

JOHN SPENCER

Curriculum Vitae
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PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT

My mission as a professor is to empower teachers (and teacher candidates) to transform their classrooms into spaces of curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking for all students.

EDUCATION

- Bachelor of Arts and Science in Secondary Education, History – Arizona State University (2004)
- Master of Education (Educational Technology) – Northern Arizona University (2009), received the Educational Technology Graduate Award for my research on teacher self-efficacy and blended professional development
- Doctor of Education (Curriculum and Instruction Focus) – George Fox University (2020)

TEACHING

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION (2015-PRESENT)

I am currently an assistant professor at George Fox University, where I specialized in educational technology.

- Served as the Digital Liaison for the College of Education (2020-2021)
- Mentored faculty as the Education Supervisor in the Digital Fluency Initiative (2016-2020)
- Conducted ongoing hybrid and face-to-face technology professional development for faculty (2015-2020)
- Designed and implemented online technology workshops on digital ethics, digital policies, authentic assessment, and the SAMR Model (2015-2020)
- Participated in the MAT rewrite committee for the design of the new assessment course (MATG 507) and contributed to the pedagogy course redesigns (2017-2020)
- Collaborated with two colleagues on developing the virtual format for MAT (2018-2019)
- Worked with district partners to develop course goals and a technology integration plan for the MAT curriculum rewrite (2018-2019)
- Oversaw the Educational Technology specialization, including recruiting and training adjuncts, designing the practicum and action research rubrics, rewriting course descriptions, and supervising candidates through the entire program (2015-2019)
- Worked as a cohort leader, using UX Design theory to teach online, face-to-face, and hybrid classes and presented these ideas at the Faculty Conference (2015-2020)

CLASSROOM TEACHER (2004-2015)

I have taught middle school (all subjects plus reading intervention, photojournalism and computer programming) in the Cartwright Elementary School District, an urban, Title One, school district in Phoenix, Arizona.

- Delivered the opening speech at the White House Future Ready Summit in 2014 for my work on a global collaboration project
- Developed the LAUNCH Cycle, a K-12 design thinking framework that added inquiry, research, and marketing to a hybrid mix of current frameworks
- Contributed to the design of the photojournalism and STEM classes for all of the middle schools in the district
- Founded Project IMPACT, a co-curricular service-learning program that incorporated design thinking for solutions-driven service projects
- Created Social Voice Media, a digital journalism program that included blogging, documentaries, and podcasts
- Led multiple PLCs as department chair and team leader
- Co-sponsored the Social Awareness Club, a service learning and social justice club
- Led the development of an inquiry-based one-to-one social studies curriculum
- Launched the Twenty-First Century Classrooms, a project-based one-to-one initiative with ELL classrooms
- Co-developed the STEM Camp Summer Lab School, combining professional development, curriculum design and action research within a project-based learning framework
- Designed a district-level online personalized professional development platform with lessons, resources and online classes
- Developed a site-level, choice-based, differentiated professional development framework that incorporated student data and action research

ENTREPRENEUR (2014-PRESENT)

As the co-founder of two educational technology start-ups, I am continuing to gain new insights into design thinking, market research, curriculum development and both UX and UI design theory

- Co-founded Write About, a blogging platform for K-12 students, centered on student choice, authentic audiences, and language support strategies in digital spaces.
- Co-founded Blend Education, an education publishing platform that includes books, products, audio-books, and courses, which has launched three Amazon bestsellers in the categories of Experimental Methods and STEM Education.

SCHOLARSHIP

As a member of the larger educational technology, I define scholarship within the Boyer's Model. This is the most predominant conceptual framework for ed tech scholarship.

Scholarly Focus

My scholarly focus is on the overlap between teacher professional learning, student equity, and transformational teaching practices (such as project-based learning, design thinking, and inquiry-based learning).

Boyer's Model: Level 1 (Discovery)

In the Boyer's Model, traditional scholarship tends to fit within discovery where scholars share their research findings in books, articles, and conference presentations. The focus tends to be on the broader practitioner audience. In educational technology, the big focus is on the reach of the platform, including audience numbers and metrics.

Books

I have varied my publishing between more scholarly, niche-oriented books and books designed to reach a larger popular audience. Three of my books have remained the number one in education on Amazon for the initial launch month.

Spencer, J. (2019). *Vintage innovation: Leveraging retro tools and classic ideas to design deeper learning experiences*. Salem: Blend Education.

Spencer, J., & Juliani, A.J. (2017). *Empower: What happens when students own their learning*. San Diego, CA: IMPress Publishing.

Spencer, J. (2017). *Making learning flow*. Bloomington: Solution Tree Press.

Spencer, J., & Juliani, A.J. (2016). *Launch: Using design thinking to boost creativity and bring out the maker in every Student*. San Diego: DBC Press.

Spencer, J. (2016). *Confident voices: digital tools for language acquisition*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

Spencer, J. (2013). Technology criticism in the classroom. In Clough, Olson, & Niederhauser (Eds) *The Nature of Technology: Implications for Learning and Teaching*. Boston: Sense Publishers.

Articles

The following are some of the articles I have published.

Spencer, J. & McKibbin, S. (2020, March). Empowered teachers empower students: John Spencer on the shift to student empowerment. *Educational Leadership*.

Spencer, J. (2018, December). The gift of boredom. *Educational Leadership*.

Spencer, J. (2017, September). Think Inside the Box: why embracing creative constraint is one key to problem solving and creativity. *Educational Leadership*.

Spencer, J. (2017, March). Genius by design: Using design thinking to structure Genius Hour. *Educational Leadership*.

Spencer, J. (2014, April). PD isn't the problem: Why teachers need the permission to innovate. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 95(7).

Spencer, J. (2013, September). We need gates: Why direction instruction is still necessary in self-directed learning. *Phi Delta Kappan*.

Spencer, J. (2013, April). Bad policy, bad practice: Why creative autonomy is the answer, not the problem. *Phi Delta Kappan*.

Spencer, J. (2014, February). From homework to home learning: Stop assigning homework and watch the learning grow. *Phi Delta Kappan*.

Spencer, J. (2013, February). I'm a better teacher when students aren't tested: Why creativity thrives when policy changes. *Phi Delta Kappan*.

Spencer, J. (2012, September). Abandoning Superman: A shift toward student-centered learning. *Phi Delta Kappan*.

Conference Presentations

I have presented in practitioner-oriented conferences throughout the world, including Hong Kong, the Netherlands, and Australia.

Spencer, J. (2020, July 25). *Virtual maker projects: Taking STEM and design thinking off-screen*. [Conference presentation]. Future Ed Livezaço, Brasilia, Brazil (Virtual).

Spencer, J. (2020, July 22). *Vintage innovative: A framework for hybrid and remote classrooms*. [Conference presentation]. Indiana Connected Educators Conference, Indianapolis, IN, United States (Virtual).

Spencer, J. (2020, May 21). *Project-based learning in virtual and hybrid environments*. [Conference presentation]. PBL K-12 Virtual Summit, New York, NY, United States (Virtual).

Spencer, J. (2020, April 29). *Empowering students in virtual environments*. [Conference presentation]. Catalyst Education Lab Virtual Learning Symposium, Hong Kong, HK, China. (Virtual).

Spencer, J. (2020, April 28). *Research-based strategies for increasing engagement and self-direction in virtual learning classes*. [Conference presentation]. Catalyst Education Lab Virtual Learning Symposium, Hong Kong, HK, China (Virtual).

Spencer, J. (2020, April 22). *Seven stages in the teacher-librarian technology journey*. [Conference presentation]. Texas School Librarian Association Conference, San Antonio, TX, United States.

Spencer, J. (2020, April 21). *Vintage innovation: A creative mindset for teachers and teacher librarians*. [Conference presentation]. Texas School Librarian Association Conference, San Antonio, TX, United States.

Spencer, J. (2020, April 15). *The Vintage mindset: A different approach to online, virtual, and hybrid courses*. [Conference presentation]. Virtual Symposium (Fontys University of Applied Science), Eindhoven, The Netherlands (virtual).

Spencer, J. (2020, March 5). *Project-based learning for all: Increasing PBL accessibility for ELL students and exceptional learners*. [Conference presentation]. NCTIES, Raleigh, NC, United States.

Spencer, J. (2020, March 5). *Empower: What happens when students own the learning*. [Conference presentation]. NCTIES, Raleigh, NC, United States.

Spencer, J. (2020, March 4). *LAUNCH into design thinking: How to integrate inquiry and research into design thinking*. [Conference presentation]. NCTIES, Raleigh, NC, United States.

Spencer, J. (2019, December 11). *Empowering students with voice and choice*. [Conference keynote]. SLATE, Wisconsin Dells, WI, United States.

Spencer, J. (2019, December 11). *Better by design: using design thinking to empower teacher leaders*. [Conference presentation]. SLATE, Wisconsin Dells, WI, United States.

Spencer, J. (2019, October 25). *Empowered teachers empower students*. [Conference keynote]. Catalyst Education Lab Conference, Hong Kong, HK, China.

Spencer, J. (2019, October 25). *PD by design: designing professional learning to increase motivation and teacher efficacy*. [Conference presentation]. Catalyst Education Lab Conference, Hong Kong, HK, China.

Spencer, J. (2019, October 25). *Empowered assessment: designing student-centered assessments to increase self-direction and metacognition*. [Conference presentation]. Catalyst Education Lab Conference, Hong Kong, HK, China.

Spencer, J. (2019, October 25). *Integrating divergent thinking into project-based learning lessons*. [Conference presentation]. Catalyst Education Lab Conference, Hong Kong, HK, China.

Spencer, J. (2019, October 25). *Research-based strategies for improving collaboration in PBL units*. [Conference presentation]. Catalyst Education Lab Conference, Hong Kong, HK, China.

Spencer, J. (2019, October 23). *The LAUNCH Cycle: How to design empathy-driven iterative design projects at the K-12 level*. [Conference presentation]. MIT Innovation HK Node, Hong Kong, HK, China.

Spencer, J. (2019, September 25). *Integrating design thinking structures into the International Baccalaureate Framework*. [Conference presentation]. IBARMS, Denver, CO, United States.

Spencer, J. (2019, July 30). *We want students to be creative but how do we assess it?* [Conference presentation]. Explore, Create, Empower Conference, Melbourne, VIC, Australia.

Spencer, J. (2019, July 30). *Making PBL a reality in virtual and hybrid environments*. [Conference presentation]. Explore, Create, Empower Conference, Melbourne, VIC, Australia.

Spencer, J. (2019, July 30). *Getting started with inquiry-based learning*. [Conference keynote]. Explore, Create, Empower Conference, Melbourne, VIC, Australia.

Spencer, J. (2018, December 9). *Epic engagement: Project-based learning through the lens of story*. [Conference presentation]. TIES Conference, Minneapolis, MN, United States.

Spencer, J. (2018, December 10). *Maximizing student engagement with a GRR approach to student ownership*. [Conference presentation]. TIES Conference, Minneapolis, MN, United States.

Spencer, J. (2018, December 10). *We want students to be creative but how do we assess that?* [Conference presentation]. TIES Conference, Minneapolis, MN, United States.

Spencer, J. (2018, November 30). *LAUNCH into design thinking: How design thinking can empower TAG students*. [Conference presentation]. Texas Association for Gifted Education, Fort Worth, TX, United States.

Spencer, J. (2018, November 30). *Using iterative thinking in PBL to reduce risk-aversion among Gifted / TAG populations*. [Conference presentation]. Texas Association for Gifted Education, Fort Worth, TX, United States.

Spencer, J. (2018, November 29). *The seven creative approaches to teaching*. [Conference presentation]. Texas Association for Gifted Education, Fort Worth, TX, United States.

Spencer, J. (2018, November 29). *The eight approaches to creativity: Measuring creative capacity in multiple domains*. [Conference presentation]. Texas Association for Gifted Education, Fort Worth, TX, United States.

Spencer, J. (2018, July 26). *The LAUNCH Cycle: Why we added inquiry, media literacy, and marketing to a K-12 design process* [Conference presentation]. The LAUNCH Academy at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, Philadelphia, PA, United States.

Spencer, J. (2018, July 26). *Design thinking in all subjects*. [Conference presentation]. The LAUNCH Academy at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, Philadelphia, PA, United States.

Spencer, J. (2018, January 23). *The Launch Cycle: Why we added inquiry, media literacy, and marketing to a K-12 design process*. [Conference keynote]. EdEx Design Thinking Expedition, Eindhoven, The Netherlands.

Spencer, J. (2018, January 23). *Interdependent design: How to create structures for mutual accountability*. [Conference presentation]. EdEx Design Thinking Expedition (Fontys University of Applied Sciences), Eindhoven, The Netherlands.

Spencer, J. (2018, January 22). *Structures for creative collaboration*. [Conference presentation]. EdEx Design Thinking Expedition (Fontys University of Applied Sciences), Eindhoven, The Netherlands.

Spencer, J. (2017, October 12). *Better by design: Using design thinking for student projects*. [Conference keynote]. Indiana Connected Educators Conference, Indianapolis, IN, United States.

Spencer, J. (2017, October 12). *Empowered anywhere: How to build student self-direction and agency into virtual, hybrid, and blended environments*. [Conference presentation]. Indiana Connected Educators Conference, Indianapolis, IN, United States.

Spencer, J. (2017, October 10). *It is personal: PBL for personalized learning*. [Conference keynote]. Institute for Personalized Learning, Milwaukee, WI, United States.

Spencer, J. (2017, October 10). *Making learning flow: Using Flow Theory as a framework for creative work and student engagement*. [Conference presentation]. Institute for Personalized Learning, Milwaukee, WI, United States.

Spencer, J. (2017, October 10). *Genius by design: Using design thinking for Genius Hour Projects*. [Conference presentation]. Institute for Personalized Learning, Milwaukee, WI, United States.

Spencer, J. (2017, October 9). *Wonder Week: An inquiry-based framework for personalized learning*. [Conference presentation]. Institute for Personalized Learning, Milwaukee, WI, United States.

Spencer, J. (2017, August 15). *The future of learning in higher education: future trends and innovations*. [Conference keynote]. Texas A&M, Texarkana, TX, United States.

Spencer, J. (2017, August 15). *UX Design Theory for personalized learning: Shifting from adaptive programs to human systems*. [Conference presentation]. Texas A&M, Texarkana, TX, United States.

Spencer, J. (2017, July 31). *It is personal: a project-based approach to personalized learning*. [Conference presentation]. Personalized Learning Summit, Minneapolis, MN, United States.

Spencer, J. (2017, July 31). *Implementing personalized assessments to increase metacognition and improve the feedback process*. [Conference presentation]. Personalized Learning Summit, Minneapolis, MN, United States.

Spencer, J. (2017, July 30). *Designing makerspaces to improve personalized learning*. [Conference presentation]. Personalized Learning Summit, Minneapolis, MN, United States.

Spencer, J. (2017, February 13). *The eight stages of the technology journey: A guide for leaders implementing the shift toward tech-integrated PBL*. [Conference presentation]. MOREnet Conference (University of Missouri with ISTE), St. Charles, MO, United States.

Spencer, J. (2017, February 12). *The Creative classroom*. [Conference keynote]. MOREnet Conference (University of Missouri with ISTE), St. Charles, MO, United States.

Spencer, J. (2017, February 12). *Cultivating a culture of creativity: Research-based practices for school leaders*. [Conference presentation]. MOREnet Conference (University of Missouri with ISTE), St. Charles, MO, United States.

Spencer, J. (2016, October 13). *Improving feedback loops and metacognition in PBL*. [Conference presentation]. Indiana Connected Education Conference, Indianapolis, IN, United States.

Spencer, J. (2016, October 13). *Building structure and interdependence into PBL*. [Conference presentation]. Indiana Connected Education Conference, Indianapolis, IN, United States.

Spencer, J. (2016, October 10). *Empathy through design: How design thinking can improve and develop student empathy*. [Conference presentation]. MOREnet Conference (University of Missouri with ISTE), St. Charles, MO, United States.

Spencer, J. (2016, October 10). *Transformative teaching: Blending together inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, and design thinking*. [Conference presentation]. MOREnet Conference (University of Missouri with ISTE), St. Charles, MO, United States.

Spencer, J. (2016, October 9). *Design thinking for all: How to ensure special populations have access to design thinking structures*. [Conference presentation]. MOREnet Conference (University of Missouri with ISTE), St. Charles, MO, United States.

Spencer, J. (2015, May 7). *The creative power of limitations*. [Conference presentation]. TEDx Talk. Pennsburg, PA, United States.

Spencer, J. (2015, February 25-27). *Off-road reading: A student-centered approach to ELA*. [Conference presentation]. iPDX / IntegratED, Portland, OR, United States.

Spencer, J. (2015, February 25-27). *The digital journey: Considering SEL of teachers in the tech-integration process*. [Conference presentation]. iPDX / IntegratED, Portland, OR, United States.

Spencer, J. (2015, February 25-27). *Maximizing Flow in a distracted world*. [Conference presentation]. iPDX / IntegratED, Portland, OR, United States.

Spencer, J. (2014, November 19). *The future of learning*. [Conference presentation]. White House Future Ready Summit, Washington D.C., United States.

Spencer, J. (2014, June 30). *Defenders of wisdom: Teacher-librarians, PBL, and the future of literacy*. [Conference keynote]. ISTE (SIGMS keynote), San Antonio, TX, United States.

Spencer, J. (2014, February 7). *Citizen journalism: How digital journalism can improve media literacy and digital citizenship*. [Conference presentation]. Nova Now, Grand Rapids, MI, United States.

Spencer, J. (2014, February 6). *Project Social Voice: integrating service learning into PBL*. [Conference presentation]. Nova Now, Grand Rapids, MI, United States.

Spencer, J. (2014, February 6). *Vintage Innovation: looking back to look forward*. [Conference presentation]. Nova Now, Grand Rapids, MI, United States.

Spencer, J. (2014, February 10). *Pocket change: digital journalism as a way to improve media literacy and develop digital citizenship*. [Conference presentation]. iPDX / IntegratED, Portland, OR, United States.

Spencer, J. (2014, February 10). *Photo prompts: A student-centered approach to writing*. [Conference presentation]. iPDX / IntegratED, Portland, OR, United States.

Spencer, J. (2014, February 10). *Social media as storytelling*. [Conference presentation]. iPDX / IntegratED, Portland, OR, United States.

Spencer, J. (2013, October 11). *We don't need rock star teachers: Teacher humility and resiliency in PBL*. [Conference keynote]. Indiana Connected Educators Conference, Indianapolis, IN, United States.

Spencer, J. (2013, October 11). *Empowered writers: How to build self-direction into student writing*. [Conference presentation]. Indiana Connected Educators Conference, Indianapolis, IN, United States.

Boyer's Model: Level 2 (Integration)

In the Boyer's Model, integration is all about building partnerships across disciplines. The following are a few examples of how I have integrated my scholarship across disciplines:

- Keynote and sessions with the design school at Fontys University in Eindhoven, The Netherlands as a partnership between design thinking practitioners, theorists, and K-12 teachers (2019)
- Partnering with CEL and engineers at MIT Hong Kong to provide week-long consulting for K-12 teachers in using the design thinking process
- Developing educational sketch videos and instructional materials (including the videos on mindsets, creative constraints, and project management) used by corporations (such as Progressive Insurance and Microsoft), government agencies (The World Bank), and non-profits (including the Mayo Clinic trainings)
- Engaging in interviews with Parent Lab and with *The New York Times* on how to build creativity and student agency during the quarantine. You can see the example at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/02/well/family/tweens-boredom-summer.html>
- Consulting with the Pew Research Group on how to design visual-oriented sketch videos to share relevant data via social media

Boyer's Model: Level 3 (Application)

In the Boyer's Model, application occurs when the researcher works with current practitioners to solve problems and provide practical insights. The following are a few examples of application in scholarship:

- Working with Marquardt School District in Illinois in an ongoing capacity by conducting workshops, coaching, and professional development with a focus on developing protocols for design thinking (2019-2020)
- Working with a school district in Oneida, NY, to develop a distance learning plan and to provide ongoing support to teachers (2020-2021)
- Consulting with the Ford Foundation to design ongoing PBL professional development with a focus on student equity and teacher self-efficacy and motivation (2019-2020)
- Working with the Cherry Creek School District in Colorado to provide ongoing professional development on design thinking (2017-2019)
- Working with St. John's Ravencourt in Winnipeg to launch design thinking projects and to create a Global Day of Design competition (2016-2018)
- Working with an association of Christian schools in Melbourne, Australia, to do a week of workshops, coaching, and curriculum development on student-centered learning, with an emphasis on project-based learning and inquiry-based learning (2018)
- Volunteering with local school districts (see service section) on an ongoing basis with a focus on design thinking, digital learning, and hybrid learning (2016-present)

Boyer's Model: Level 4 (Teaching)

Within the Educational Technology Community and the larger Boyer's Model framework, scholarship includes the creation of digital content and resources for practitioners. The focus here is on practical resources that are used by the larger practitioner community.

- Writing weekly articles on a blog that receives an average of over 500,000 pageviews per month (2003-present)
- Recording a weekly podcast, The Creative Classroom, that remains in the top 50 Education podcasts according to Apple Podcast metrics (2017-present)
- Recording videos for a YouTube Channel with 36,000 subscribers, including a video with 978,000 pageviews (2015-present)
- Writing a weekly newsletter with over 65,000 subscribers
- Creating free lesson plans, unit plans, eBooks, frameworks, writing prompts, and other resources for K-12 teachers
- Maintaining a presence on Facebook (16,200 followers), Twitter (46,100 followers), and Instagram (2,600 followers)

SERVICE

I am passionate about empowering students to become creative thinkers and problem-solvers. Most of my volunteering centers around this idea of empowering students through voice, choice, and creativity.

Global Education Community:

- Launched the Global Day of Design, with over 50,000 participants in 2016 and over 100,000 students in 2017, 2018, and 2019.
- Developed and designed the Mars Challenge Global Design competition with over 30,000 students participating in prototyping an ideal school for Mars
- Consulted with numerous local school districts on design thinking implementation in STEM courses from 2014-2017
- Designed free online resources including maker challenges, video writing prompts, STEM Challenges, and a design thinking toolkit that have been downloaded hundreds of thousands of times
- Developed and released weekly top-rated content through a blog, podcast, YouTube Channel

Local Education Community:

- Volunteered with Newberg School District leadership in developing design thinking and Genius Hour elective classes in 2016-2020
- Provided shorter free design thinking consulting to local districts and organizations (including OETC, Forest Grove School District, and Evergreen School District) from 2015-2020.

- Volunteered at Ockley Green Middle School training teachers on design thinking in multiple subject areas in 2015 and 2016
- Conducted social media and digital policy training for two cohorts of superintendents in Arizona from 2011-2014
- Provided website development and technical guidance for the Dare2Dream Youth Leadership Conference from 2008-2014

Faith-Based Community:

- Helped create and launch the Happiness Conversations digital media strategy for a Cadence International hospitality house, which helped a pastor and licensed counselor work with airmen to process life decisions and de-stigmatize PTSD (2020)
- Participated in the Interfaith Hospitality ministry at St. Paul's Episcopal Church (2017-2019)
- Provided youth leader and parent workshops *Social Media for Parents* in Tucson, Arizona (2013-2014)
- Volunteered as a mentor for Neighborhood Ministries, providing guidance for a student from fifth grade through college and guiding to develop a holistic curriculum for the mentorship program (2000-2009)

George Fox University:

- Currently serving as the MAT representative on the Faculty Senate (2020)
- Worked on two different Year 3 Review committees (2018-2019)
- Served on a committee to hire a new professor for the MAT Full-Time position (2017)
- Provided workshops for the Oregon Writing Project as they developed digital camps (2015-2016)
- Taught several sessions for the Digital Fluency Initiative (2016-present)
- Taught sessions on UX Design Theory for Faculty Conference (2017)
- Worked with the MAT+3 project in Yueyang City, China (2017)
- Taught the SAMR model, design thinking, and PBL to GFU undergraduate classes (2016-present)