



TLEF Project – Final Report

Report Completion Date: **2019/10/1**

1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

1.1. General Information

Project Title:	History Lab: Creating a Digital and Collaborative Approach to Teaching and Research		
Principal Investigator:	Heidi Tworek		
Report Submitted By:	Heidi Tworek		
Project Initiation Date:	September 2017	Project Completion Date:	September 2019
Project Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Large Transformation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Small Innovation <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Other: [please specify]		

1.2. Project Focus Areas – Please select all the areas that describe your project.

- Resource development (e.g. learning materials, media)
- Infrastructure development (e.g. management tools, repositories, learning spaces)
- Pedagogies for student learning and/or engagement (e.g. active learning)
- Innovative assessments (e.g. two-stage exams, student peer-assessment)
- Teaching roles and training (e.g. teaching practice development, TA roles)
- Curriculum (e.g. program development/implementation, learning communities)
- Student experience outside the classroom (e.g. wellbeing, social inclusion)
- Experiential and work-integrated learning (e.g. co-op, community service learning)
- Indigenous-focused curricula and ways of knowing
- Diversity and inclusion in teaching and learning contexts
- Open educational resources
- Other: [please specify]



1.3. Project Summary

This small TLEF supported the creation of a new type of course at UBC, called the History Lab. The History Lab allows students to work on a digital history project with faculty members. It brings the experimental and collaborative spirit of a lab to humanities research. The Lab has two main objectives. First, it exposes students to the messy process of research. It removes the walls between teaching and scholarship. Second, it enables students to acquire digital research skills. This TLEF was also meant to create scalable approaches to digital humanities. By putting students in the driving seat, the course turns conventional ideas about instruction on their head. We have all heard of the flipped classroom. This is a flipped curriculum.

1.4. Team Members – Please fill in the following table and include students, undergraduate and/or graduate, who participated in your project.

Name	Title/Affiliation	Responsibilities/Roles
Mark Werner	Teaching Assistant (PhD candidate)	Help students with projects and work on technical issues
Vastav Anand	Computer assistance (undergrad)	Helped with coding
Elizabeth Williams	PhD candidate (UVic)	Conducted survey research

1.5. Courses Reached – Please fill in the following table with past, current, and future courses and sections (e.g. HIST 101, 002, 2017/2018, Sep) that have been/will be reached by your project, including courses not included in your original proposal (you may adapt this section to the context of your project as necessary).

Course	Section	Academic Year	Term (Summer/Fall/Winter)
HIST 490		2018	Winter
HIST 490		2018	Fall



2. OUTPUTS AND/OR PRODUCTS

2.1. Please list project outputs and/or products (e.g. resources, infrastructure, new courses/programs). Indicate the current location of such products and provide a URL if applicable.

Product(s)/Achievement(s):	Location:
History Lab developed as viable course	N/A
Resources: Syllabus and Guides for teaching History Lab developed and in final stages of proof-reading before posting to my website	It will be: www.heiditworek.com . I include a ToC for the guides.

2.2. Item(s) Not Met – Please list intended project outputs and/or products that were not attained and the reason(s) for this.

Item(s) Not Met:	Reason:
Module in another lecture course	Professor who agreed left UBC and another who agreed to participate unexpectedly had a year of leave in 2018-19

3. PROJECT IMPACT

3.1. Project Impact Areas – Please select all the areas where your project made an impact.

- Student learning and knowledge
- Student engagement and attitudes
- Instructional team teaching practice and satisfaction
- Student wellbeing, social inclusion
- Awareness and capacity around strategic areas (indigenous, equity and diversity)
- Unit operations and processes
- Other: [please specify]



3.2. What were you hoping to change or where were you hoping to see an impact with this project? – Please describe the intended benefits of the project for students, TAs, instructors and/or community members.

I aimed for this course to expose students to new research methodologies, provide them with digital skills, and to help them in their future career trajectories. The course more broadly was intended to be a template for others to adopt in the faculty of arts and beyond, if they wish to engage in digital instruction. Finally, History Lab was meant to demonstrate the viability of digital humanities at UBC and of active lab learning in the humanities.

3.3. Were these changes/impacts achieved? How do you know they occurred? – What evaluation strategies were used? How was data collected and analyzed? You are encouraged to include copies of data collection tools (e.g. surveys and interview protocols) as well as graphical representations of data and/or scenarios or quotes to represent and illustrate key themes.

The course received an evaluation of 4.7 in fall 2018. Students satisfaction was thus very high with the course in its second iteration, when I improved the syllabus. The class has already changed the career trajectories of at least three students: one received an internship to work on a digital database of historical buildings in Toronto only because of skills he had learned in History Lab; a second decided to pursue an accelerated second BA in computer science; a third is pursuing an MA in SLAIS and working on digital information collection.

I am conducting survey analysis to compare the course with other seminars in the History Department to understand if and how the course achieved our department's stated learning objectives. This analysis will be completed by October 2019 for the second iteration of the course. We conducted surveys of the History Lab and two other more conventional seminars in both semesters at the start of the semester, the end of the semester, and six months later. My RA for survey research (Elizabeth Williams) will conduct overall analysis of both semesters in October once the second survey is complete. The survey numbers to date illustrate similar levels of satisfaction with the History Lab and more conventional seminars; however, History Lab participants remarked that they had learned new directly-transferable skills. The other seminars did not contain students with similar stories to the three in the previous paragraph. As I changed the syllabus significantly for the second iteration, I am waiting for the final surveys six months after that iteration to measure differences. However, as the number of respondents for that survey may be quite small, it is hard to conduct rigorous and reliable statistical analysis.

My teaching assistant (Mark Werner) also gained significant digital history skills. He has changed his dissertation research to incorporate those skills and now added me to his PhD committee. At least one chapter of the dissertation will include digital history work that he only learned through working on History Lab. I am thus considering whether to teach History Lab as a graduate course at some point in the future. The course has also equipped him to apply for jobs in digital history or digital humanities.

Finally, Mark Werner and I are planning to create an OER book based on our experiences teaching History Lab. We would produce the guides and incorporate examples of how research with digitized newspapers can happen in the classroom and in research.



3.4. Dissemination – Please provide a list of **past** and **upcoming** scholarly activities (e.g. publications, presentations, invited talks, etc.) in which you or anyone from your team have shared information regarding this project.

Invited talks explicitly on History Lab:

“History Lab,” [Poster Display](#), Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund Showcase, UBC, Vancouver, May 2019.

“The Impact of Communications in Global History,” World Society and Its History Workshop, Bielefeld, Germany, March 2019.

“News, Communications, and Text Analytics,” Data Analytics Workshop, Data Science Institute, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, April 2018.

“The History Lab – What is the Role of Digital History?” (with Mark Werner), Pixelating, Koerner Library, UBC, March 2018.

“(Digitalisierte) Zeitungen als Quelle historisch-soziologischer Untersuchung — Reflexion und Erfahrungsbericht,” (Digitalized Newspapers as a Source of Historical-Sociological Investigation – Reflection and Report), Workshop: Historische Soziologie der Rankings, Universität Bielefeld, October 2017.

I have also mentioned and discussed History Lab in the following talks:

“News from Germany: The Long History of Information Warfare,” David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies, Brigham Young University, April 2019.

Keynote Speaker, “How the Media Made Politics about Personalities and Parties,” Politics in Public: The Mediatization of Political Personae 1880s-1930s, Leuven, Belgium, October 2018.

“Secret Press Agents: When Journalists, Propagandists, and Spies Seem Indistinguishable,” Observing the Everyday, Max Planck Institute, Berlin, Germany, June 2018.

“Fake News: A Modern History,” The Breaux Symposium: An Anatomy of Fake News, Washington, DC, May 2018.

4. TEACHING PRACTICES – Please indicate if **your** teaching practices or those of **others** have changed as a result of your project. If so, in what ways? Do you see these changes as sustainable over time? Why or why not?

Within UBC, the History Lab has reinforced my commitment to student-led work in the classroom and to group projects, if well-curated. I have introduced a group project of writing a Wikipedia entry into my 100-person lecture class. My conversations with my colleagues in the History Department about the course have led to contemplations about how to change our hiring priorities to incorporate digital history. I have also had discussions with our new educational-leadership stream faculty, Pheroze Unwalla, about how to incorporate digital history into his teaching in our department and at Vantage College. However, for reasons I detail below, we are confronted with significant challenges in continuing History Lab without further support from UBC.

Outside UBC, I have consulted with multiple librarians and history departments about how to introduce this course. Bielefeld University staff consulted with me in October 2017 on how to create the conditions for a History Lab-style course. I have, for example, advised Emory University’s librarians on how to create a course like the History Lab. I anticipate that this activity will increase once the final version of my History Lab guides is available online as an open educational resource online.



5. PROJECT SUSTAINMENT – *Please describe the sustainment strategy for the project components. How will this be sustained and potentially expanded (e.g. over the next five years). What challenges do you foresee for achieving the expected long-term impacts listed above?*

One of the unfortunate discoveries during this project was the difficulties of sustainability at UBC. There are three main reasons for this. First, unfortunately, UBC does not provide free licences to key software programs (like FileMaker Pro). Without funding, it is not possible to run History Lab again. This is a massive challenge. Second, my TA and I constantly struggled to find IT expertise to help with our problems. We had to hire a computer science undergrad to write code for us. Again without funding, the students could not have progressed, as we needed this code to move forward with their projects and could not find help from IT employees at UBC, despite weeks of effort. Third, UBC did not have the right kinds of classrooms for us to work with students. I understand that this is changing with the redesign of the library. However, we had to deal with issues like students who had Chromebook laptops and no access to other computers. A lab space to teach this course would have helped us immensely.