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# Early Careers Workshop

## Building a Network for Early Career Scholars of Games and Learning

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## Abstract

The Early Career Workshop brought together scholars from around the North America, to meet, share research, consider potential collaboration and sow the seeds of the network they will grow together. It is the initial workshop that will be the launching point for the creation of a network of early career scholars in Games and Learning, which will foster new collaborations in research and grant writing.

## Workshop Description

The Games and Learning Early Career Workshop offered select early career scholars the opportunity for valuable career advice and critical feedback on their scholarship. The workshop was a half day meeting and was the initial phase to create a larger network to support the development of early career scholars across the interdisciplinary field of Games and Learning. The intention of the network is to connect scholars from different disciplines who all research in areas related to games and learning. The initial participants came from departments of education, information science, and business, with research that covered design, intervention, and ethnography.

The purpose of the workshop is to nurture early career scholars in Games and Learning. We endeavor to both widen the field and deepen research in the field as a new generation of scholars embarks on their careers. The workshop provides mentorship, the opportunity to build networks, and through collegial support work to advance and propel the study of Games and Learning.

The inaugural workshop consisted of several events. The first event was a panel on mentorship and career development from senior scholars and practitioners in the field. The panel offered the participants a chance to ask candid questions about career development in a safe and judgement free environment. The panelist shared their experiences and expertise, and each shared their unique career path. The participants then presented their research to their fellow participants. The presentations were used a way for the participants to get to know each other, understand what each other's immediate and long term goals are, and to be able to determine overlaps and intersecting areas of research with the workshop participants. After the presentations the participants met in birds-of-a-feather groups with one another along research interest lines to discuss possible collaborations and opportunities for grant writing. The workshop ended with a brainstorming session where participants shared ideas with us, the facilitators, on what the group needed for professional development and what would work best for keeping the network connected while the members were distributed.

The subject matter for the presentations reflected the interdisciplinarity of the participants. Research included a study on the career trajectory of women in games, analysis of the design process of serious games, study of relationships in online games, training teachers to use board games in early elementary classrooms, student learning outcomes in early elementary classrooms, the impact of audio on games, and the development of a unified theory of digital games. This diversity of participants' research reflects the diversity and variation in the field of games and learning itself.

The early career network has initiated an online forum through which to stay in touch, as well as share ideas, jobs, calls for participation, and news; and create connections and collaborations. The online forum will also be used to set up in person meetings at shared conferences attended by early career network members. The network will be developed through the inclusion of other early other early career scholars to the group.

The workshop has an advisor group of senior scholars in place to help guide the development of the network. The advisory panel will work with us over the next two years to guide the development of the network as it expands.

This workshop is the initial phase of the development of the workshop. From here we will build the network by inviting more scholars to join, using a snowball method to get the initial network started. We will also create meetups at conferences like the American Education Research Association, Digital Media and Learn and Games for Change frequented by early career network members, before we hold a second workshop next year. The long-term goal is that this network will become self-sustaining and will foster new collaborations.

## Acknowledgments