Collaborating with Strangers (CoLAB) on Intersections: Animating Conversations with the Humanities @ UF Participants, Facilitated Process and Results

December 7th, 2017

Presenters and Facilitators
Bess de Farber, CoLAB Planning Series® Creator/Facilitator, Libraries Grants Manager
April Hines, Journalism & Mass Communications Librarian
Barbara Hood, Director of Communications
Outcome Report

Collaborating with Strangers (CoLAB) on Intersections Workshop
Date of Café: December 7, 2017

Report Prepared March 13, 2018
By Danielle Barrientos, Intersections Program Coordinator

The materials included in this document reflect the results of conversations that materialized during the first Collaborating with Strangers (CoLAB) Workshop on Intersections, photos of the event, and participants’ responses to a follow-up evaluation survey. The Workshop was attended by 36 participants, 21 of whom were from the humanities.

The CoLAB Workshop was used to bring strangers together for the purpose of finding intersecting research interests and potential collaborators for the Intersections Research-into-Teaching Grant. Participants of the CoLAB Workshops were asked to complete a “profile sign” that they affixed to their torso area or held during a series of speed meetings. During each speed meeting, a duration of three minutes, participants were asked to pair up, read each other’s profile signs and then converse about any topic. After each brief meeting the pair was asked to decouple quickly and find another participant for a new speed meeting. Following ten rounds of speed meetings, participants were asked to answer three questions on Post-It notes: what synergies did they observe, what did they learn, and what are there next steps? Participants of the workshop were then asked to complete a survey evaluating their experience at the CoLAB workshop. After the workshop, participants’ headshots, profile signs, and Post-It notes were transcribed and made available in a password-protected website to facilitate follow-up communications and the CoLAB Idea Table Cafés that followed in subsequent weeks.

All of the CoLAB participants noted that their CoLAB experience was either “excellent” or “good.” 100% of participants also shared that they would attend additional CoLAB events and recommend them to others. In further compliment of their positive experience, 91% of the CoLAB participants shared on their surveys that the CoLAB experience helped them realize the value in speaking to others about their skills, assets, and passions. More than half of the CoLAB participants also shared that they felt more confident speaking to others (in different disciplines and different positions), and more than half recognized the ways in which their research could be advanced by collaborating with others.

In responding to the open ended survey questions, participants revealed their excitement to find others whose interests overlapped and new resources that could support their work. As one professor of foreign languages observed, “[I learned that] Lots of people in fields I thought were unrelated are working on topics connected to my own.” Many participants provided answers about their surprise on how productive the three-minute speed meetings were; as one participant observed, “I find that it was easy for me to relate to other people who study history, no matter the time period.” Participants listed between one and seven people they intended to follow up with after the workshop. When asked about discrete outcomes, for example, one political scientist shared, “possible connections in Japanese literature, also Classics.”

Most informative were the answers in response to the specific connections participants made with their own work and other “big” topics in the humanities. Close to 40% of the participants provided detailed answers about the ways in which the CoLAB facilitated a creative environment that helped them to develop interdisciplinary project topics related to health, technology ethics, diversity, and information literacy.
### CoLAB Workshop Evaluation Report

**36 Total Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Humanities –21 (58%)</th>
<th>Non-Humanities –15 (42%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty members</td>
<td>17 (81%)</td>
<td>11 (73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Students</td>
<td>4 (19%)</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Members</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (20%)</td>
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</table>

**36 Completed Surveys**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Staff Members</td>
<td>0</td>
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1. **How would you evaluate the overall CoLAB experience?**

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Humanities</th>
<th>Non-Humanities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>27 (75%)</td>
<td>16 (76%)</td>
<td>11 (73%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>9 (25%)</td>
<td>5 (24%)</td>
<td>4 (27%)</td>
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2. **Would you attend another CoLAB?**

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Humanities</th>
<th>Non-Humanities</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36 (100%)</td>
<td>21 (100%)</td>
<td>15 (100%)</td>
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</table>

3. **Would you recommend CoLAB to others?**

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<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Humanities</th>
<th>Non-Humanities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36 (100%)</td>
<td>21 (100%)</td>
<td>15 (100%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. **Has this experience helped you to realize the value of speaking to people you do not know about their skills, assets, and passions?**

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<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Humanities</th>
<th>Non-Humanities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34 (91%)</td>
<td>19 (90%)</td>
<td>15 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I already knew</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
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5. **I have a better sense of how I could advance my research interests by working in collaboration with others.**

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<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
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<th>Non-Humanities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>18 (50%)</td>
<td>10 (47.5%)</td>
<td>8 (53%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>16 (44%)</td>
<td>10 (47.5%)</td>
<td>6 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
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6. **I feel more confident in my ability to approach people I do not know.**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
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<th>Non-Humanities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>13 (36%)</td>
<td>9 (43%)</td>
<td>4 (26.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>14 (39%)</td>
<td>7 (33%)</td>
<td>7 (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>8 (22%)</td>
<td>4 (19%)</td>
<td>4 (26.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
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</table>
7. I am more comfortable talking to “strangers” in different disciplines.

<table>
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<th></th>
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<th>Non-Humanities</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>16(44%)</td>
<td>9 (43%)</td>
<td>7 (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>10(28%)</td>
<td>6 (29%)</td>
<td>4 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>7(19%)</td>
<td>5 (24%)</td>
<td>2 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2(6%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>1 (6.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1(3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (6.5%)</td>
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8. I am more comfortable talking to “strangers” in different positions in their academic or professional careers.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Humanities</th>
<th>Non-Humanities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>12 (33%)</td>
<td>7 (33%)</td>
<td>4 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
<td>1(3%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>11(31%)</td>
<td>6 (29%)</td>
<td>6 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>6(17%)</td>
<td>4 (19%)</td>
<td>2 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5(14%)</td>
<td>3 (14%)</td>
<td>2(13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1(3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
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</table>

9. Did the CoLAB help you to access new skills/resources?

- 25 (69%) of participants answered “Yes” and/or affirmed the question with additional information about skills and resources that they were able to access such as library resources, participants with similar interests, and potential collaborators. For example:
  - Yes, I found someone who can help me create a music therapy program for students studying in the library during finals.
  - I have made new connections with people whose skills intersect mine. They will be a great resource.
  - Yes, made contacts that will help expand the creative possibilities for projects.
  - Yes! I think we might have an idea for a course.
- 5 (14%) of participants gave responses that were more vague. For example:
  - People
  - I am happy I met so many people I should already know
  - Only got to meet 3 before needing to leave early. Connections to those would take a bit more time
  - We will see.
  - It helped me meet new people but whether I can access new resources or not depends on whether we follow up or not
- 6 (17%) participants did not provide an answer to this question.

10. What was the most useful part of the CoLAB and why?

- 10 (28%) of participants specifically described the “speed” or “3 minute” style meetings that the CoLAB uses as the most useful part of the CoLAB process.
- 2 (6%) described the profile signs or other aspects of the CoLAB process itself.
- 16 (44%) described meeting new colleagues to discuss potential projects or just interacting with others to discuss projects in various fields.
- 7 (19%) did not provide a response to this question.
- 1 (3%) participant directly noted “getting a sense of who interested in applying to Intersections grants.”
11. What surprised you about the speed-meeting process?
- 9 (25%) of participants made note of their expectations in relation to the time of their meetings. Many were surprised on how quickly the meetings passed, or how much they were able to discover and the productivity of their speed meetings.
- 9 (25%) were surprised to find that they shared interest in others’ work and had more in common than expected, or how much they could learn when meeting a new person.
- 8 (22%) noted how fun the speed meetings were, or surprised how comfortable they felt talking to strangers.
- 1 (3%) noted there were “no real surprises.”
- 9 (25%) did not provide a response to this question.

12. What connections do you see between your work and “big” topics in the humanities?
- 10 (27%) participants provided clear feedback on connections they made during their CoLAB experience and described ideas they had on “big” topics that intersected with the humanities. Their responses have been categorized into the following themes:
  - How technologies shape our society and social lives
  - Much potential between the Humanities and Computer Science
  - Mind-body therapies/mind-body dualism history
  - Research and information literacy
  - Health through the humanities
  - Digital citizenship & how the internet affects knowledge production/manipulation
  - Rethinking knowledge and how to include community in the production of knowledge
  - Connections between archives and power structures
  - Collaboration between biological/neuroscientific and socio-cultural realities: evolutionary relationships
  - Empowerment & diversity
- 7 (19%) participants provided ambiguous answers about working with others or a “big” topic in the humanities, such as:
  - Potential partnerships
  - Questions of accessibility, overlapping interests etc. with very localized issues
  - Unique interests- I forgot that perspective has value
  - Broad interest dealing with vexing problems
  - A strong sense of shared mission across campus
  - Make work public!
  - I find that it was easy for me to relate to other people who study history, no matter the time period.
- 4 (11%) of participants spoke about new resources/techniques they discovered to address “big” topics, such as:
  - Using social science data to contribute to answering questions
  - Piloting new courses in the Honors program
  - Mobile videos can be applied to teaching concepts in various disciplines.
  - Developing undergrad research skills & undergrad teaching in classroom/online
- 3 (8%) participants were not sure or did not have an explicit answer:
  - Sigh. Still wondering. Many of the big questions seemed a bit specialized.
  - I’m not sure yet
  - Good (connections)
- 12 (34%) participants did not provide a response to this question.
IDEA BOARD RESPONSES – INTERSECTIONS COLAB DECEMBER 7TH, 2017

Following the workshop, participants were invited to share on post-it notes the synergies they observed and their next steps. The numbers in the following pages refer to individual CoLAB participants for anonymization purposes. Transcriptions are verbatim.

What SYNERGIES or connections did you discover?

1 "Someone who can teach me to make instructional videos"
2 "digital citizenship + medievalist political movement" "globalist medieval history!" "Nationalism in Africa + medievalism"
3 "Physical activity combined with dialogue and time constraint, as well as diversely educated and passionate individuals yields Fruitful and playful interaction!!"
4 "-about urban development -about town growth connections - about language grant"
5 "Possible connection to 25,16,11"
10 "Connections w/ various dept. across campus"
11 "-health care mind/body -journalism students"
12 "Lots of potential honors courses!"
13 "3, 32, 33, 16"
14 "I found lots of interest in mobile videos as learning objects"
15 "Librarians are engaged"
16 MUSEUM STUDIES, LITERATURE, HEALTH, WOMAN STUDIES, COMPUTER SCIENCE. RACE & SPACE - GENDER & SPACE -HEALTH & SPACE"
20 "-Grant-writing w/ Sharon on predictive policing. -Collab on socially beneficial uses of health data w/ Maggie."
21 "Lots of people in fields I thought were unrelated are working on topics connected to my own"
22 "Talk to 33 about medieval exempla (miracle stories)" "29 interested in TEI & DH" "19 works in Mexico & so do 1"
23 "-a number of potential colleagues have heard of my work and want to know more."
24 "POSSIBLE CONNECTION IN JAPANESE LIT. ALSO CLASSICS"
29 "I got to connect with several people who are interested in history!"
30 "Several! Quite a few people have interests in my work. I'm also interested in their work"
31 "that many people are looking for new ways to collaborate with other fields"
32 "Connect with IFAS on wellness, music and newer science, Connection with community outreach"
33 "I found people with whom I might plausibly work."
34 "My area is so interdisciplinary & I met so many indiv. w/ shared interests & even offered up names of other people For Folks to connect w/"
40 "Medieval history: race studies Public Histories -Libraries and Museums"
45 "I Know Barbara Mennel. We do yoga together."

unnumbered

"Mobile Museums Interest"
"I found out that #12 is interested in honors-student well-being, like me!"
"Common interests about Fake News" "Common interests on open data"
"Some knew of a professor I want to work with"
"No. 14 Erin is interest in domesticity & interiors and would like to incorporate links from around the globe. And work with domesticity in Indo-Caribbean writing so this is a great connection."

What did you LEARN?
1 "that BIEBR does survey and analysis work for hire"
2 "That I should be looking to supplement my work w/ hard data!"
3 "Humans love to be creative and socially engage, and I believe the synchronizing elements of constant external auditory stimulus contribute to this activity. And/or facilitate"
4 "About ethics + technology I met Melissa who is the Sophia of the Honors college I learned about a Mexican author who wrote about miniature houses outside of Bel (?)"
5 "Researchers with rather different background can collaborate"
7 "Quest is a possibility"
9 "Many Hidden Resources @ UF to help in future teaching & Research"
10 "Many people understand the need for social sustainability"
11 "PhD in philosophy works for CISI"
12 "Honors is not well-known across campus. Lots of missed opportunities!"
13 "I like to collide with people - improve-"
14 "I learned a lot of people hate Comic Sans" "I learned some new resources for meditation" "I learned Korean TV shows are awesome!"
"People have DIVERSE interests"

"I can have a computer program written that tracks movement in space (spatiac fudoor computing)"

"Several people study law, but do not seem familiar with Mexican law"

"I learned that the Honors College is interested in interdisc Phil courses - African American studies would guest lecture in my CMI course"

"12 organizes honors classes - they don't have linguistics" "26 runs a libraries + museums program"

"Several faculty in other units are working in related areas (doh!) and are interested in collaborating (yah!)"

"PHILOSOPHY HAS SOME REALWORLD IMPLICATIONS"

"Free Jiu Jitsu class on Sunday @6:30"

"I learned a lot about interests of faculty, staff, and students from different colleges."

"Despite being uncomfortable it's good practice discussing interests and to listen to others."

"Enhanced appreciation of discussions with those in other disciplines; the connections in what we are doing that may not have previously been apparent."

"I find talking to strangers exhausting. Sorry!"

"There is a new office for sustainability to assist with projects + partnerships" "Connect with #27 & #13 about develop. Visual lit skills among H +SS students" "Connect with #1 about teaching clinical research methodologies & creating meditation event at LW" "Meet with #30 & AASP Faculty to connect/engage w/ Assp online students & dec online lib. inst."

"I learned there is a History of Interiors program. Connections between Ancient Histories et Current Histories"

"I learned how to get a co-sponsor!!!!!"

"That many other departments/researchers are asking the same questions I am."

"People have a diverse range of interests & one never knows how paths cross until they have met or spoken to each other. Ultimately we need to speak more to each other" "I have learnt that no. 19, Emily loved reading The Great Derangement by Amitav Ghosh. Thanks for recommendation. I learnt a large number of scholars are interested in landscape & domesticity."

"There is a Digital Native Am. languages Dictionary"

"Overlapping interests in [indecipherable] issues"

"I learned that the self care movement is particularly salient for certain minority groups."

"I learned about "hattitude"! Workshops." "BIEBR is no longer going to be openly available. Needs funding! :("
**What are your next STEPS?**

1. "Email Margherita about digital preservation + political regimes wksp."

2. "To follow-up with people I had the opportunity to meet and keep the fire burning!"

3. "Email Joel Black #17 Van's email. Email #21 Erin Cunningham the email address of Lauren Pilcher (my grad student). Invite Maya Patel #10 mayapatel@ufl.edu about invites to Libby Roderick."

4. "Follow up w/ several individuals for course collaborations and/or guest lecture"

5. "To reach out to the connections I've made today and learn more about potential partnerships"

6. "Connect w/ #25 on precision public health"

7. "Follow up w/ several people about involvement w/ Honors"

8. "Partner with #32 to talk about chronic diseases - perception - feedback on a paper" "16 -studio design spaces- maybe connect to talk?"

9. "Set up lunch dates w/ several people -discuss research collaboration"

10. "Write an abstract"

11. "DEEPING CONNECTIONS WITH: -COMPUTER SCIENCE -MUSEUM STUDIES -WOMAN STUDIES -URBAN PLANNING -HEALTH - HONORS PROGRAM -LITERATURE"

12. "Contact all of these interesting folks!!"

13. "I plan to contact #24 about UF Quest" "I plan to contact #23 about collaboration" "I plan to contact someone #4 told me about team teaching."

14. "Talk more to 29 about DH projects"

15. "will contact 21, 20, 19 to 33 discuss active mid-range collaboration"

16. "CONTACT SEVERAL PEOPLE FOR FOLLOW-UP."

17. "I Plan to contact Zach (& others) about his idea for a Quest course about shifts in power"

18. "Contact persons with common research and teaching interests"

19. "Follow up with various people for help and collaboration or to simply talk more!"

20. "Make the connections after I pause & let this all seep in."

21. "Contact #8 about "Fake News" workshop" "Contact #9 about conflict management"
"Contact #12 about technology in and strategies online teaching"

34 "Meet w/ or talk to Barbara #4 about grant prop & developing a meta-level "grand idea"

40 "Connect with no. 27 on Museums and History, Connect with no 23 on Environmental Humanities SA & US, Connect with no. 26 on Minority Representation in Museums. Follow no. 8 on Twitter"

unnumbered

"Follow up with Val Leitner about historical cooking! Possible library programming idea." "Follow up with #3 about some kind of music therapy event for Finals relaxation week."

"I would love to get in touch with No. 14 Erin, and discuss about our common interests in domestic space and hopefully we can come up with some collaborative work. I would love to speak with Emily (19) about gender & decolonial studies."

"Contact #12, #10, #24, #20, #9, #11, + #8 about ideas discussed."

"Solidify connections I started to make w/ those that have similar interests"

"Talk to 11,16,25 if they are interested"

“Emailing w/ contact”

GALLERY: Participants at the CoLAB Workshop