



## Small TLEF Project – Final Report

Report Completion Date: (YYYY/MM/DD)

### 1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

#### 1.1. General Information

Project Title:	Human Environmental Geography Experiential Learning		
Principal Investigator:	Siobhán McPhee		
Report Submitted By:	Siobhán McPhee		
Project Initiation Date:	April 2014	Project Completion Date:	August 2017

#### 1.2. Project Summary

The Learning Initiative, drawing on UBC's Place and Promise Plan of student lead activities providing firsthand research experience while engaging with communities and the environment in a sustainable way, aims to produce an innovative and student-driven experience with relevant curricula and learning tools for undergraduate Geography and UBC students. The two-course initiative (a BC based 3rd year and an international 4th year) allows students to engage locally and internationally providing them with a capstone experience whereby they learn by doing, a cornerstone of geographical research. The Initiative would engage and enrich, but not overlap, upon existing projects in Geography involved in a transformation of curriculum in new and innovative ways, and putting into practice learning occurring in class. The Initiative engages with colleagues across UBC in collaborative development of pedagogies, resources and curriculum on intercultural understanding, international engagement and sustainability (both environmental and social), and draws on UBC students for design and participation in the initiative.

**1.3. Team Members** – (Please fill in the following table and include **students**, undergraduate or graduate, who participated in your project).

Name	Title/Affiliation	Responsibilities/Roles
Leonora Kind	Graduate student	RA
Lyana Patrick	Graduate student	RA
Sarah Przedpelska	Graduate student	RA and co-author
Emily Rennalls	Undergraduate Student	URA
Jialin Yang	Undergraduate Student	URA



**1.4. 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)
GEOG 379b	101	2014-2015 and 2015-2016	Winter term
GEOG 498	101	2016-2017	Autumn term (this is an ongoing seminar occurring every autumn term)

**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:
New field school course created offered to 52 students	<a href="http://www.blogs.ubc.ca/geography379b">www.blogs.ubc.ca/geography379b</a>
Relationships established with 7 community partners in Williams Lake, BC	<a href="http://www.blogs.ubc.ca/geography379b">www.blogs.ubc.ca/geography379b</a>
Online resources for teaching field schools including First Nations content	<a href="http://www.blogs.ubc.ca/geography379b">www.blogs.ubc.ca/geography379b</a>
Virtual partner model established for GEOG 498 (Middle East course)	Currently developing material with CCEL for use with other instructors across campus

**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:
GEOG 379b will not run again for the present time	A lack of funding from the department



### 3. PROJECT IMPACT

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

Geography is a discipline that is very much based on field based experiential learning and I saw a gap in this for the Human and Environmental component in the department. The intention was to engage students with community partners working on ‘real’ issues with student applying what they learned in the classroom. Graduate and undergraduate TAs were responsible for choosing the site, identifying partners and setting up relationships. For two years, the course GEOG 379b provided undergraduate students from across UBC with the opportunity to engage in a rural town in BC with community partners. The benefits to students and community members was clear. Not to allow financial constraints to stop this experiential element, I have incorporated virtual partners into my Geographies of the Middle East course with a small pilot last year with one partner and a larger one this year with 4. The aim to increase this number to six community partners for September 2018, and I am working closely with CCEL to develop best practices for working with virtual community partners. The extension of the community partner component into GEOG 498 was possible due to support from a graduate TA funded by the TLEF in developing these relationships.

The intended outcomes for the field school student remain the same with GEOG 498 (Geographies of the Middle East):

- Apply knowledge gained in academic geography courses to ‘real’ world topics and projects.
- Appreciate how knowledge is acquired through conducting original research.
- Identify, discern, and apply a diversity of research methods and techniques in the discipline of geography.
- Decide on the appropriateness of the methods and techniques in geography and then evaluate the chosen method/s.
- Develop an in-depth understanding and critical awareness of local/international economic, social, cultural and environmental landscapes through collaborating and conducting research with community partners.
- Demonstrate effective collaboration, initiative, and leadership within interdisciplinary teams.

**3.2. Were these changes/impacts achieved? How do you know they occurred? – To what extent were intended benefits achieved or not achieved? 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.**

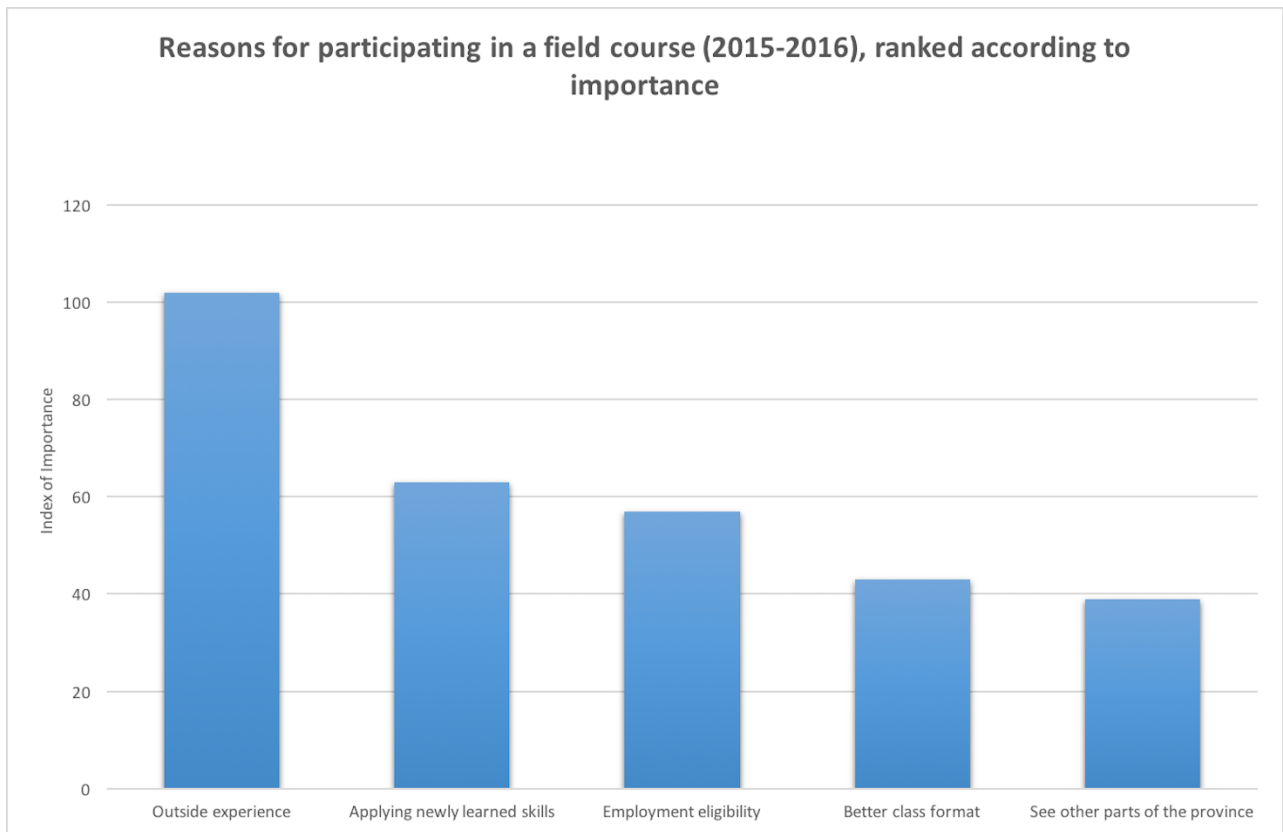
The intended benefits were definitely achieved by the development of the experiential learning course (field school course GEOG 379b), but the sustainability of this was not achieved due to departmental constraints. Possible future support from ORISE within the Faculty of Arts may make some form of the field school possible, especially given that community partners in Williams Lake are interested in the relationship with UBC continuing.

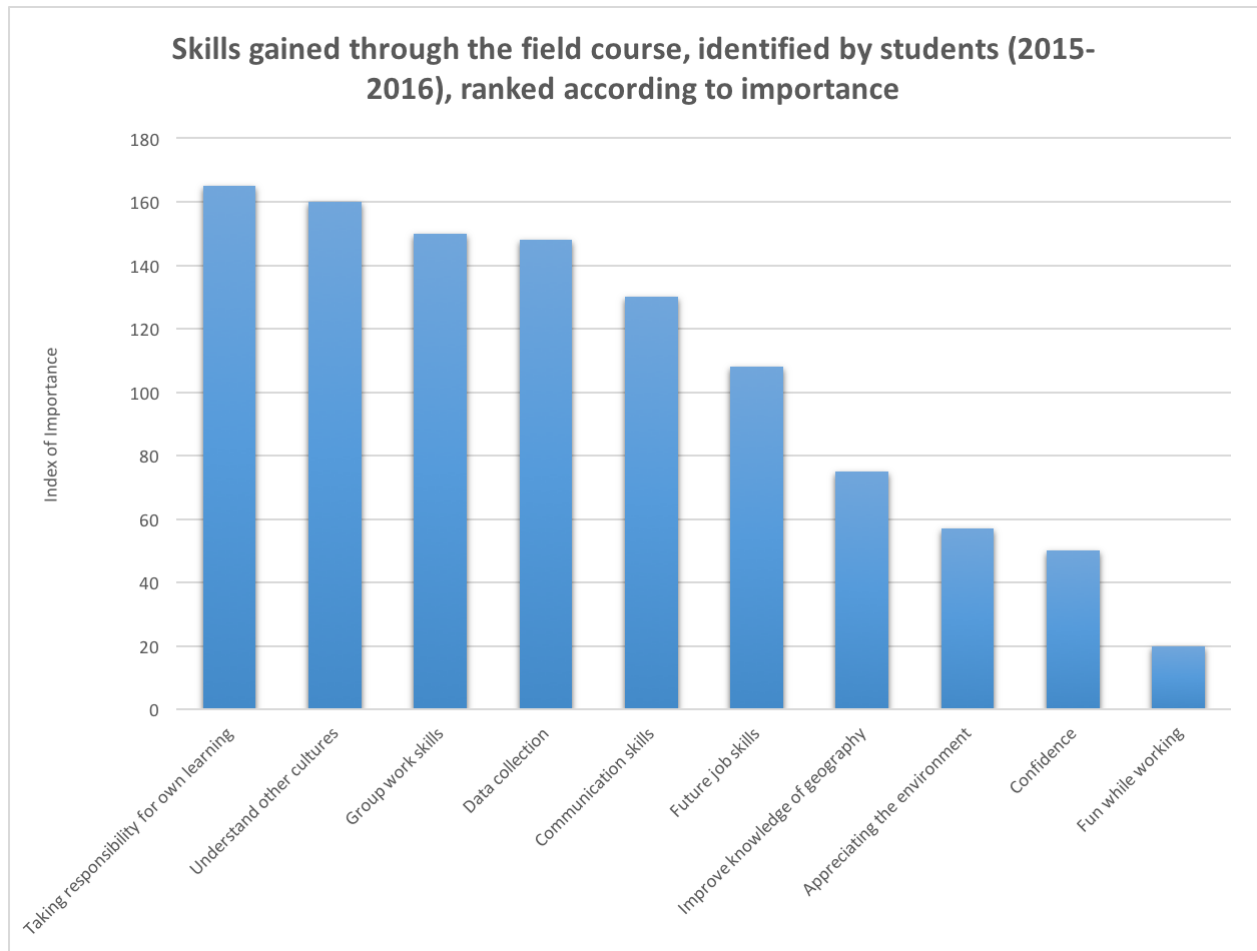
The table below illustrates the specific skills that students identified in focus groups conducted at the end of the course in 2015 and 2016. These four skill areas also frame the approach used in developing the assessment piece for students working with virtual community partners in GEOG 498.



<b>Independence</b>	<b>Technological Literacy</b>	<b>Communication</b>	<b>Understanding Complexity</b>
Taking responsibility for own learning Data collection Confidence Fun while working	Data collection Future job skills	Group work skills Communication skills Future job skills	Understand other cultures Future job skills Improve knowledge of Geography Appreciating the environment

In addition to the focus groups a survey was also conducted with students at the end of the course in 2015 and 2016. The figures below represent the main motivations for taking the field school course, and the skills gained through taking the course which the students identified.





**3.3. 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.

CCEL conducted with students from the field schools following up on experience of working with remote community partners. One of my graduate RAs and I conducted a survey and focus groups with students from both course offerings, the results of which were recently published in the *Canadian Geographer*. Additionally, the findings of the surveys and focus groups were presented at the Annual Association of American Geographers meeting in April 2017.



**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?

The biggest achievement of the experiential learning TLEF for me is the confirmation that providing students with the opportunity to work with community partners (either by visiting Williams Lake or virtually with partners in the Middle East) is a really important component of having them apply their learning. I have incorporated different strategies for experiential learning into all my courses, and will continue to develop the avenues for virtual partners to address issues around financial constraints and accessing different parts of the world.

**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?

As stated above financial constraints have meant that the field school will not run annually, but measures are in place to work with ORISE in the Faculty of Arts to offer an alternative form of the course. The model for experiential learning through working with community partners has been adapted into GEOG 498 (Geographies of the Middle East) and I will continue to work with CCEL to strengthen this pedagogical approach. Gaining the evidence from the research conducted also cements for me the necessity to incorporate experiential learning into all of my courses when possible.