

Making the Case for HCI Education: Developing and Sustaining Competence in Global HCI Education

User experience (UX) design is rapidly expanding as a field and discipline, drawing practitioners from a range of educational backgrounds, which ensures the field's diversity and multi-disciplinarity. However, this diversity comes at the expense of a shared and stable sense of disciplinary identity as is enjoyed by many other practicing fields of design or engineering. As HCI academics worked to become established as a field in the 1980s, there was substantial interest in defining pedagogical approaches and core content to address the rapidly changing state of the field. In intervening decades, little scholarship has addressed HCI pedagogy, even as engineering and design have invested heavily in this area.

In this talk, I report on almost a decade of my own scholarship of HCI and UX learning practices, bridging three unique contexts: 1) the development of a novel undergraduate program in user experience (UX) design at Purdue University; 2) facilitating study abroad experiences in digital civics at Open Lab, Newcastle University; and 3) bridging teaching and learning practices in UX through the development of a dual Master's degree between Purdue University and Beijing Normal University. Drawing on these global contexts for HCI and UX learning, in conjunction with continued practice-led research exploring the rapid evolution of UX practices "on the ground," I argue for renewed and substantial scholarship on HCI educational practices, building upon trends in the literature and scholarship from related fields. I will situate current interest in developing a "living curriculum" in relation to scholarship on HCI education from the 1980s and 1990s, building upon these multiple conversations regarding core knowledge and pedagogical practices to propose a call for renewed scholarship on curriculum, instructional strategies, pedagogical approaches, and research-practice relationships fostered by HCI programs.

AUTHOR BIO

Colin M. Gray is an Assistant Professor at Purdue University in the Department of Computer Graphics Technology and Program Lead for an undergraduate program and graduate concentration in UX Design. He holds a PhD in Instructional Systems Technology from Indiana University Bloomington, a MEd in Educational Technology from University of South Carolina, and a MA in Graphic Design from Savannah College of Art & Design. He has worked as an art director, contract designer, and trainer, and his involvement in design work informs his research on design activity and how it is learned. His research focuses on the role of student experience in informing a critical design pedagogy, and the ways in which the pedagogy and underlying studio environment inform the development of design thinking, particularly in relation to critique and professional identity formation. His work crosses multiple disciplines, including engineering education, instructional design and technology, design theory and education, and human-computer interaction.