John Sweller, Ph.D.
University of New South Wales

Dr. John Sweller's research reputation is associated with cognitive load theory, an instructional theory based on our knowledge of human cognitive architecture. He initiated work on the theory in the early 1980's. Subsequently, "ownership" of the theory shifted to his research group at UNSW and then to a large group of international researchers. The theory is now a contributor to both research and debate on issues associated with human cognitive architecture, its links to evolution by natural selection, and the instructional design consequences that follow. It is one of the few theories to have generated a large range of novel instructional designs from our knowledge of human cognitive architecture. The following instructional design effects have flowed from cognitive load theory: goal-free, worked example, split-attention, redundancy, modality, element interactivity, isolated-interacting elements, imagination, expertise reversal, completion, variable examples, guidance fading, transient information and collective working memory effects. These effects have been studied by many groups of researchers from around the globe. Based on any commonly used citation index, the work has been cited on between 8 and 15 thousand occasions.