
Set document feed
View abstract
Related documents
Show Related Affiliations

Author details

The Scopus Author Identifier assigns a unique number to groups of documents written by the same author via an algorithm that matches authorship based on a certain criteria. If a document cannot be confidently matched with an author identifier, it is grouped separately. In this case, you may see more than 1 entry for the same author.

Receive emails when this author publishes new articles

Wang, Dingbao
University of Central Florida, Department of Civil, Orlando, United States
Author ID: 16306102200
http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4822-7485

Other name formats: Wang, D.
Wang, D. B.

Documents: 66
Citations: 1074 total citations by 867 documents
h-index: 21
Co-authors: 107
Subject area: Environmental Science , Earth and Planetary Sciences View More

66 Documents | Cited by 867 documents | 107 co-authors

66 documents

Land availability for biofuel production	Cai, X.,Zhang, X.,Wang, D.	2011	Environmental Science and Technology	144
Quantifying the relative contribution of the climate and direct human impacts on mean annual streamflow in the contiguous United States	Wang, D.,Hejazi, M.	2011	Water Resources Research	132
Climate change impacts on crop production in Iran's Zayandeh-Rud River Basin	Gohari, A.,Eslamian, S., Abedi-Koupaei, J.,(...),Wang, D., Madani, K.	2013	Science of the Total Environment	49
Climate change impact on meteorological, agricultural, and hydrological drought in central Illinois	Wang, D.,Hejazi, M.,Cai, X., Valocchi, A.J.	2011	Water Resources Research	42
State and parameter estimation of hydrologic models using the constrained ensemble Kalman filter	Wang, D.,Chen, Y.,Cai, X.	2009	Water Resources Research	40

Author History
Publication range: 2006 - Present
References: 2442
Source history:
Journal of Applied Meteorology and Climatology View documents
Journal of Water Resources Planning and Management - ASCE View documents
Hydrology and Earth System Sciences View documents
View More

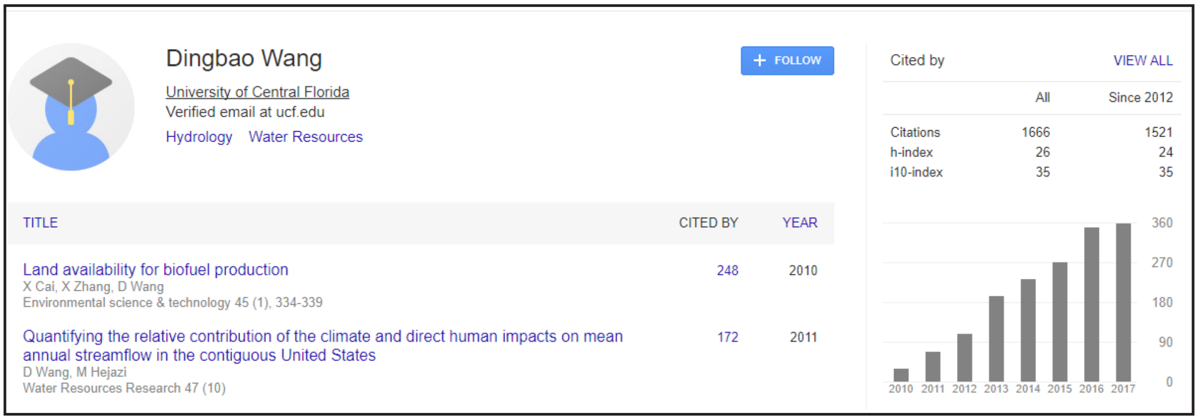
Figure 2. Scopus via Scopus Preview Using Compendex Web: Total Publications = 66, h-index = 21

Google Scholar

Google Scholar provides a simple way to broadly search for scholarly literature. You can search across many disciplines and sources for articles, theses, books, abstracts and court opinions, from academic publishers, professional societies, online repositories, universities and other web sites. Google Scholar is a search engine searching the web that narrows the results to "scholarly" sources based on machine automated criteria.

Also, Google Scholar searches the full text of the article whereas Web of Science and Scopus do not. They search only the citation, abstract, and tagging information. With Google Scholar you can find additional citations that may be available in other sections of a journal article. If you're not having luck finding something specific with your Web of Science or Scopus search, try Google Scholar and you may find it.

To run a Google Scholar author search, run a search on the scholar's name. Once the name appears at the top, select it in the User Profile. The citation metrics appear with the h-index listed as shown in Figure 3 below.



Dingbao Wang
University of Central Florida
Verified email at ucf.edu
Hydrology Water Resources

Cited by	All	Since 2012
Citations	1666	1521
h-index	26	24
i10-index	35	35

TITLE	CITED BY	YEAR
Land availability for biofuel production X Cai, X Zhang, D Wang Environmental science & technology 45 (1), 334-339	248	2010
Quantifying the relative contribution of the climate and direct human impacts on mean annual streamflow in the contiguous United States D Wang, M Hejazi Water Resources Research 47 (10)	172	2011

Figure 3. Google Scholar: Total Publications = 93, h-index = 26

Comparison

Comparing the three sources, Web of Science and Scopus are human-curated databases where Google Scholar is not. Also, Web of Science covers a smaller number of works and is very concerned about quality compared with quantity. This will likely result in a smaller number of citations for an author or article compared with Google Scholar or Scopus.

A quick comparison of the three databases yielded a different number of total citations and h-index. Results show that coverage in the three databases is highly dependent on the subject matter of the faculty member, the journals, proceedings and books indexed, citing sources, years covered, etc. Therefore, searching multiple sources will provide a more comprehensive picture of the author's scholarly impact.

* * *

* **FCTL Note:** Citation indices in many disciplines outside of STEM fields are emerging, and many scholars will not find their productivity is accurately represented in these tools at this moment.

Supporting and Strengthening Faculty

Jana Jasinski

Jana Jasinski is Interim Vice Provost for Faculty Excellence and Pegasus Professor of Sociology. Jasinski focuses on further developing retention and recognition efforts to better serve our faculty. Always an advocate for faculty, staff and student success, Jasinski has served in multiple leadership roles in the College of Sciences, including the first program director of UCF's Sociology doctorate program, where she helped create new curricula and departmental culture.

As we at UCF look to support and strengthen faculty, we are guided by helpful and strong roadmaps, including the UCF Collective Impact Strategic Plan and the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (aka COACHE). The COACHE survey is designed to learn more about faculty perceptions regarding their workplace experience. In Spring of 2015, UCF invited full-time faculty members to complete our initial administration of the COACHE survey. In Fall of 2015 we received our results and began a process of identifying areas that would be addressed first and what steps would be taken to address each of these areas. Two committees comprised of faculty and administrators (first a priority setting committee which was then followed up with a strategy setting committee) were formed to evaluate our results and see how we compared to five UCF-identified peer institutions (University of Houston, Florida International, Florida State University, Auburn, and North Carolina State University) as well as other institutions nationally who participated in the COACHE. Our results showed that UCF rated better than our peers and most COACHE institutions in the following areas: quality of colleagues, tenure policies and clarity, support for engaging undergraduates in research, and support for obtaining and maintaining grants. At the same time, there were also areas in which we were not as strong. Working collaboratively, the priority setting committee identified five areas of highest priority for UCF including: Nature of Work (research/creative activity, teaching, and service), Departmental Leadership, Personal and Family Policies, Promotion (Associate Professor to Professor), and Appreciation and Recognition. These priorities, and the strategies developed to address them, were endorsed by the Faculty Senate Steering Committee in August 2016; they have also guided much of the programming and other support that Faculty Excellence—with our mission to recognize, strengthen, and inspire faculty—has undertaken over the past year or so. As we prepare to assess our progress through the re-administration of the COACHE survey in Spring 2018, we thought it might be useful to take stock of the progress UCF has made and which we continue to work toward. While some of the university's efforts have been more direct responses to the 2015 COACHE survey, others were achieved or underway before this.

Note: Information on UCF's COACHE administration and process can be accessed at <http://facultyexcellence.ucf.edu/COACHE/>. The Provost's report for the Spring 2015 COACHE results can be accessed at <https://facultyexcellence.ucf.edu/files/2015/10/COACHE-2015_Provost_Report_University_of_Central_Florida.pdf>.

Improvements to Career-Life Balance for UCF Faculty Over the Past 5 Years

Linda Walters

Linda Walters is Pegasus Professor of Biology, Director of the Faculty Excellence Center for Success of Women Faculty, and Director of Fellers House Field Station in Canaveral National Seashore. Walters has spent the past 20 years as a member of the UCF faculty, and her research incorporates marine conservation, restoration and education.

Conducting a Google search on "academia work-life balance" will produce over 1.5 million results, ranging from blogs to articles to books and everything in between. Based on what you read, work-life balance in academics is perceived to be everything from completely doable, challenging but possible, to a myth—simply not obtainable. So what really is career-life balance? And, can faculty members at any academic institution ever achieve balance at any or all stages of their career? A lot depends on the faculty member; some enter the academy so they can work all the time and this makes them happy. Other faculty, especially those new to a university, are often on a perpetual roller-coaster feeling guilty about letting their work overtake their non-work lives and *vice versa*. When the scales tip too far off balance with workloads, unhealthy faculty or unhappy faculty emerge. Both frequently document their dissatisfaction by moving to another institution or form of employment. The COACHE survey found career-life balance was a topic at UCF that needed more campus conversation and more efforts to help faculty have long, productive and successful careers.

UCF has made some significant strides in promoting faculty career-life balance in recent years. Many of these efforts were the result of combined efforts by Faculty Senate, Faculty Union (UFF), Faculty Excellence (FE), and The Center for Success of Women Faculty (CSWF). Two recent big gains were instituting a transparent, university-wide paid parental leave/modified instructional duties policy for both men and women faculty, as well as UCF tuition credits that can be used by family members. Likewise, dual-career hiring became a transparent policy in recent years and a number of academic couples now call UCF home, with resources for partner hiring provided through the Targeted Opportunity Program. Broad-based, faculty-friendly "stop-the-clock" policies are also now in place for individuals heading down the promotion path. Although many don't think about it now, the FE Center for Success of Women Faculty was established in 2012, and one primary purpose was for advocating career-life balance at UCF and to mentor faculty toward better career-life balance. Previously, the Center was called the Women's Research Center with a focus on research by, for, and about women. This shift in direction documented the university's goal to better assist faculty.

Additional measures to improve the lives of UCF faculty impact subsets of our faculty population. For expectant and new parents, we now have expectant mother parking, lactation rooms across campus, workshops where faculty share parenting experiences with their peers, the UCF Faculty Parents Network closed Facebook group, and opening up the long-running, on-campus learning center (UCF Creative School for Children) for preschool-age children to include babies and toddlers (previously, it was only for potty-trained children).

For faculty with older children, UCF has many department and college-wide opportunities that are promoted campus-wide. The folks in UCF Admissions hold "how to start planning for college" workshops for faculty and FE/CSWF have co-hosted numerous workshops in recent years on time management (especially with email overload), how to de-stress through yoga and meditation, and they are in their second year of a Faculty and Family Fitness Challenge. The Fitness Challenge incentivizes faculty to increase their physical activity, with rewards such as drawings for baskets of produce from the UCF Arboretum and lunches with UCF administrators. FE/CSWF is also in its second year of its Faculty and Family Sunday Fun Event, with faculty showcasing and sharing their research with colleagues, their families, and their pets. It is also key for networking in a more casual atmosphere with old and new colleagues. This year's event will be held on Sunday, November 12 from 12:30–3:00 PM at the Arboretum Park on main campus.

Many good initiatives can be added to this list of successes, but there are more opportunities for increased work-life balance to consider as well. These include, for example, paid family emergency leave to parallel the paid parental leave, improved faculty gym facilities, dual-career partner opportunities for faculty members with non-academic partners, and an on-campus eldercare center for faculty members who are in the sandwich generation. The Faculty Excellence Advisory Committee for 2017–18 has a working group focused on improving career-life balance at UCF. If you have suggestions or topics of concern, please contact me at linda.walters@ucf.edu.

* * *

Supporting Mid-Career Faculty

Blake Scott

Blake Scott is Professor of Writing & Rhetoric (and formerly founding Associate Chair and Director of Degree Programs for this department), former Provost Faculty Fellow, and current Faculty Excellence Fellow. In the latter role, he works with the Faculty Excellence team to advance work on the COACHE priority areas for improvement.

By and large, universities have invested a substantial amount of resources into supporting and retaining new faculty, particularly around preparing them for the first major promotion and (for some) tenure. UCF is no exception, and our 2015 results from the COACHE faculty job satisfaction survey suggest that we've been fairly successful with this. In contrast, higher education research has found that faculty *in between* early career and near retirement—most faculty, that is—are often "taken for granted and expected to fend for themselves as they carve a path into the uncharted middle years (Baldwin & Chang 2006 p. 28). *Where can faculty turn for support after they reach the first major milestone of promotion and move into what we might call "mid-career," with its additional and varied responsibilities and possibilities?* In partnership with other faculty-facing units such as ORC and FCTL, Faculty Excellence has launched a concerted effort to answer this question.

Although the 2015 COACHE survey pointed to Promotion to Professor (including clarity of promotion criteria) as a priority area for improvement, Faculty Excellence has expanded this charge, in line with an emergent national movement, to better support mid-career faculty more generally. We're defining "mid-career" inclusively to include both tenure-line and non-tenure-earning (NTE) faculty who have achieved the first promotion milestone and for whom retirement is not on the immediate horizon.

Faculty Excellence is playing a leading role in several mid-career support initiatives. First, we have developed, and are continuing to refine, support for promotion, including individual support for preparing an electronic dossier but also unit support for revising and clarifying promotion criteria, particularly in relation to UCF's *Collective Impact* Strategic Plan. This year, in addition to our Straight Talks series, Faculty Excellence will be hosting a "speed review" CV workshop in January at which faculty can get feedback from experienced college and university P&T committee members.

Second, in addition to the well-established Faculty Excellence Center for Success of Women Faculty Mentoring Community, Faculty Excellence has launched two new university-level communities—one for NTE faculty and one for associate professors. Based on feedback received from last year's Instructor/Lecturer Excellence Program (ILEP), this year's NTE community includes over 50 faculty working in small groups around one of three tracks—Research, Outreach, and Leadership—with the goal of helping participants explore opportunities to enhance their faculty roles beyond teaching. The new Associate Professor Mentoring Communities include over 35 faculty this year, similarly working in small groups but around preparing for promotion and career advancement planning more broadly. All three programs are complemented by our Leadership Series sessions (open to all) focused on such topics as aligning your professional brand and goals with UCF's Collective Impact.

Because we see these efforts as a starting point and value *your perspectives* about the most important areas and means of support, we have reconfigured the Faculty Excellence Advisory Committee into four subcommittees—one of which is focused on mid-career faculty. Formed through an open call, this subcommittee will be working to identify, prioritize, and develop recommendations for additional short- and long-term support initiatives (including ways to support and protect time for research).

In our ongoing and future efforts to support mid-career faculty, Faculty Excellence is driven by the goal of enhancing faculty vitality, which can be defined as "the capacity of the… university to create and sustain the organizational strategies that support the continuing investment of energy by faculty… both in their own career and in the realization of the institution's mission" (Clark & Lewis 1985). As *Collective Impact* emphasizes, UCF's continued vitality and distinctive impact depends in large part on cultivating the vitality of its faculty as we move through our careers. If you have suggestions about areas of need or possible initiatives to meet such needs, please contact me at bscott@ucf.edu.

* * *

Recognizing and Appreciating Faculty

Faculty Excellence Team

UCF has a long history of recognizing and rewarding faculty through substantial awards. In addition to the college- and university-level Excellence awards, UCF is the only member of the SUS that still gives the Incentive (TIP, RIA, SoTL) awards. The Pegasus Professor, Trustee Chair, Reach for the Stars, and Early Career Development awards support our Collective Impact's strategy of attracting and retaining nationally and internationally recognized leaders in their fields.

With our mission of Recognizing, Strengthening, and Inspiring faculty, Faculty Excellence is proud to be part of this tradition. The Faculty Excellence Center for Success of Women Faculty sponsors the Women of Distinction Awards—which have recognized faculty for a number of achievements, including research, community engagement, and (this year) mentoring—as well as the Life@UCF Excellence in Academic Partnerships Award.

Partly in response to the 2015 COACHE faculty job satisfaction survey, which indicated that UCF can still improve the way we recognize and appreciate faculty *and* find new ways to provide faculty with *time* to innovate in their essential duties of research, teaching, and service—Faculty Excellence launched the Faculty COACHE Innovation Awards this year; these competitive awards provide faculty with a course release to allow focused time to work on a project. Another faculty honor re-established by Faculty Excellence in 2016 is the Scroll & Quill Society, which recognizes the sustained (10-year plus) scholarly contributions of faculty who have brought national or international recognition to UCF. Counting "legacy" members, the Society now has over 60 members across all colleges, with over 20 new members to be inducted this fall.

Other administrative units have also launched new ways to recognize faculty excellence. The Office of Research and Commercialization recently launched the Luminary Awards, designed to "shine a light on exceptional faculty whose work is advancing their discipline and making a difference." *UCF's Collective Impact* has been the impetus for two other new faculty awards: The Marchioli Collective Impact Innovation award gives an individual faculty or staff member funding for an innovative, scalable project or program that can help achieve a priority metric of the strategic plan. The Collective Impact Community Challenge (formerly called the Collective Excellence Award) rewards individuals or teams who are leading change in a significant community challenge that also has national or global implications, and whose work exemplifies pillars such as empowering partnership, creating access, or amplifying impact.

Finally, we know that faculty need to feel appreciated in our everyday worklives, especially in the midst of so many big and fast changes at UCF (from *Collective Impact* to the Downtown Campus). To this end, Faculty Excellence is working with chairs, directors, and associate and assistant deans to identify smaller but still important ways to show faculty that they are valued and to promote our excellence. If UCF's Impact is achieved by "Scale x Excellence," then recognizing and incentivizing faculty excellence is crucial to our collective success.

Announcing Upcoming Faculty Center Programs

2017 Winter Faculty Development Conference
The Faculty Center and the Quality Enhancement Plan team will co-host the 2017 Winter Faculty Development Conference, December 11th through 13th. This year's theme is Mapping the Integrative Undergraduate Experience. All UCF faculty and staff are welcome to attend plenary portions of the event. For more details, please visit <http://fctl.ucf.edu/Events/WinterConference/>.

STEM Faculty Learning Community
In collaboration with the Florida Consortium on Metropolitan Research Universities, the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning is looking for faculty members teaching large introductory gateway courses in STEM fields to participate in a faculty learning community that will focus on improving STEM education at UCF. Faculty members will meet three times during the semester, agree to have a trained undergraduate student observe their course to collect data, and provide a written reflective report at the end of the project.

Course Innovation Projects
The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning is seeking faculty members to participate in three Course Innovation Projects. The first will focus on using virtual reality in the classroom, the second will focus on teaching in active-learning classrooms, and the third will explore the use of contemplative pedagogies. Each cohort will meet four times during the semester, and participants will collaborate to create relevant faculty-facing materials as a deliverable. Applications for all programs will be available soon.

Special Interest Group: Writing a Journal Article in 12 Weeks
The purpose of this workshop is to enable faculty to produce an article manuscript for submission to an academic journal. It is designed to help participants make time for research and writing in the midst of their other various professional and personal obligations. It is also designed to help participants make and meet weekly goals. Faculty writers will work over twelve weeks during the semester to revise an existing piece of writing (conference paper, chapter, unpublished draft, etc.), to identify publishing venues, and to submit the finished product for publication. Each participant will receive a copy of the *Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks* book prior to the beginning of the workshop.

Asset-Based Approach to Coping with Secondary Trauma Faculty Development Cohort
The Faculty Center will reprise this fall's cohort in the upcoming spring. This cohort will focus on identifying assets that can be used to cope with secondary trauma that can result from exposure to student trauma. Without proper mapping of resources and tools, it may be difficult for faculty members to know how to assist students and where on campus the resources are that their students need. In addition, if instructors do not have an awareness of the resources that can assist them in dealing with secondary trauma, they may be at high risk of compassion fatigue and burnout, which will likely result in lowered outcomes for their classroom performance.

Sunshine State Teaching and Learning Conference 2018
The second Sunshine State Teaching and Learning Conference will be held in St. Pete Beach, January 31st through February 2nd, 2018. The event is co-hosted by the UCF Faculty Center and the USF Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence, and will feature a keynote presentation by Michelle D. Miller, author of *Minds Online: Teaching Effectively with Technology* (Harvard University Press 2014).

For details about these and other Faculty Center programs, see our main website at <http://fctl.ucf.edu/Events/>, or sign up for our listserv by sending an email to listserv@listserv.cc.ucf.edu with only the following in the body of the email: subscribe fctl First Last (where you substitute your own first and last name).

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 <http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/Publications/FacultyFocus/submission.php>. Please send your submissions to fctl@ucf.edu.

The ideas and opinions expressed in the articles featured in the *Faculty Focus* belong to the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Faculty Center or of UCF.

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Division of Teaching and Learning

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