

Research Teams: Fostering Scholarship and Practice

Jeff Allen
University of North Texas, USA
Jeff.Allen@unt.edu

Malak Khader
University of North Texas, USA
MalakKhader@my.unt.edu

Millicent Njeri
University of North Texas, USA
Millicent.Njeri@unt.edu

Amy Rosellini
University of North Texas, USA
amy.rosellini@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This workshop is presented by members of a University of North Texas research team. First, the team will overview their experience as members of the research team and share experience in areas such as trust formation, team roles, productivity, work-life balance, faculty-students interaction, peer and faculty mentorship, dissertation preparation, and job seeking. Second, the workshop will discuss and brainstorm how this format can be implemented for organizations both with faculty-student teams and with peer-directed teams. Finally, successes and challenges are openly discussed with audience.

KEYWORDS

faculty team; research methods; student team; program development, scholarship; pedagogy

GOALS

This panel session is presented by members of a University of North Texas research team (faculty, students, and alumni). First, the panel will overview their experience as members of the research team and share experience in areas such as trust formation, team roles, productivity, work-life balance, faculty-students interaction, peer and faculty mentorship, dissertation preparation, and job seeking. Second, the panel will discuss how this concept can be implemented for organizations both with faculty-student teams and with peer-directed teams. Finally, the thorns and roses are openly discussed with audience.

OVERVIEW

The *SageResearch Tribe* was formed in the Department of Information Science at the University of North Texas in Fall 2018 with an open call for participation to current doctoral students. Criteria for membership was bounded by four criteria: 1) general interest in information literacy/behavior 2) willingness to learn from others; 3) willingness to work within a team of talented scholars; 4) ability to meet deadlines; and 5) interest in producing content for distribution.

Beyond the four criteria that serve as a price of admission on the team, the *SageResearch Tribe* builds resilience in its members through navigating open and direct feedback with poster, paper, and article submissions. The team fosters interdisciplinary education through collaboration of varied research interests to find intersections of skills that together contribute to the information science body of research.

This team is an example of how LIS education can modify the instructional environment with unique collaborations between faculty, students, and alumni. Doctoral research teams change faculty-student dynamics, depart from standard curriculum practices, and innovate how we prepare resilient information scholars with practical skills needed for the future.

The *SageResearch Tribe* builds leadership skills through both team leadership appointments and leaders of individual proposals. Members build confidence by learning to accept or reject feedback from peers and established academic reviewers. Graduate students forming the initial team, in 2018, had a variety of backgrounds and the initial five students were a variety of stages within their doctoral program (coursework to dissertation defense). Students' research interests included culture and information literacy, training and development, veterans and the workforce, smart cities, and information behavior in social media with the faculty director studying workforce wisdom. During the first year, the tribe worked to develop trust, negotiated common research interest, determined venues for scholarly dissemination, and created a first annual workplan to be conducted over the next 12 months.

As exciting as the first year was, the second (2019) year brought dynamic changes in team members. The team worked to integrate new students while gradually phasing out others - relationships and trust are key. The team also began building one of its strongest assets - grit in the form of receiving constructive feedback from peers, accepting and implementing critiques of rejected peer-reviewed papers, and navigating difficult conversations between members to brainstorm and develop important and innovative research. With the development of new skills, the second year exhibited team productivity growing with papers and posters accepted at major international conferences and a chapter submission.

The third year (2020) continued the trend of change with three members graduating and a new member joining. However, in this instance the three graduating members shifted their roles on the team (as alumni) but continued a full commitment to team goals. With fewer members exiting the team, productivity continued with papers and posters being accepted at major international conferences and a published book chapter. Though dynamics and membership continue to change, the team was normalized and poised for a fantastic fourth year.

The 2021 team is composed of the four doctoral students, three alumnae, and a faculty mentor. The team's annual schedule now includes 12 papers, panels, or papers for national and international conferences, four journal articles in development, two under reviews, and two in press. At this time, four previous team members have completed their Ph.Ds.

SESSION STRUCTURE

There are tremendous lessons to learn from a tribe of scholars with common goals. We propose an innovative and interactive workshop format.

Part I: Story of development, normalization, and performance. Part I will provide lessons learned, thorns and roses that are part of being a member or a collaborative high performance knowledge team.

Part II: Implementation. Part II will provide an opportunity for participants to create a plan for implementation in their organization (corporate or university).

WORKSHOP LEADERS

Dr. Jeff M. Allen is an internationally recognized scholar in the area of workforce innovation for the knowledge economy. He serves as a Regents Professor of Information Science at the University of North Texas. Together with his colleagues, he prepares students for jobs that are not yet created.

Malak Khader is a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of North Texas, where her field of study is broadly Information literacy, in collaboration with cultural and religious literacies. She has also done research with Information Behavior, Information Seeking, and Data Ethics.

Millicent (Milly) Njeri is a currently pursuing her Ph.D., at the University of North Texas, in Information Science with a concentration in Consumer Behavior and Experience Management and minor in Research, Measurement and Statistics. Her research interests include smart tourism, data analytics, consumer experience and behavior management, and tourism destination management.

Dr. Amy Rosellini is a knowledge management strategist currently working as Chief People Officer for a national investment real estate group. She received her PhD in Information Science with the University of North Texas. Her research focuses primarily on knowledge management systems, corporate culture and knowledge measurement.