

Developing an Experiential Pedagogy Toolkit: Oral History & Digital Scholarship as High-Impact Undergraduate Research Methods

Submitted by Brooke Bryan, Instructor of Cooperative Education, Antioch College

Team Information

We are seeking ILiADS engagement during the first phase of a three-year, tiered project in development through the Great Lakes Colleges Expanding Collaboration initiative. Specifically, this request seeks for a sub-section of the full project team to attend ILiADS for a week-long intensive development of a toolkit— a web-based collection of resources exploring best practices and providing tools for faculty interested in getting students out of the classroom and into the community. This pedagogical resource aims to give faculty traction on ‘high impact practices’ and undergraduate research frameworks. It promotes oral history methodology as an accessible form of fieldwork suitable for nearly any inquiry, and digital storytelling as an effective and impactful means of multimedia analysis and publishing.

The Team:

Brooke Bryan, Cooperative Education, Antioch College

Brooke is an oral historian specializing in experiential learning. She has expertise in field recording for cultural documentation, oral history methodology, and using digital tools for storytelling and scholarship. At Antioch College, she supervises field-based cooperative learning experiences each term— integrating oral history interview methods and digital storytelling platforms to animate course-level and institutional learning objectives. Brooke’s role in this project includes helping to structure its overall aims, authoring sections of the toolkit on the ethical dimensions of oral history work (and how publishing in the digital age complicates informed consent) and a section on FERPA, student privacy laws, and the nuanced liabilities that can arise when fieldwork is integrated into curriculum. She is also the resident technologist for the toolkit and will build it using Wordpress on Antioch servers. She will be given root access to the installation, and will handle theme implementation, taxonomy construction, hacks, and .

Veronica Pejril, Music Instructional Technology Center, DePauw University

Veronica teaches music theory and serves as an Instructional Tech at DePauw. In addition to teaching courses in pedagogical and creative uses of music technology, Veronica's position places special emphasis on assisting faculty members with curricular technology needs, particularly related to multimedia and social computing. Veronica’s imperative role in tool-kit authorship will explore the myriad

ways in which audio (both spoken word and other environmental sounds) can be used in creative compositions and immersive installations in the digital age.

Emily Yochim, Communication, Allegheny College

Emily teaches a variety of courses on media and culture at Allegheny College, and conducts ethnography exploring youth subcultures, media and identity, and youth marketing. She will take a lead role in authoring the toolkit, primarily focused on developing the philosophy of ethnographic experience that surrounds community-engaged fieldwork and the dimensions of practice in collaborative community studies.

Ernest Cole, English, Hope College

Ernest's work explores the topics of peace, forgiveness and reconciliation with a focus on post-civil war Sierra Leone. He teaches in the English department at Hope, where he created a series of video-based interdisciplinary learning modules based on his oral histories, working in the college's New Media studio with students in the digital humanities and in the Mellon Scholars program at Hope. Ernest's work will serve as a foundational case study for the toolkit and archive, asserting best practices for collaboration and engagement with campus resources.

Student: TBD, Antioch College

One student is being recruited from Antioch College in order to serve as a resident maker and technologist, armed with the Creative Suite, coding skills, and field recording gear, to document our work at the conference and to be the lead graphic designer and resident hack.

Possible Half-Week or Weekend attendees include Ric Sheffield (Kenyon) and Bruce Mills (Kalamazoo).

Project Description

Higher education is in a period of intense introspection as educators strive to find new means of more deeply engaging students in their educational experience, and to achieve greater outcomes. Across many campuses of higher learning, faculty and instructional staff are challenged to reconsider the centuries-old lecture format (which research suggests too often fails to engage first generation students and those from underserved communities) in favor of teaching styles that are more active, applied, and 'meaningful'. The promise of experiential learning is espoused by many, but few have a solid grasp on what it is and how, specifically, it may be done in classroom environments with undergraduate students.

Within this pedagogical milieu, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) recommends the development of “high-impact practices,” or HIP, in an effort to increase rates of student retention and student engagement in undergraduate institutions. According to the AACU, examples of high-impact practices include collaborative inquiry, undergraduate research, community-based learning, and capstone projects. However, according to AACU, “the utilization of active learning practices is ‘unsystematic’ on almost all campuses.

The purpose of this project is to develop a systematized, replicable, supportive model for active HIP learning using oral history methods, digital scholarship, and digital storytelling. Oral History is here defined as a methodology for conducting interviews, curating the result of those interviews, and making those interviews available for research, in accordance with the best practice guidelines established by the Oral History Association. Digital Scholarship is the process of using digital tools and algorithms to investigate, arrange, and analyze source media (i.e. oral histories and archival records) as part of a broader inquiry. Digital Storytelling is here defined as the process of creating documentary stories for public consumption from a variety of digital source media— including archival imagery and edited narratives from oral history interviews. For brevity, the use of the term “oral history” in this proposal infers all of the above— the collection, processing/analysis, and publication of first-person narratives in cultural documentation and research.

The full team behind this project has been meeting and planning for 9 months. In Spring 2015 the project commences with a working group of faculty and instructional techs, each with distinct responsibilities. ILiADS will be a working institute devoted to building the digital project/online toolkit, one of three major outcomes of the entire project.

THE TOOLKIT

The team in residence at ILiADS will be focused on building out the toolkit, creating the digital project to engage a faculty audience seeking ways to develop HIPs in their courses, seminars, and majors through immersive, well-connected resources that inspire and engage.

The toolkit will be navigated like a digital project with downloadable resources, and will be thematically broken down into three sections— *Practice*, *Pedagogy*, and *Publication*.

Practice

One can argue that the majority of literature on the practice of oral history is written by and for community practitioners. The practice section of the Experiential Pedagogy toolkit will be a synthesis of existing literature and best practices, reconsidered in light of the legal, ethical, and programmatic structure that faculty and instructional technologists work with in institutional settings. How does the digital age complicate informed consent?

Who owns this interview and what happens to the digital file? Do assignments published on the web, such as edited oral histories, fall under FERPA guidelines? How should our campus IRB's approach these projects—and is oral history considered to be research with human participants?

Along with chapters and case studies authored by group members, the toolkit will feature an extensive addendum of materials, including best practice statements, a project statement template, an interviewee biographical information form, informed consent documents, and a deed of gift form. The team of faculty and staff developing this toolkit will be in conversation with national organizations responsible for asserting best practices, authors of peer-reviewed literature setting the tone of practice, and will convene with Institutional Review Boards at member campuses to lay the groundwork for easy approval for projects implementing the toolkit and repository.

Pedagogy

Despite decades in the academic arena, the oral history community has published very little literature *explicitly* discussing the art and science of teaching oral history, building oral history exercises into curriculum, or assessing whether attempts at animating course-level and institutional learning outcomes through oral history is effective. While there is some pedagogical literature exploring this work in the K-12 arena, there is no decisive reference college faculty may turn to, and no clear cannon to explore for those working in higher ed. Notably, there are no significant writings exploring the use of oral history methodology in experiential education, and theories of experiential learning have not necessarily been applied to fieldwork involving multimedia and interview collection. This leaves room for a major contribution with potential broad impact.

The pedagogy authorship group will contribute new pedagogical theory utilizing a variety of case studies, best practices, theoretical frameworks (i.e., HIPs, high-stakes research, the experiential learning cycle, etc.), rubrics, and assessment strategies from higher ed leadership such as the AACU.

Publication

The publication section of the toolkit is conceived as a theoretical discussion of what scholarly publishing looks like in the digital era when faculty are conducting immersive and extensive inquiry using born-digital oral history methodology. Conceiving an audience of peer faculty (many of whom are involved in review processes for Tenure and Promotion), it will synthesize the emergent realm of scholarly publishing as it relates to the digital humanities, digital scholarship, and digital storytelling. Following this discussion, the toolkit will provide a detailed annotated resource list, pointing faculty to specific tools useful for oral history work using narratives, archival sources and imagery, fieldwork notes, and multimedia. This

resource will be a tactical primer and a resource for course planning and programmatic outcomes of oral history/digital storytelling work. It will also seek to catalyze conversations at member campuses about the nature of scholarly publishing and how experiential learning practices are evaluated.

Who will use your project? How might they use it? What might it offer that they can't find elsewhere? How might others contribute to the project?

This project conceives an audience of average classroom faculty teaching disciplinary foundation courses and electives in classroom settings. It also sees an audience of faculty who supervise undergraduate research, coordinate field-work opportunities and cooperative placements, and instructional tech support staff who aim to connect faculty and students with tools to better engage in their research and publishing. In other words, this project is not necessarily undertaken for oral historians and digital history enthusiasts. It is for the literature professor wishing to reify the realities of migrant farm labor for her students by reaching out into the community, students armed with audio recording gear and cameras. It is for the developmental math teacher struggling against a tide of quantitative apprehension who sends his students into the offices of a wide variety of professionals armed with a question list seeking how math is used in their daily life. It is for the philosophy faculty exploring theories of ethical behavior through coffee shop conversations; for the psychology professor exploring cultural adoption of theories of learning with her students. It is for community studies and cultural documentation projects; it is for anyone who can imagine using interviews as a mode of inquiry and the internet as a platform for sharing knowledge in visual, immersive ways.

The Role of ILiADS

Without ILiADS, the project team authoring the toolkit would be largely resigned to collaborate over the phone and through video conferencing. A lack of substantive collaboration could undermine the entire project— which aims to survey and synthesize a wide variety of disparate literature into a cohesive, supportive tool. To support faculty in using oral history and digital storytelling to engage their students beyond the walls of the classroom, we must become nimble in multiple realms of theory, best practices, and educational frameworks. We must also create something people want to engage with.

During ILiADS, Ernest and Emily will be synthesizing existing literature and best practices, maximizing the value of collaboration by wading through an immense amount of resources, whittling down to what is most important and synthesizing and summarizing the rest to create the first round of text content.

Meanwhile, Brooke will provide leadership to the site creation, ensuring the taxonomy and architecture can power the project we envision. From base site

configuration and theme and plug-in tweaks, to the voice with which the site will speak to its audience, Brooke and Veronica will lead the team's visioning process and build the foundation in real time, enacting the team's decisions step by step—with Veronica establishing the basis for the audio repository and how it will affect the best practice recommendations in the toolkit. Finally, the student from Antioch College is being recruited for graphic design and visual communication skills, creating branding elements (logo, graphic buttons, brand standards) to ensure high quality visual communication throughout the toolkit. ILiADS collaboration will allow the time and resources we need to set a cohesive foundation for a project that is both broad and deep.

The importance of ILiADS cannot be overstated— the toolkit is the guiding organization and sine qua non of this experiential pedagogy project. A basic timeline for the entire project is outlined briefly below:

May 2014: Project conceived at Digital Liberal Arts Conference
June: Partnership conversations with American Folklife Center, LOC
October 2014: Full project planning meeting at Kenyon College
November-January: Proposal development; partnership conversations with potential partners Nunn Center, UK Special Libraries and Popup Archive.
February 15: Final proposal detailing project presented.
March: Three-year project funded.
April- May: Phone conferencing to break down first-phase workflows amongst the group.
June: Full project team in residence at Kenyon College in an evaluative role for the Ohio Humanities Oral History Institute, with two half-days and one full-day of workshopping and project development. Pilot repositories tested and running. All team members have functional roles and clear leadership responsibilities going forward.
July: ILiADS Institute: The first phase of the online toolkit will be developed and launched by the tool-kit sub-group. Website will be functional by the end of the institute.
October: Project presented in panels at Oral History Association conference
Fall-Winter: Outreach to initiate faculty project teams, summer '15 conference planning, toolkit and repository refinement.
Spring '15: Proposal review for summer '15 conference.
June '15: Oral History Institute
June '15-June'16: Year-long support of project teams, including pedagogical development, collection processing, faculty development on member campuses.

Sustainability

This project is expected to enjoy the support of GLCA over a three-year period, including faculty stipends and incidentals, through the Expanding Collaboration initiative. (While the final proposal has not been submitted yet, the planning process and project team developed in close conversation with GLCA leadership.) GLCA has further indicated an understanding and interest in establishing an endowment to support the audio repository (if the repository is to grow beyond its pilot phase), understanding the needs of digital preservation and release agreements and how they must be maintained into perpetuity.

The three outcomes of this three-year project and their sustainability plan are outlined briefly below:

Toolkit: The toolkit, as developed and authored at the ILiADS institute and conference, will be a live, web-based resource launched at the end of ILiADS and under constant development throughout the three-year project period as supported by GLCA. While other forms of support may be sought to continue ongoing development and management of the digital resource beyond that time, the toolkit is originally imagined to have a viable 'shelf life' of five years as a best practice resource for experiential pedagogy using oral history and digital storytelling, which is ambitious given rapid change in the digital era. At that time the digital project may be decommissioned, taken off-line, redeveloped, or migrated into another project.

An academic publisher has expressed interest in publishing an edited collection on oral history pedagogy, as no such resources currently exist. Further, the 'high-impact practice' frameworks the AACU advocates have very little associated pedagogical literature at this time, and are notably practiced "unsystematically" on most campuses. The project's authors see a notable arena for contribution and are proceeding with publishing opportunities in mind. Further potential alliances may exist in partnering with the Oral History in the Digital Age project, a web-based resource reconsidering its sustainability plans by turning into an open-access peer-reviewed platform.

Conferences: The workshops envisioned as training for this project are strategically aligned with the Oral History Institute at Kenyon College, a veteran program of Kenyon faculty with the support of the Ohio Humanities. The Ohio Humanities intends for the program to continue, and this project will lead to a refreshed curriculum well-equipped to help practitioners navigate the particular concerns of the digital era.

Archive: This project hopes to address the repository needs of faculty doing 'born digital' collaborative fieldwork with undergraduate students. The sustainability needs of the repository arrangement are the most difficult to ascertain at this time, and the project intends to proceed as a research and development initiative exploring multiple tools in a pilot environment. Can a consortium-wide repository

meet the needs of all faculty/staff/student audio collections and field recordings across 13 campuses? What local workflows will be established through this project period, and will they catalyze further institutional capacity building? Which of the pilot archives will prove most effective at supporting community research at the undergraduate level? And, importantly, what parallel explorations will lead to similar or different repository arrangements? Our task is to be present in these conversations, sharing the results of our research and development, and stewarding resources toward the most supportive tools.

Needed Resources

During ILiADS, our team would hope to have access to people with following skills:

- Live scribes, such as dpict (<http://dpict.info/>) to aid in capturing complicated concepts in synthetic visual graphics that tell stories, aid in understanding, and capture the attention of audiences. (Digital toolkits require adoption to be good resources, and visual communication strategies are important and impactful. (We'll make due with a student adept in Photoshop to build out our toolkit, but how amazing would it be to have presentations live-scribed, bringing the entire institute alive while creating a visual piece for each team!)
- Digital archivists. Our team is short on archivists, and yet where you intend to archive your audio impacts the release forms you use when you originally record it. Necessarily, we are interested in engaging with people who have both a deep and dynamic understanding of multimedia special collections to help us do some base configuration, think through legalities, establish local workflows, and create metadata standards. Archivists we intend to collaborate with during this project period include Doug Boyd, Nunn Center for Oral History at UK Special Libraries and Anne Wooten from Popup Archive.