



Heather Olson, Ph.D.

LEARNING, MOTIVATION, AND
ONLINE DESIGN



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Ft. Myers, Fl.

Education

Capella University — General Psychology, Ph.D. 2022

Specialized in positive psychology with a dissertation focused on meditation and stress reduction.

Florida Gulf Coast University English, M.A. 2013 English, B.A. 2013

Certifications

- Foundations of Positive Psychology Specialization (UPenn)
- Quality Matters (QM) Course Design
- Mental Health First Aid Facilitator

Skills

- Motivation-Informed Course Design
- Positive Psychology in Education
- Faculty Professional Learning
- Data-Informed Teaching & Learning
- Learner-Centered Instruction

About me

Scholar-practitioner and institutional leader specializing in motivation, belonging, and human-centered online learning. Expertise in applying positive psychology, self-determination theory, and growth mindset principles to faculty development, course design, and learning experience innovation across blended and virtual environments.

Experience

Director, Online Teaching and Learning Experience

May 2022- Present

Florida SouthWestern State College

- Design faculty learning experiences grounded in motivation, belonging, and autonomy to support effective online teaching.
- Lead and facilitate cross-disciplinary communities of practice focused on human-centered pedagogy and reflective teaching.
- Consult with faculty and academic partners to translate learning science into scalable course design and instructional practices.
- Collaborate with Student Affairs on initiatives supporting student wellness, engagement, and holistic success.

Faculty

Aug. 2014 - May 2022

Florida SouthWestern State College

- Designed learner-centered courses emphasizing motivation, self-regulation, and academic success.
- Developed tools and frameworks to support meaningful interaction and quality in online learning environments.
- Served on institutional committees focused on mental health, inclusion, equity, accessibility, and student well-being.
- Created a master shell for an asynchronous Academic Success Skills course grounded in learner needs and feedback.

English Teacher

Aug 2010 - Aug 2014

Florida SouthWestern State College Collegiate High School

- Developed interdisciplinary curriculum integrating literacy, STEM themes, and experiential learning.
- Piloted blended learning and early LMS adoption to support student engagement and agency.
- Initiated and managed a school garden program embedded within the curriculum.