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The Liminal Experience of 'Reacting To The Past': Faculty & TA Role Reversals

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The Liminal Experience of
“Reacting To The Past”:
Faculty and Teaching Assistants Role
Reversals

Kathryn Johnson
Northern Michigan University
For STLHE 2017



RTTP

What is it?

Role Playing Pedagogy

- Student centered
- Characters with objectives
- Game
- Strategy & tactics
- Historically plausible scenarios
- Primary source documents
- Written & verbal assignments
- [Big List of Reacting Games](#)

NMU's Road to RTTP

1 faculty went to conference

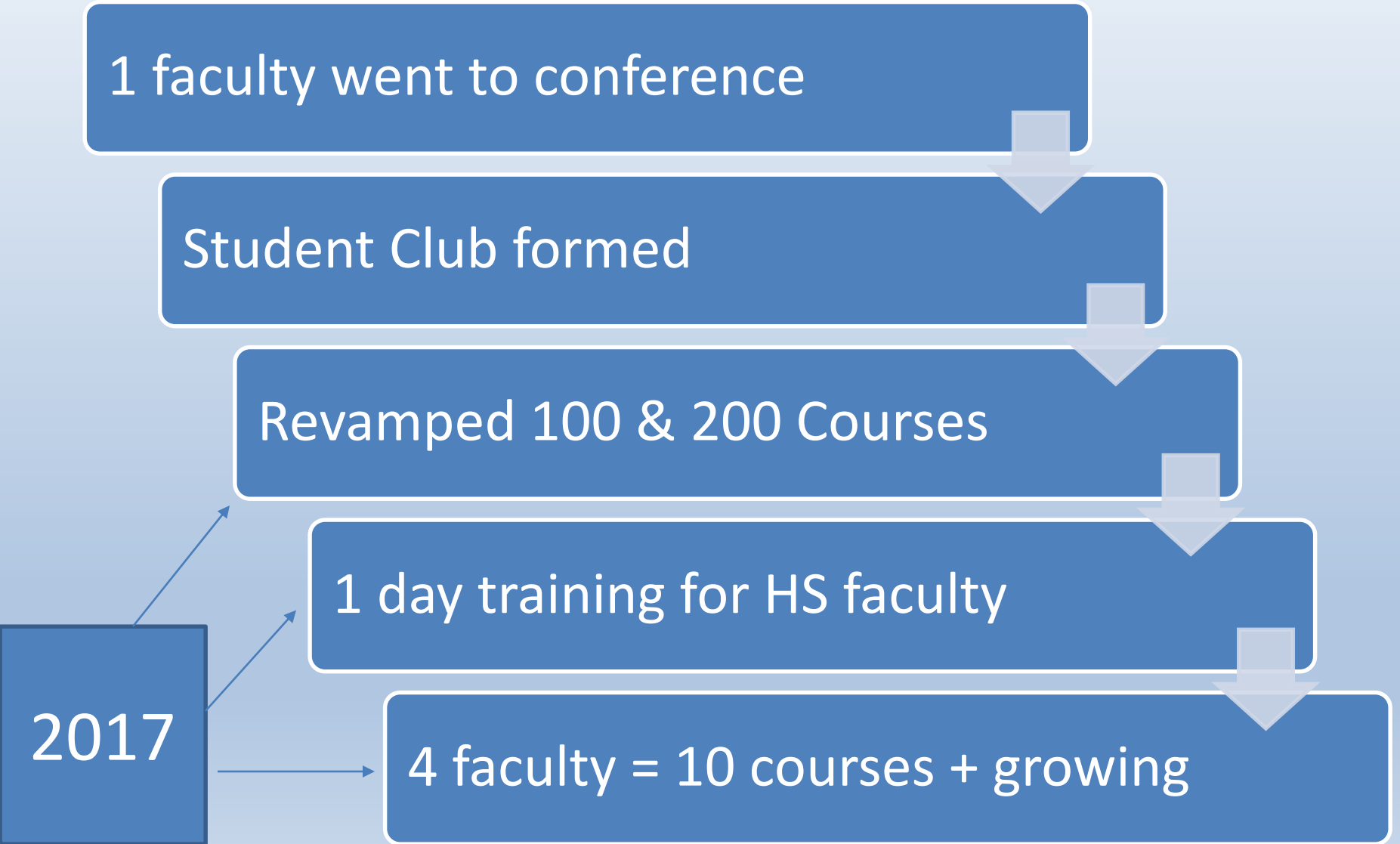
Student Club formed

Revamped 100 & 200 Courses

1 day training for HS faculty

2017

4 faculty = 10 courses + growing



Contributing to the existing scholarship

- Method: 300 + surveys over 2 semesters
- Measure students perceptions of RTTP
- Existing scholarship:
 - Carnes, M. C. (2004). The liminal classroom. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 51(7), B7.
 - Higbee, M. D. (2009). How Reacting to the Past games “Made me want to come to class and learn”: An assessment of the Reacting pedagogy at EMU, 2007-2008. *The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at EMU*, 2(Article 4), 40–74.
 - Hughes, A., Stevenson, J., & Gershovich, M. (2006). Community through discourse: Reconceptualizing introduction to theatre. *Theatre Topics*, 16(1), 85–101. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1353/tt.2006.0008>
 - Lightcap, T. (2009). Creating political order: Maintaining student engagement through Reacting to the Past. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 42(1), 175–179. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096509090167>

What do students think?

When you first began the RTTP unit, which of the following best describes your attitude about RTTP?

- 12% : I got this.
- 64% : I have no idea what to expect, but am willing to give it a try.
- 24% I wish this wasn't part of the class.

Would you recommend RTTP to other students?

- 72% Yes
- 9% No
- 19% Not sure

What skills did you utilize during the RTTP unit? Check all that apply.

- 85% Primary source analysis
- 94% Verbal communication
- 83% Written communication
- 87% Presenting an argument
- 85% Supporting an argument
- 90% Collaborating with peers
- 73% Problem solving

How did the TA facilitate the RTTP game? Check all that apply.

- 42% Helped with technology
- 84% Answered questions during class
- 81% Answered questions outside class
- 45% Met with factions outside class
- 64% Directed to specific primary sources
- 71% Prompted arguments

Behind The Scenes: TA Leadership & the TA-Faculty Relationship



Game Mechanics

- Student Manual
- Game Master Manual
- Podium Rule
- Presider Advice
- Voting
- Special Powers

Character Selections
Written Assignments
Speeches
Syllabus

Implications for Future

- Rethink TA qualifications & training
- Utilize TA experts to:
 - expand RTTP to other disciplines
 - collaborate with our campus Center for Teaching and Learning
 - host a regional RTTP conference