

SARAH BROWN

Ph.D. Candidate in Human-Centered Computing | CISE Department | University of Florida

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Applied Interactive Storytelling

Exploring the transformative potential of interactive story authoring and experiencing for health and education
Building and consolidating theory in applied interactive story interventions through process-focused methodologies

Creativity Support Tools

Investigating the design of embodied tools for creators to reduce cognitive burden, induce a 'flow' state, and support productive collaboration and brainstorming
AI-facilitated and gesture-supported creative technologies

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy in Human Centered Computing – University of Florida, Gainesville

Anticipated May 2027

Dissertation Title: Therapeutic Interactive Digital Narrative Authoring Tools to Mediate Narrative Restructuring and Reflection in College Students

Advisor: Dr. Sharon Lynn Chu

Generation NEXT Scholar

Graduate School Preeminence Award

Spring 2020 – Spring 2025

August 2018 – Present

Bachelor of Science in Visualization – Texas A&M University, College Station

May 2018

Graduation Honors Distinction for Research

May 2018

Century Scholar

Fall 2014 – Spring 2018

Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Scholar

Fall 2014 – Spring 2018

EXPERIENCE

Graduate Instructor – University of Florida

Fall 2026

CEN 4722 User Experience Design

Graduate Assistant – The Embodied Learning & Experience (ELX) Lab

Fall 2018 – Present

University of Florida

Lab Director: Dr. Sharon Lynn Chu

Teaching Assistant for: Intro to Digital Arts & Sciences, User Experience Design, Digital Health, Human Computer Interaction, Interactive Modeling and Animation I, Programming Fundamentals II

Undergraduate Researcher – The Story Lab

January 2018 – August 2018

Texas A&M University

Lab Director: Dr. Sharon Lynn Chu

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Journal Papers

Park, J., **Brown, S. A.**, Chu, S. L., Zhou, A. Q., & Abreu, R. L. (2026). College Students and Large Language Models for Mental Health: A Qualitative Exploration of Motivations and Experiences. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhcs.2026.103806>

Chu, S. L., **Brown, S.**, Park, H., & Spornhauer, B. (2020). Towards Personalized Movie Selection for Wellness: Investigating Event-Inspired Movies. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2020.1768665>

Peer-Reviewed Conference Proceedings

- Kulkarni, A. M., **Brown, S. A.**, Rani, N., & Lynn Chu, S. (2026, July). Towards Pedagogy-Grounded Conversational AI Tutors for Interest-Based Learning. In *Proceedings of the 8th ACM Conference on Conversational User Interfaces* (pp. 1-16). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3816046.381621>
- Brown, S. A.**, & Chu, S. L. (2021, December). "You Write Your Own Story": Design Implications for an Interactive Narrative Authoring Tool to Support Reflection for Mental Health in College Students. In *International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling* (pp. 312-321). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-92300-6_30
- Brown, S. A.**, Chu, S. L., & Yin, P. (2021, June). A Survey of Interface Representations in Visual Programming Language Environments for Children's Physical Computing Kits. In *Interaction Design and Children* (pp. 268-275). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3459990.3460727>
- Zarei, N., Quek, F., Chu, S. L., & **Brown, S. A.** (2021, June). Towards designing enactment-scaffolded narrative authoring tools for elementary-school children. In *Proceedings of the 20th Annual ACM Interaction Design and Children Conference* (pp. 387-395). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3459990.346072>
- Brown, S. A.**, Resch, C., Han, V., Surampudi, S. V., Karanam, P., & Chu, S. L. (2020, November). Capturing User Emotions in Interactive Stories: Comparing a Diegetic and a Non-diegetic Approach to Self-reporting Emotion. In *International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling* (pp. 229-242). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-62516-0_21
- Brown, S. A.**, Chu, S. L., & Rani, N. (2020, September). Externalizing Mental Images by Harnessing Size-Describing Gestures: Design Implications for a Visualization System. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Advanced Visual Interfaces* (pp. 1-9). (**Honorable Mention Award**) <https://doi.org/10.1145/3399715.3399920>
- Zarei, N., Chu, S. L., Quek, F., Rao, N. J., & **Brown, S. A.** (2020, April). Investigating the Effects of Self-Avatars and Story-Relevant Avatars on Children's Creative Storytelling. In *Proceedings of the 2020 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1-11). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3313831.3376331>
- Brown, S. A.**, Chu, S. L., Quek, F., Canaday, P., Li, Q., Loustau, T., ... & Zhang, L. (2019, November). Towards a Gesture-Based Story Authoring System: Design Implications from Feature Analysis of Iconic Gestures During Storytelling. In *International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling* (pp. 364-373). Springer, Cham. (**Nominee for Best Short Paper**) https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-33894-7_38

Peer-Reviewed Abstracts

- Brown, S. A.** (2026, July). Interactive Narrative Authoring for Mental Health. In *Proceedings of the 2026 Conference on Creativity and Cognition* (pp. 78-82). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3803784.3804472>
- Brown, S. A.** (2021). Interactive Digital Narrative Authoring to Support Therapeutic Narrative Reflection in College Students. *Doctoral Consortium at International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling '21*. Talinn, Estonia.
- Zarei, N., Quek, F., Chu, S. L., & **Brown, S. A.** (2020, November). A Comparison of Children's Narrative Expressions in Enactment and Writing. In *International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling* (pp. 125-130). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-62516-0_12
- Brown, S. A.**, Chu, S. L., & Rani, N. (2020, April). Harnessing Gestures to Externalize Discourse Ideas for Common Ground: Design Implications from a Frame of Reference Analysis. In *Extended Abstracts of the 2020 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1-8). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3334480.3382927>
- Brown, S. A.**, Chu, S. L., & Loustau, T. (2019, November). Embodying Cognitive Processes in Storytelling Interfaces for Children. In *International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling* (pp. 357-363). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-33894-7_37
- Park H., **Brown S.**, Chu S. L. (2019). Understanding Avatar Identification Through Visual Similarity for Richer Story Creation. In: Stephanidis C. (eds) HCI International 2019 – Posters. HCII 2019. *Communications in Computer and Information Science*, vol 1033. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-23528-4_57

Workshop Proceedings

- Brown, S.** and Chu, S. L. (2020). In the Flow of Creative Practice: Multimodality and Embodiment for Creativity Support Tools. In *Proceedings of Workshop on Where Art Meets Technology: Integrating Tangible and Intelligent Tools in Creative Processes*. CHI 2020. Honolulu, HI. ACM.

Theses

Brown, S. (2018). *For What We Are: An Interactive Experience with a Bifurcated Perspective*. Undergraduate Thesis. Texas A&M University, College Station, USA. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/1969.1/166452>.

Non-Scholarly Publications

Brown, S. A., Arbo, J., Colarieti, M., Hu, S., Matthey, J., Brata Roy, S., & Serbanescu, A. (2025). Foreword from the Association for Research in Digital Interactive Narratives Graduate Research Committee. *Journal of Interactive Narrative*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.62937/jin.2025.grad.2238>

Brown, S. (2017). Spiraling Through Color. *Explorations: the Texas A&M Undergraduate Journal*, 9, 30-33. Retrieved from https://drive.google.com/file/d/1K4DCHGPSFFb7zqof8kl4_ardJBabCHYM/view.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Leadership and Organizing

Futures in Interactive Digital Narratives (FIDN) Student Research Symposium Program Chair	2025
Association for Research in Digital Interactive Narratives (ARDIN) Committee on Graduate Research	2021 – Present
Founder and current coordinator	
ARDIN Monthly Social Co-Organizer	approx. 2021 – 2022
International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling (ICIDS) 2021 & 2024 Student Social Co-Host	
International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling (ICIDS) 2020 Co-Virtual Chair	

Mentoring

15 undergraduate students for the term of a semester each, as they pursued research in collaboration with our lab (3 undergraduates mentored as part of the NSF Research Experiences for Undergraduates program; 1 undergraduate mentored as part of the Women in Computer Science and Engineering mentorship program)

5 junior graduate students within the Embodied Learning and Experience Lab, 1 graduate student from Psychology

Speaking

ARDIN Monthly Social, IDNs in Health Panelist	March 2, 2022
ARDIN Monthly Social, Graduate Student Speaker	February 24, 2021

Outreach

Maker Workshop at Millhopper Elementary School, Co-Presenter — Gainesville, FL	March 6, 2025
WiNGHacks Hackathon Mentor — Gainesville, FL	February 2024
ARDIN Website and Monthly Newsletter Co-Manager	approx. 2020 – 2022

Reviewing

- International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling (ICIDS) 2024, 2025, 2026 — Full Papers
- ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI) 2021 — Works in Progress
- ACM Designing Interactive Systems Conference (DIS) 2020 — Late-Breaking Works
- ACM Interaction Design for Children Conference (IDC) 2019 — Works in Progress; 2021 — Short Papers

SKILLS AND CERTIFICATIONS

- Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL) Associate Certificate
- Software Proficiencies: Unity, Adobe Creative Suite, Autodesk Maya, Autodesk Fusion
- Programming Languages: Python, C#, HTML & CSS, JavaScript, and C++