

# LUCAS CENTER FELLOWSHIP REPORT- 2018-2020

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## PART I: ACTIVITIES AND ASSESSMENT

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### Year One: Planning and Implementation

Throughout the academic year 2018-2019 I worked alongside the other Lucas Center Fellows to develop a comprehensive approach to reach out to our peers across the university. My particular area of focus centered on *Active Learning Strategies* that may be utilized in a variety of classroom settings.

Much of the first year was spent brainstorming with the other Fellows and learning from each other in order to “spread the word” to other departments. I personally shared information on research grants creation (Greg Boyce), syllabus construction (Anne-Marie Bouche) and library innovation (Heather Snapp) with my department. As fellows we spent a good deal of time learning about the offerings of our counterparts.

I was able to launch my “Spark Workshop”, titled *Monsters and Mayhem: How Scenario-Based Learning and Gamification Engage Communication & Global Community/Ethics in the Classroom* in the fall of 2018. This workshop allowed students that work as course assistants for the large lecture Apocalypse class as well as the other professors that co-teach the course an opportunity to present in front different members of the FGCU community prior to attending an academic conference.

In the spring of 2019 all of the fellows continued to meet and also attended the Lucas Center/FSW Symposium.

I also utilized the spring semester as a time to launch another workshop with a broader focus. This time it was titled, *Active Learning: Strategies for an Engaged, Collaborative and Exciting Classroom Experience*. Initially I put this workshop on as another Spark event at the Lucas Center. I subsequently presented an adapted version of the workshop to our library staff after Heather asked if I would be willing to share the information again. I presented over spring break to our library staff.

### Year One: Assessment

I walked away from year one learning a lot about ideas versus implementation. All of the fellows had wonderful ideas to share but when we put on workshops the attendance was modest, at best. I believe that I could have revisited specific courses that might have has an interest in my work (large lecture courses for example) and engage those faculty members OR have the

Lucas Center invite those faculty members. That said, even with modest numbers, the connections I have made with our library staff continue to endure and have become integrated in much of the active learning course development. By the end of this year I felt that perhaps making significant (versus many) connections would be better served in this fellowship opportunity. That said, I also wanted to return to see if we could increase the visibility of the fellows and programs offered by the Lucas Center.

### **Year Two: Revisions, Action and a Pandemic**

Based on my year one experience I was excited to work on the fellowship in year two to better foster specific relationships and culminate with materials that might serve the interests of the FGCU community. In the summer of 2019 I worked to secure the Lucas Center on two separate occasions in August and October for the newly revised Foundations of Civic Engagement Training. I was asked to revise the training program to include faculty that might usually be prohibited from attending in the summer. I devised a plan for have trainings in the Fall and Spring to open up the pool of faculty members. I also wanted this revision to work with the fellows that had so much to offer but did not see significant attendance at their workshops in year one.

The two training sessions focused on active learning strategies that I discussed in year one. Additionally, I made time for Lucas Fellows to present on their topics.

In addition to meeting with the fellows and these training/active learning sessions, I also worked with the Lucas Center at the various coffee hours in the fall. Again, this was another way to improve the visibility of the fellows and the offerings.

### **Year Two: Assessment**

I was excited with the start to year two. I was able to have Greg Boyce attend and present at the first training session. He was extremely well received. Attendance also more than doubled from my previous year one experiences. We had anywhere from 12-16 attendees at each session. This part was a success. After working with some criticism (from one of the fellows) from year one, I was able to tailor the active learning workshop specifically to the needs of the faculty that attended. Again, a success!

My plan for the spring was to build on this with the two remaining sessions. I also wanted to compile a database of sorts for faculty to utilize. First scheduling became difficult. I was unable to schedule any of the fellows for the first session. Then I fell ill and was unable to attend the symposium (among other things) in the spring. Lastly, Covid-19 changed everything dramatically for all those teaching. I was able to conduct one final session via Zoom. This session actually yielded the highest attendance interestingly enough (just under 20 for the three-hour session). My intended resource page will be available in part two of this report. I intended to work with the Lucas Center to somehow integrate this with our website. I hope that it may still be utilized.

## PART II: RESOURCES

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My initial plan with the following resources was two-fold. I hoped to provide one or two workshops over the spring semester that incorporated many of the ideas found in these various resources. After the workshops I wanted to work with the Lucas Center to provide a web resource of the activities utilized in the workshop (many described in these resources). I planned on taking video of the activities, editing those videos and providing examples from FGCU classes of the implementation of the various strategies described in many of these resources.

Instead I am providing you with a brief description of each resource and the hope that they might provide assistance for our faculty.

### Resources:

1. *Active Learning* by Dr. Cynthia J. Brame. Dr. Brame examines the brief history of active learning from its introduction (to academia) in 1991 to more recent concepts that focus on community based projects from the National Survey of Student Engagement (2015). The six-page document covers the important question of *does active learning work?* It also provides a dozen or so strategies that may be utilized in the classroom.
2. *Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom*. This document is an abbreviated look at the important work completed by Charles C. Bonwell and James A. Eison in 1991. Dr. Brame's active learning piece as well as many other refer to this earlier work. In this abbreviated form put out by George Washington University the work examines the importance of active learning in the classroom. There are about four easy strategies of employing active learning techniques. The article also explains the challenges that active learning faculty face in terms of "buy-in" by the academic community.
3. *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education* by Arthur W. Chickering and Zelda F. Gamson. In addition to the Bonwell and Eison piece from 1991 this piece (from 1987) is most often cited in the active learning literature. The seven principles are stated right up front
  1. Encourages contacts between students and faculty.
  2. Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students.
  3. Uses active learning techniques.
  4. Gives prompt feedback
  5. Emphasizes time on task
  6. Communicates high expectations.
  7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning

These principles are a great lens to view the importance of active learning. Not only is it one of the principles but using these strategies allows one to incorporate many of the other outlined principles. The piece explores each one of these principles in detail. Although this is the oldest reference listed I believe it expresses the sentiment behind active learning approaches most effectively.

- 4. Active Learning Strategies by the Berkeley Center for Teaching and Learning.** This is the first of three helpful education-based websites that provide active learning techniques. I would love to see our very own Lucas Center develop pages that are similar to the universities listed here. This particular site jumps right in to the strategies listed in many of the previous resources (listed earlier). Do you want to try an activity where students sit and talk with peers nearby? This site offers nearly a dozen active approaches that work in this format. Would you like students to move around? The site offers these strategies as well. There is something for any teacher.

<https://teaching.berkeley.edu/active-learning-strategies>

- 5. Active Learning by SERC (Science Education Resource Center at Carleton College).** I particularly like this next site because of its interface. There seems to be a hyperlink for everything! I also like that it tends to focus on science instruction. There's a belief that active learning is easier to do in a humanities course (it is not) than a science course. This site caters to those that instruct in the sciences. It also builds off of the work from Chickering and Gamson (listed above).

<https://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/gallerywalk/active.html>

- 6. Active Learning by Queens University.** I chose this final site because the interface/formatting is done in such a way that I could see FGCU and the Lucas Center developing something similar. It uses a module approach to dispersing the information. All of the information and strategies are covered in places like the previous websites but the modules allow a certain amount of interaction by faculty and students. An example of this is with a common active learning approach called "think, pair, share". The module format allows you to circle through as a faculty member or student and determine what this strategy looks like in a small classroom, large classroom, etc. I am not sure if it is the easiest to navigate but it provides a unique experience in gathering information about active learning strategies.

<https://www.queensu.ca/teachingandlearning/modules/active/index.html>

## PART III: LUCAS CENTER BLOG

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The Lucas Center is an exceptional resource that all faculty should take advantage of. My experience as a Lucas Center Fellow explored active learning approaches in various classroom environments. While I focused primarily on the humanities and civic engagement courses, there are so many other ways in which faculty from across the university may incorporate active learning techniques. The *seven good principles for undergraduate education* are important in *any course* offered at FGCU. Though dated, I encourage my colleagues to read this piece by Chickering and Gamson. While there is a great amount of recent literature on active learning it seems the most helpful and applicable way to utilize active learning strategies is through various educational websites. Here are two that are particularly helpful:

1. **Active Learning Strategies by the Berkeley Center for Teaching and Learning.**

This particular site jumps right in to the strategies listed in much of the literature on active learning. Do you want to try an activity where students sit and talk with peers nearby? This site offers nearly a **dozen active approaches** that work in this format. Would you like students to move around? The site offers these strategies as well. There is something for any teacher.

<https://teaching.berkeley.edu/active-learning-strategies>

2. **Active Learning by SERC (Science Education Resource Center at Carleton College).**

I like that this site tends to focus on science instruction with active learning components. There's a belief that active learning is easier to do in a humanities course (it is not) than a science course. This site caters to those that instruct in the sciences. It also builds from the "seven good practices" from Chickering and Gamson with a modern approach.

<https://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/gallerywalk/active.html>

----END BLOG POST----

I truly hope that this report encompasses the evidence and reflection you needed from my experience as a Lucas Fellow. I valued the opportunity to work with my colleagues in the Lucas Center format, to introduce students to the Lucas Center, and to develop resources for faculty. I would like to continue to have a relationship with the Lucas Center in any way you all see fit and particularly in the development of an active learning page that may become part of the FGCU and/or Lucas Center website. Thank you all for the opportunity, your leadership and dedication to high quality instruction at FGCU.

Many Thanks,  
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