

The NCPEA Connexions Project – Beta 1.2

What is Beta 1.2?

Beta 1.2 is an extension and improvement of the original version of the NCPEA Connexions Project (Beta 1.1). The first version was the display of each of 20 domains on 20 separate web pages resulting in a very labor-intensive management process. The real difference between versions 1.1 and 1.2 relates to how the material is USED rather than DISPLAYED (new Search Process). There will likely be more Beta versions (Beta 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, etc), as the Connexions Project is dynamic and ever changing with new resources and technology surfacing such as Manuscript FastTrack and FastPress.

What is Connexions?

Connexions is a place to view and share educational material consisting of small knowledge chunks called modules that can be organized as courses, books, reports, *etc.* Anyone may view or contribute:

- **Authors** create and collaborate
- **Instructors** rapidly build and share custom collections
- **Learners** find and explore content

Content should be modular and non-linear. Most textbooks are a mass of information in linear format: one topic follows after another. However, our brains are not linear - we learn by making connections between new concepts and things we already know. Connexions facilitates this by breaking down content into smaller chunks (modules) that can be linked together and arranged in different ways. This lets students see the relationships both within and between topics and helps demonstrate that knowledge is naturally interconnected, not isolated into separate classes or books. All instructional materials are housed on the Rice University servers (R. Baraniuk, 2008).

What is the Connexions Philosophy?

Connexions is an environment for collaboratively developing, freely sharing, and rapidly publishing scholarly content on the Web. Our Content Commons contains educational materials for everyone — from children to college students to professionals — organized in small modules that are easily connected into larger collections or courses. All content is free to use and reuse

under the Creative Commons "attribution" license.

What is the relationship between Connexions and NCPEA?

A team of educators at Rice University developed Connexions in 1999. In 2002, NCPEA and Rice forged a partnership to have NCPEA serve as a "lens" and review and sanction any educational material deemed as significant contributions to educational administration. All modules and other material sanctioned by NCPEA are peer-reviewed by NCPEA editors.

How do I submit manuscripts to Connexions as an author?

- First, go to the NCPEA web page at: <http://www.ncpea.net/>
- Second, click on NCPEA Knowledge Base Project. All directions, guidelines, and procedures are explained in detail.
- Third, be certain to register and set up a users account in Connexions. This is required to give copyright and author roles to you as the author. Accounts are free and can be set up in minutes.

How do I create a course utilizing published modules?

Connexions uses the term *Collection* for what professors consider a Course. Essentially, to create a Collection (or Course), a professor searches the Connexions data base (Content Commons) for published instructional modules and collects or organizes them into a course format (Chapters, Readings, Activities, etc).

What is Manuscript FastTrack?

NCPEA has made significant progress with the publications of assembling modules in educational administration through an international initiative called the *NCPEA/Connexions Project*. Most exciting is our recent association with Express Academic Services, which provides us with the Manuscript FastTrack™ system, a fully automated web-based manuscript management and tracking service. This speeds up the review process, improves the quality of reviews, and enhances the experience of authors, reviewers, and editors, while eliminating the need for administrative and other support staff. Some features of the system include:

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1. Reduces the average time manuscripts spend in review;
2. Improves the response time of reviewers;
3. Minimizes communication via automated and paperless correspondence;
4. Eliminates the need for document storage and archiving;
5. Provides editorial access to the manuscripts and databases from any place at any time;
6. Gains continuity of a single "editorial office" regardless of where editors are located and how often they change; and,
7. Allows authors to track their submitted manuscript status.

How do I register in FastTrack as a user?

Go to:

<http://ncpea.expressacademic.org/login.php> and register as a user. Registering is free and only takes a couple of minutes. This allows you to submit manuscripts and facilitates the review and publication processes. Submission is not possible without registering as a user.

What happens to my manuscript after submission?

- Step 1. Within seconds after your submission, an email is sent to the editor of the topic area indicated on your submission (e.g., Human Relations).
- Step 2. The editor then delegates your submission to an Assistant Editor, who requests 2/3 reviewers to begin the process of blind-reviewing your submission.
- Step 3. The reviewers have 14 days to complete the blind-review, after which your submission is reviewed by the Editor and a decision is made to: (1) Accept, (2) Reject, or (3) Accept with resubmit options. You will receive a timely notification from the Editor or Assistant Editor.
- Step 4. Once accepted, your submission is formatted into the Connexions Content Commons, and you receive formal confirmation from NCPEA that your publication has been peer-reviewed and sanctioned as a significant contribution to the knowledge base. This documentation

is designed to be used for your Promotion and Tenure needs.

Why is NCPEA using the FastTrack System?

All files, documents, tables, figures are uploaded to the FastTrack system by the individual author with a few clicks on the computer. Then, all of the reviewing, editing, and publishing steps are handled in the system, eliminating emailing files back and forth from author to editor and reviewer. Publication and other submission decisions are made in a much more realistic turn-around. In most cases, decisions are made within 30 days. The jobs of the editor and reviewer are no longer tedious or time-consuming. This is a win-win answer to getting your submissions reviewed and published much faster than the usual 6 month or more in traditional research journals.

What is FastPress?

FastPress is the partner to FastTrack, taking manuscripts from review and acceptance to an actual publication format.

What is the IJELP?

The International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation is an online journal used to highlight the published modules and manuscripts in NCPEA Connexions. In May 2008, the Project Director, NCPEA Executive Director, Chair and members of the NCPEA Publications Executive Committee (PEC), and other Board members decided to investigate the streamlining of the management and categorization of the Connexions publications into a new format. The issues needing addressed focused on two critical management procedures: (1) the submission and review process and (2) the finished publication format and process. The group reviewed several online systems designed to facilitate the submission, blind-review, and publication processes. Agreement was reached to use Express Academic's Manuscript FastTrack and FastPress services. This new system eliminates the need for separate locations of operations and centralizes ALL processes and procedures into one simple and very user-friendly data base. Most importantly, the system is not dependant on one or a few individuals - all published files including reviews are archived in one central location and available to anyone given managerial access to

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the site. Modules accepted for publication in Connexions are also published in the IJELP. All prior modules have been catalogued into back issues and available on the IJELP site.

What happened to the 20 Domains?

Due to the popularity of some domains and absence of contributions to others the 20 domains were condensed (without excluding any) into seven topic areas. Published modules are labeled with one of the 7 topic areas along with one or more of the categories associated with each original domain to facilitate searching the Connexions data base. Authors indicate a topic area (e.g., Organizational Change) and category (e.g., Key Idea and Theory) on the required submission form. The seven topic areas are listed below with the original domains in parentheses:

1. *Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology Leadership*
(Research Methods, Learning Theory, Curriculum, and Technology Leadership)
2. *Site and District-Based Leadership*
(Site-based Leadership, District Leadership, and School Public Relations)
3. *Program Preparation and Higher Education*
(Administration of Special Programs, Educational Management, Educational Leadership, School Business & Finance, School Law, School Facilities, and Educational Leadership Preparation)
4. *Organizational Change*
(Systems Analysis and Design, Organizational Structure, Strategic Planning)
5. *Human Relations*
(Student Services, Human Services, Mentoring, and Personnel)
6. *Critical Theory, Ethnicity, Diversity, Equity*
(Historical, Social, Cultural, and Philosophical Foundations)
7. *International Contributions*

What is the Search Tool?

This FastPress system has a very powerful and reliable search engine. Though you may search with any method, most useful strategies are searching by:

1. Author's last name
2. Key words included in the manuscript
3. One of the seven Topic Areas (e.g., Organizational Change)
4. A sub topic (e.g., Administration of Special Education)
5. A category (e.g., Key Idea and Theory, Lit Review, Instructional Module, Case Study, etc.)
6. A theory or concept (e.g., transformational leadership or mentoring), or
7. Any other word or phrase you might be looking for.

The FastPress search engine will track any word or phrase contained in any of the manuscripts in the *IJELP*, both current and back issues.

What are Endorsements and Lens?

NCPEA provides endorsement of all NCPEA Connexions publications and serves as a lens of quality and relevance to educational administration. An endorsement is a special type of lens that provides a window into the Connexions Content Commons of material that has been reviewed and approved by the lens creator. NCPEA endorsements display in the Quality box on each publication that has been selected by the lens.

How to cite Connexions and IJELP content?

Modules may be cited either of two ways: (1) as a Connexions Content Commons module or (2) as an IJELP publication. Examples are provided below in APA style:

1. Connexions Content Commons

Irby, B., & Lunenburg, F. (2007, October 12). *Doctoral Program Issues: Accreditation of Programs*. Retrieved June 21, 2008 from the Connexions Web site:
<http://cnx.org/content/m14599/1.3/>

2. International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation

Irby, B., & Lunenburg, F. (2007, October 12). *Doctoral Program Issues: Accreditation of Programs*. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 2 (1). Retrieved July 21, 2008 from <http://ijelp.expressacademic.org>

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What is an Impact Factor?

Journal Impact Factor is from Journal Citation Report (JCR), a product of the Thomson Institute for Scientific Information. JCR provides quantitative tools for ranking, evaluating, categorizing, and comparing journals. Impact Factor is a measure of the frequency with which the "average article" in a journal has been cited in a particular year or period. Many universities are expecting faculty to report Impact Factors with their applications for Promotion and Tenure. The Connexions Project and the IJELP are sensitive to this expectation and have developed a process of their own for the reporting of an Impact Factor.

What about Impact Factors of an author's individual contribution?

The Connexions Editorial Board suggests that more important than a Journal's Impact Factor is the impact that an *individual author's work* has on the field and the world. NCPEA introduces a new concept and definition of Impact Factor: a quantitative measure of how often an individual author's contribution is read or viewed over an extended period of time. We suggest this measurement is related to several factors, including the (1) exposure to libraries, (2) number of readers or views, and (3) the breadth of the exposure of an author's contribution's (i.e., state, national, or international).

How does a Connexion's author access an Impact Factor for a module?

The Rice University Connexions and the NCPEA Connexions Project surpasses a particular journal's impact due to Connexions world-wide open access (free to the world) and multiple languages. Rice University Connexions has already thought of this and provides an easy tracking of such an Impact Factor. Through the Rice CNX site, anyone can access the statistics related to the number of views a particular author or module receives both from the time of publication and from a weekly record.

Here are the steps for such access along with a printout of an individual author's Impact Factor.

1. Log on to the Connexions site at: <http://www.cnx.org/>
2. From the opening screen (you do not log in to individual user accounts) note Find Content and then Browse Content by Author.
3. This opens a screen with an alphabetical list of all Connexions authors. Click on the first letter of the author's last name (e.g., S for Smith).
4. Click on the author's name.
5. From the resulting screen, select Author Profile.

6. On the Author's Profile page, click on Statistics next to the author's number of modules.

Here is an example of a result:

Statistics: All Time Recent (06/09–06/16) Download Spreadsheet	Total Views	Views/Day	Percentile	Rank
Doctoral Program Issues: Accreditation of Programs (m14599)	1302	3.56	50.48%	3005
Doctoral Program Issues: Commentary on Companion Dissertations (m14542)	1306	3.34	47.91%	3161

The above author (Irby, B.) has two published modules in Connexions with each receiving over 1,300 views since the modules' publication date, with average views of 3+ per day. The percentile and rank are based on the total number of modules in the Connexions Content Commons, currently over 6,000 (all fields of education). If an author wants to see the most current week's views, he/she clicks on Recent (in this case, 6/9 - 6/16). Statistics are updated on a weekly basis. NCPEA Connexions authors are encouraged to track their Impact and submit to their department, college, and university for professional development and P & T purposes.

Where do we go from here?

Connexions is not just an NCPEA project, but a dynamic learning environment that is helping to expand the dissemination of knowledge about educational administration. As ubiquitous as the Internet has become, there are still questions about how teachers, school principals, superintendents and other educators can find and utilize information that is available on the world wide web. Increasingly, it is becoming clear that just as Connexions is a dynamic learning environment, the process of developing Connexions is equally dynamic. The expression, "It's a process, not an event" explains the many changes that have taken place as Connexions emerged. It also helps explain the future of Connexions as NCPEA moves forward in developing this dynamic learning environment. The process of putting a robust and useful learning environment on the Internet will take time, much thought, and help from the NCPEA membership.

The value of this project will be determined by how it gets used and in developing a dynamic learning environment that will be useful for future and practicing school leaders.

Information?

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