CoLAB Idea Table Cafés on Intersections:
Animating Conversations with the Humanities @ UF
Participants, Facilitated Process and Results

Facilitated by Bess de Farber, Grants Manager
Smathers Libraries at UF
January 19th, 2018
Outcomes Report
Collaborating with Strangers (CoLAB) on Intersections Workshop
Date of Café: January 19, 2018
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 second CoLAB Idea Table Café on Intersections: Animating Conversations with the Humanities, photos of the workshop, and participants’ responses to a follow-up evaluation survey. The Café was attended by 25 participants representing the 19 disciplines illustrated in the word cloud to the right, including 12 in the humanities.

The structure of this workshop utilized the World Café protocol. Participants were seated at four tables, with one participant volunteering to scribe while others listened and conversed about responses to one question: What possible research or project ideas exist at this table, if we were to partner with each other? Each table answered this question during a 20-minute discussion, at which point a bell was rung to indicate that two participants from each table should move to other tables for a new round of conversations. This process was repeated twice, to enable three discussion periods. Prior to starting each discussion, participants read the pre-circulated profile signs of those seated at their tables in lieu of verbal introductions. At the start of round two and round three discussions, those participants who had remained at the same table shared the discussions that developed in the previous round or rounds before embarking on new discussions.

Following three rounds of discussions, participants were asked to share key words that represented the topics discussed at each of the tables. Finally, participants were asked to practice developing grand-challenge questions using the key words representing the major discussion topics.

The Café style workshop on January 19th appeared to facilitate more partnering between participants for research projects and Intersections Research-into-Teaching Grant applications than the previous Idea Table Café (on January 11, 2018). 19% Nineteen percent of responding participants said they found new resources for an existing project, 38% said they found resources to begin a new project, and 44% said they found resources to create an Intersections Grant application. In regard to the workshop itself, the majority of participants found having access the profile sheets of others helpful, while all participants confirmed they would be willing to attend another CoLAB event and recommend it to others. Overall, the workshop contributed directly to the formation of at least two applicant teams to the Intersections Grant by introducing new collaborators across disciplines and assisting them in turning their research ideas into grand-challenge questions. But, almost all participants provided specific feedback about the connections they made with others for the purposes of collaboration, teaching, and research beyond the Intersections program.
Café Discussion Themes

- **Ethics**
- **Exploitation in academic and community relationships**
  - Equality vs. power in research methods
  - Being in mutually respectful relationships
  - Faculty-student relationships
- Stimulating critical thinking among undergraduate students
- **Indigenous knowledge**
- Forms and context of communication
- Introducing more cultural perspectives to contemporary issues
- Process of knowledge transfer
- **Health** and its relationship with medicine and food
- How people’s personal attitudes filter how they intake information

Grand-Challenge Questions Created

1. How do people construct their identities and those of others around them?
2. Why does scholarship matter?
3. How can scholars do ethical research?
4. How can universities connect to communities in an ethical and respectful manner?
5. How do people identify the quality of information they encounter?
6. How do attitudes or bias affect the way people disseminate and interpret information?
7. How do people learn over their life cycle?
8. How do people effectively incorporate practice and experience in (higher) education?
9. How does social change happen?
Idea Table #1 (Dr. Barbara Mennel)

The Local
- What could relationships be...in and with the community?
- What is the LOCAL?
- Longevity and UF?
- What are needed services in the community?
- How could we think of processes and topics for community engagement?
- Water and other ethical decisions?
  - Law, policy, reflection

For all three rounds, this table focused on topics related to the local. After electing local as their focus of discussion, participants explored what “local” actually means. During the second and third rounds, the table began discussing issues of engaging ethically and sustainably with organizations in and members of the local community.
**Idea Table #2 (Dr. Sophia Acord)**

- Ethics and action in the public sphere
- Tools for students to help them act constructively in communities
- Why do we need to separate thought/action?
- Ways to connect student reflection and study with action and skill-building?
  - Literature as a foundation for teaching about the world and discussing how to act in it
- Historical perspectives on how medical knowledge is shared, carried by diverse populations, particularly women
- Psychology of social change

This table focused broadly on the relationship of thought to action in our classrooms and community. In the first round, participants discussed a nascent *Intersections Research-into-Teaching Grant* proposal by Prof. Anna Peterson (Religion) and Prof. Jaime Ahlberg (Philosophy) on the topic of Ethics in the Public Sphere, and the possibility of integrating a service-learning opportunity with coursework on ethics (by creating meaningful reflection opportunities on the ways in which ethical issues are manifest in service-learning for students). The second round brought scholars of literature and medicine to the table, who shared interesting case studies about how medical knowledge is transferred in communities around the world (past and present) outside of formal scientific channels, raising questions about what constitutes expertise in different contexts. In the final round, participants brought these threads together with a focus on “cultural knowledge transfer,” and discussed how the study of cultural beliefs and values that takes place in the humanities manifests in community-based research and projects. This final group also discussed best practices for experiential education in the humanities that involved community groups without burdening them.
Idea Table #3 (Ms. April Hines)

- Ethical dissemination of quality of information
  - How does ethics, trust, and empathy reflect changing attitudes in popular culture?
    - Digital media and literacy
      - Tailor to different audiences
      - What marketing does to change or manipulate minds?
      - Few facts matter
      - Lack of trust
      - Scholarship and conversation
      - How common goals are effective
      - Beliefs
    - Set aside identity to deal with facts
    - Interpreting data
      - How does interpretation lead to polarization?
- How do you develop critical thinking in education?
  - Does the top down dissemination of information lead to critical thinking?
  - How do you balance the perspectives of students without imposing upon their lived experiences?
- How do you find a balance in open discussion?

Participants in all three rounds of this table focused on the environment of communication and information in mainstream American society. In round one, participants discussed digital media and information literacy, focusing on the role of facts in a “post-truth” society. In round two, participants built upon these observations of the world to explore how cultural literacy can help people to understand what causes polarization and how to overcome it. In round three, participants focused on discrete ways that people could intervene in this polarizing environment through means of education and course instruction.
Idea Table #4 (Dr. Megan Daly)

- Variety of cultures and languages
  - How do these affect women, sexuality, and gender roles?
- Differences between urban and rural communities in the Global South
- Food and culture across time
  - How food influences religion, power, ethics, fears, cultures, poverty
  - Types of food and its relationship with trade routes
- Art, culture, power
  - Literature, propaganda, expression
- Historic preservation, oral history
  - Stories, how to tell, textiles, oral traditions, riddles
  - Health knowledge
- Migration through climate change
  - Cultural responses
  - Art as empowering tool for educators
  - Environmental sustainability policies

Participants over several rounds at this table discussed a variety of topics including languages and cultures, women and sexualities, food and culture, gender, power, and art. In round one, participants specifically discussed cultures of the Global South and disparities between urban and rural Florida communities. In the second round, participants expanded this discussion of culture and food throughout time, and considered how food influences spheres of gender, identity, and power. In the third round, new participants introduced the topic of the arts, and discussed various features of society such as riddles, oral traditions, and textiles in which identity and power can be manifested.
**Idea Table 5 (Ms. Stephanie Birch)**

- **Public health**
  - How do the Humanities, Social Science, and Sciences intersect?
  - Infusing indigenous knowledge into institutional systems
  - Social, political, cultural, and racial underpinnings of health disparities
    - How these connect to environmental inequalities
  - Ethical and sustainable processes for health-related inquiry
  - Human impact on disease spread
    - Education and intervention
  - Looking health parallels across cultures

Participants at this table discussed a variety of topics related to public health. In the first round, participants discussed various topics from indigenous knowledge, environmental and medical racism, health knowledge, climate change, and public health. In the second round, participants focused on the environment at large and its relationship with the community, specifically discussing the goals of the UF One Health program to manage complex health issues. In the third round, participants discussed ways of connecting the public to information on the environment and health through means of education and art, while also addressing other community issues such as food deserts.
**Idea Table Café Evaluation Report**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Participants 25</th>
<th>Humanities 12 (48%)</th>
<th>Non-humanities 13 (52%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>8 (67%)</td>
<td>7 (54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Students</td>
<td>3 (25%)</td>
<td>3 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Members</td>
<td>1 (8%)</td>
<td>3 (23%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completed Surveys 16</th>
<th>Humanities 9 (56%)</th>
<th>Non-humanities 7 (44%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>6 (67%)</td>
<td>3 (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Students</td>
<td>2 (22%)</td>
<td>1 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Members</td>
<td>1 (11%)</td>
<td>3 (43%)</td>
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</table>

1. **What did you learn?**
   This open-ended question generated a broad survey of responses with many overlapping themes (numbers in parentheses identify how many participants responded on the particular theme):
   - About many opportunities to share and collaborate (6)
   - Ethics of learning and practice (3)
   - Communication and people (3)
   - How to integrate theories and practices (2)
   - Other responses by individuals included:
     - About new ways to design courses around grand-challenge questions
     - About the Brown Center for Leadership and Service
     - Campus sustainability
     - The incredible variety among people (librarians, grad students, an extension employee and other types of faculty) at UF
     - A lot about work being done by colleagues at UF; ways to think about humanities in context of my work
     - Many people are interested in more responsible interaction between UF and Gainesville community

2. **Was the Café process enhanced by having access to profile signs?** *
   | Yes        | 12 (75%) | Yes |
   | No         | 3 (19%)  | No  |
   | Did not answer | 1 (6%) | DNA |

   *If so how/why? (General themes noted below:)
   - Saved time to focus on the discussions
   - Helped identify overlapping interests
   - Provided info about backgrounds and areas of research
   - Helped with introductions.

3. **Would you attend another Café?**
   | Yes | 16 (100%) |

4. **Would you recommend this process to others?**
   | Yes | 16 (100%) |
5 & 6. Did you find possible partners for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An existing project?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer</td>
<td>3 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
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</table>

Which projects?
(Several participants named colleagues with whom they felt they could develop projects but did not name specific projects.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A new research project?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer</td>
<td>5 (31%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Which projects?
- a group forming around race, identity, memory in medieval history (3)
- an exhibit around the symbols of health across cultures and time
- digital humanities project around food, culture, history
- bias and information
- ethics in the public sphere

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Sharing of resources?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12 (75%)</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>2 (13%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did not answer</td>
<td>2 (13%)</td>
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<th>Discovery of NEW resources?</th>
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<tr>
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<td>10 (63%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2 (13%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did not answer</td>
<td>4 (25%)</td>
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Which resources? (Participants noted resources they discovered, as well as resources they shared)
- Museum professionals and museum resources
- Experts in race and literature
- Human resources from other departments: experts in race and literature, African American Studies,
- UF One Health initiative and intersections with urban development
- Course mapping and digital humanities
- Libraries
Generating an Intersections Grant Application?

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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Did not answer</td>
<td>2 (13%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maybe/Potential</td>
<td>2 (13%)</td>
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On what topics?
- I have an existing project idea and now a way to package it as a grand question!
- Who or what is a bilingual?
- Food and culture
- Ethics in the public sphere
- Collaboration without exploitation and with respect

Other activities?

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Which ones?
- Resources for teaching: exhibitions, information literacy, internships (3)
- Resources for personal research: non-thesis project, and using historical narratives to explore how people create positive identities (2)

7. **Are you taking away any specific ideas or methods you plan to further explore? If yes, what?**

12 (75%) participants said they are taking away ideas and methods they plan to explore further, such as:
- How do we incorporate and value different ways of knowing/methodologies/knowledge corpuses in a responsible way that does not open up avenues to disseminate poor scholarship/ "Fake news"?
- How incremental changes often propel bigger changes? How grand narratives of discovery are built upon smaller localized histories?
- I want to learn more about social ethics and cognitive dissonance.
- I hope to be more collaborative. Classicists often work alone but they have a lot they can offer to a variety of topics.
- A grand question, and sub-topics to incorporate/embed into project based on broad/collective concerns, interests of this community of experts.
- I would to explore more the formation of identities and their roots in space and knowledge.
- The CoLAB model could be a great way for instructional support staff to get to know each other better identify potential topics of collaboration or information sharing, and identify solutions to common problems.
- Methods of info transfer, how attitudes filter info, use of online education in experimental education.
- How to think about information literacy, how polarizing communication can be, and how the history of a culture may continue to influence people.
- I got really interesting research idea about social justice in children's books and if they help inspire activism.
- Picked up a way of thinking about internships to consider for our existing program.

2 (12.5%) participants said responded no. One added, “Not at this time. For now, focused in connections and ideas for Intersections grant in particular.”

2 (12.5%) Participants did not provide answers.
GALLERY: Participants at the Idea Table Café