Collaborating with Strangers
Workshops that Spark Partnerships and Innovation @ the University of Florida Libraries

Presenters:
Bess de Farber, CoLAB Planning Series® Creator and Libraries Grants Manager
April Hines, Journalism & Mass Communications Librarian
What is the CoLAB Planning Series®?

If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together.
Distribute flyers: print and electronic

Collaborating with Strangers in Education and Communication

Tues. April 5, 2016
5:30–7:30 pm
Marston Science Library
Room L136
Sandwiches, chips, water provided

Looking to engage in cross-disciplinary collaborations with other graduate students in related fields?

Collaborating with Strangers workshops connect students, faculty and researchers on campus during 3-minute speed-meetings. Come prepared to talk about your research interests. You’ll walk away with more resources, solutions and creative ideas than you ever imagined!

When: Tuesday, April 5, 2016, 5:30 – 7:30 pm
Where: Marston Science Library, Room L136
Who: Members of SAGE and GSMCA

IDEAS link PEOPLE
E-MAIL MESSAGE TO CONFIRM SCENARIO 1 WORKSHOP REGISTRATION

Subject line: RE: ORIENTATION: Collaborating with Strangers for Mini-grant Communications Projects

We're excited you will be joining us for Collaborating with Strangers for Mini-grant Communications Projects.

When: Wednesday, October 1, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Where: College of Journalism and Communications, conference room 100

Please read this brief orientation: When you arrive, you will receive a profile-sign with the questions listed below. You may prepare answers in advance, if you like. The more detailed your answers to these questions are, the more you will benefit from the workshop. But don't worry if you don't have all the answers—just come and enjoy the experience!
CoLAB participants arrive and prepare profile-signs
Headshots
Video plays as profile-signs are completed

Stephen Johnson, creativity historian
Where good ideas come from
1. Define CoLAB Workshop goals and objectives
2. Describe history of how CoLABs originated and matured since 2002
3. Discuss the types of CoLAB Workshops presented and past sponsors
Sponsors of CoLABs

- LIVE UNITED
- United Way of Palm Beach County
- Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties
- United Way of Martin County
- U.S. National Library of Medicine
- The University of Arizona Library
- Junior League of Boca Raton
- City of Belle Glade
- College of Arts and Letters
- Creative Campus Committee
- Florida State University Libraries
- Conspire
- P&G
University of Arizona - Sonoran Desert
CoLAB @ Conference
Association of College & Research Libraries
Collaborating with Scholars to Ignite Social Change - frank Scholar Conference
CoLAB content presentation (continued)

1. Define CoLAB Workshop goals and objectives
2. Describe history of how CoLABs originated and matured since 2002
3. Discuss the types of CoLAB Workshops presented and past sponsors
4. Five ways people combine forces with others
5. Principles of Asset-based Community Development
6. Ways to increase creativity in daily life
7. Distribute checklists
8. Review instructions for speed-meeting
CoLAB Planning Series®: 
“Speed Meeting” Instructions

• *Find* a participant you do not know
• *Jot down* the participant’s # on your list so you will remember who you spoke to
• *Read* your partner’s card
• *Converse* for 3 minutes
• You may sit or stand or move to a quiet area
• Take brief notes (*no need to capture contact info*)
• When you hear the bell, *say good-bye and find a new stranger*
Participants receive checklists

Collaborating with Strangers Checklist

Sustainability CoLAB

1. built environment → studying local gardening
2. parking garage gardens!
3. Urban planning faculty - sea levels
4. Latin American Collection - ethnohistory
5. Studies Sociology + Sustainability!
6. Telecomm Major - can help w/ video projects
7. Green Energy Development, windmills
8. Biomedical Engineer - expert in computer programming
9. Fulbright Fellow, evaluation of ecosystems
10. Works for E-learning Support Services
11. Creative Writing Major - Are UF's investments sustainable?
12. Involved in Gators for a Sustainable Campus
Participants take the CoLAB oath
UF Sex and Gender Differences in Health CoLAB + UF Women in Science and Engineering Mentoring CoLAB
Collaborating with Strangers on Scholarship in UF Libraries
UF Collaborating with Strangers Workshop + UF Collaborating with Strangers on Sustainability
Idea Boards for sharing connections discovered, new learning, + next steps
Wrap-up...

• **Complete** evaluation survey on back of sign
• **Quick** closing comments
• **Return** sign, Sharpie, other supplies
• **Keep** your checklist
• Next step is to **LOOK** for post-workshop email message

THANK YOU FOR CoLABing with us!
Collaborating with Strangers in Education and Communication

April 5, 2016

Email: stephyuf@ufl.edu
Basic principles that produce desired results

• Value of face-to-face conversations
• Self selection to participate
• Welcoming participants regardless of their situation
• Quality of profile-sign questions
• No right or wrong answers
• Minimal presentation, maximize meetings and structure
• Comfort with ambiguous nature of workshop
• Session is customized for participants
• Food is not the focus
Too much curiosity....

- Who was participating? Where were they from?
- How often do participants routinely speak to strangers? In their discipline? Outside their discipline?
- What happens to participants during the workshop? What kinds of new knowledge, ideas or resources are acquired?
- How are participants responding to the process? Do they seem inspired and engaged, or timid and reserved?
- After the workshop? Do they really follow-up?
How do we answer these questions for stakeholders?

- Participants – What’s in it for me?
- Requesters – Will this help us accomplish our goals? How is this different from a mixer or networking event?
- Future and current sponsors – Why should I fund these workshops? Does this actually work?
- Library administrators – How does this enhance our mission as an institution?
- Other libraries – Why should we adopt this process?
Outside evaluator...

Collaborative Assessment & Program Evaluation Services
Pre-workshop surveys

80% of students from 2 public relations classes agreed or strongly agreed that they felt comfortable having face to face conversations with others they don’t know.

More than 50% said they were having fewer than two conversations per month with strangers about class projects and career goals.

“I am very uncomfortable in groups of strangers but okay with one-on-one interactions.”
In a *Collaborating with Strangers on Sustainability Projects at the University of Florida* workshop,

- 46 undergraduates, 16 graduate students, 8 faculty, and 5 staff attended.
- Representing a wide range of academic departments on campus including accounting, architecture, engineering, sociology, public relations, sculpture, construction management, and the health sciences.
- Listed skill sets included everything from design techniques and expertise in (GIS) software to fundraising, computer programming and project management.
- Projects included green housing, local gardens, downtown revitalization, and water resource development.
Data visualizations from profile-sign info

**Who Participated**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduates</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PARTICIPANT STATS**

- Total # Workshops: 6
- Total # Participants: 198
- Breakdown of Participants:
  - Undergraduates: 36
  - Grad Students: 137
  - Faculty: 21
  - Other: 4

**Countries of origin:**

- United States
- India
- China
- Japan
- South Korea
- Iran
- Puerto Rico
- Canada
- Ecuador
- Peru
- El Salvador
- Colombia
- Spain
- Ghana
“Participants often began 'speed meetings' hesitantly. However, they quickly saw the value of the meetings. The change in environment was obvious by the third round. There were clearly observable changes with an increase in volume of discussions, participants standing closer together, and greater animation among the participants including pointing at features on each other’s signs.”

-David Miller
CAPES Evaluation Report

Other Observations:

“You’re just like me!” – overheard from a participant at a Books as Objects of Study CoLAB.

Participants giving each other a high five and laughing.

“I forgot I was nervous by the end!”
Idea Boards - What synergies did you find?

What were the areas/concepts that people seemed to really connect/bond over?

- Connections based on research interests and career paths
- Connected with other students with strong passions
- The drive and desire to help community make a change and empower minorities
- Most people I could relate to due to common health interests
- Using media to decrease HIV/STI stigma
- UT offers lots of volunteering for community outreach for students
- Common interest in visualizing and communicating data
- Connections between psychology and women’s studies
- Interest in gender disparities i.e. the second shift
- Many libraries specializing in my research field and areas of interest-gendered health disparities
- Common interests in interdisciplinarity
Idea Boards – What did you learn?

What kinds of new knowledge, ideas or resources were acquired?

What seemed to resonate most with participants?

Google scholar is not as good as web of science.

There are many different avenues for gender/women's health research.

Approaching/meeting strangers.

Gender influences, food-finding behavior.

Learned about other people's research.

Latino's don't readily seek medical treatment: Have a fatalist mentality.

People are interested in meeting and talking to new people, regardless of the topic.

Librarians can give lots of ideas about resources on all kinds of topics.

Even though there were different areas of study represented, we all had much more in common in life and academics that you would think before this event.

UF has a PhD program in toxicology out of College of Veterinary Medicine.

I learned you can find common ground with anyone.

Need for better campus facilities for women (Showcases).
Idea Boards - What are your next steps?

Were next steps mostly about following up with others or expanding on what they've learned?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn about 2020 health goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I plan to look up ways I can use a career in nursing to positively impact other communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find out more about women and therapy classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconnect with some students to touch base about their school and endeavors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact/follow up with everyone 3 mins wasn’t enough!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact #4 about research/publication ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up with those I connected with. Lots of potential for collaborative projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up on interests and learn more about facilitating groups in this way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up with those that I made a connection with and had similar interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitely get involved and follow through with personal projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reach out to those people who had shared interests—especially librarians—will be good to know these</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting with #7! Researching more grad schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post-workshop surveys on profile signs

CoLAB Workshops Comprehensive Evaluation Report

View all Participants Feedback Results

Interesting Facts:

- 93.18% were about evenly distributed between rating the workshop good or excellent.
- When asked if they would attend a workshop like this again, 88.18% responded positively.
- 77.27% percent of participants reported they “felt more confident approaching people they do not know”.
- 90.45% percent of participants responded that they would recommend the workshop to other students.

Survey Results

Types of resources discovered:

- People with a different perspective
- People with a different background
- Possible collaborators
- New ideas for collaboration
- Learned of a new club or organization
- Meeting people with similar interests
- Development communication skills with strangers
- No resources yet with plans to follow-up with participants

POST-SURVEY (complete at the end of the session)

1. My overall CoLAB evaluation: [ ] Excellent [ ] Good [ ] Fair [ ] Poor
2. I would attend a workshop like this again: [ ] Yes [ ] No
3. I would recommend this collaboration process to other students/faculty: [ ] Yes [ ] No
4. Has this experience helped you realize the value of speaking to people you do not know about their assets, skills and passions? [ ] Yes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. CoLAB Results:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel more confident in my ability to approach people I don’t know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more comfortable talking to “strangers” in different disciplines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(If applicable) I am more comfortable talking to “strangers” in different positions in their academic or professional careers (e.g., student to faculty)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Did the CoLAB facilitation process help you access new resources, knowledge and/or grant-seeking information? If so, please describe: Absolutely! I learned so much about my discipline, other disciplines, and opportunities for collaboration.

7. What was the most useful part of the workshop and why? Meeting other experts in a neutral space, who are also seeking new connections.

8. What surprised you about the speed meeting process? It went by so fast! I was deep in conversation, I didn’t want to part.

9. During the presentation, what information was most useful and/or interesting? Asset-based community development.

10. Would you be willing to participate in a 20 minute follow-up interview in the next 2-3 months? [ ] Yes [ ] No (Please list email if Yes)

Enthusiastically so.
Follow-up participant interviews

Sample Interview Questions:

• Did you use the online follow-up to continue networking with fellow participants? Why or why not? In what ways?

• Do you feel more connected to resources and important assets in your community? In what ways?

• What are different resources that you feel you can tap into after your CoLAB experience? (New people, new departments, new facilities/organizations, etc.)

• How do you feel about collaborating with other people? Personally? In research? In team projects?

• Did your view on collaborative relationships change as a result of your CoLAB experience?
Participant results...in their own words

“I did follow up with another participant. He’s in a different stage of his career than I am, but he actually just e-mailed me yesterday with a job opportunity within his lab and it’s a really good job. And he offered to help me in any way he could, he’s a grad student and I’m an undergrad. It was great timing, he just emailed me yesterday, but we did meet for coffee before that too.”

-Undergrad Student

“There were follow-ups with the College of Public Health and Health Professions. We did set up face-to-face meetings with some of them as a result of the CoLAB. We ended up forming a co-master’s degree where students in the College of Public Health can take a series of our classes as an option. So yes, that definitely, that’s what came of it.”

-Faculty Member and Associate Dean
Future of CoLAB Planning Series

Collaborating with Strangers
Facilitating Workshops in Libraries, Classes, and Nonprofits

Bess G. de Farber, April Hines, and Barbara J. Hood

Collaborating with Strangers Workshop Training-in-a-Box

How can you learn to connect faculty, staff, students, librarians or community members with “hidden” assets during speed-meetings?

P&G
Your questions are welcomed!

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