Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation Grants

Final Report: Open Historical Game

To submit your Final Report, go to the [Final Report submission page](http://affordablelearninggeorgia.org/site/final_report_submission) on the ALG website: http://affordablelearninggeorgia.org/site/final\_report\_submission

The final report submission form allows up to five files:

* This completed narrative document
* Syllabus or syllabi

*If multiple files, compress into one .zip folder*

* Qualitative/Quantitative Measures data files

*If multiple files, compress into one .zip folder*

* Invoice for the second half of the grant’s award amount (or institution sends after)

Follow the instructions on the webpage for uploading your documents. Based on receipt of this report, ALG will process the final payment for your grant. ALG will follow up in the future with post-project grantee surveys and may also request your participation in a publication, presentation, or other events.

# General Information

**Date:** 6-5-2020

**Grant Round:** Awarded Jan. 17, 2019

**Grant Number:** SGBOR0000986801

**Institution Name(s):** University of Georgia

**Project Lead:** Janice Hume, Professor and Journalism Department Head

**Team Members (Name, Title, Department, Institutions if different, and email address for each):** Andrea Briscoe, doctoral candidate, Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication, abriscoe@uga.edu

**Course Name(s) and Course Numbers:** JRLC 5490/7490 History of Mass Media in the United States

**Semester Project Began:** Spring, 2019

**Final Semester of Implementation:** Spring, 2020

**Total Number of Students Affected During Project:** 67 (30 in Spring 2019 helped with primary research and 37 in Spring 2020 played the game)

# Narrative

A. My co-author Andrea Briscoe and I finished developing our new reacting game “Atlanta, 1913: Justice for Mary Phagan and Leo Frank” in Fall 2019, and I taught it for the first time in my class, JRLC 5490 History of Mass Media in the United States, during the last four weeks of the Spring 2020 semester at the University of Georgia. The game was developed in partnership with the Digital Library of Georgia, and all resources are accessible free online from a variety of sources listed in the Core Texts document.

My goals for students were that they would 1) write beautifully, 2) speak persuasively, 3) think critically, 4) dig for primary documents, 5) consider journalistic norms and ethics, and 6) get up and moving. We designed the game so that students would have to find appropriate primary documents rather than having all sources provided as some games do. To that end, the Digital Library of Georgia made available digitally *The Atlanta Georgian* and *The Atlanta Journal*. *The Atlanta Constitution* is available via Proquest from the University of Georgia Libraries. These three competing newspapers often published multiple editions a day during the trial of Leo Frank, which meant that students had to immerse themselves to find coverage relevant to their roles. Other primary documents were available digitally at the Georgia Archives, Digital Public Library of America, and the Library of Congress.

Andrea and I had been looking forward to the launch of our game, and I had prepared lanyards with character photos for each student and background slideshows of game locations for the two big screens in my classroom. I was planning on having popcorn and era- and Atlanta-appropriate Coca-Cola when students visited the Decatur Street speakeasy, where 1913 journalists would gather and brag about their scoops. We were to play shortly after students returned from Spring Break. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted our plans, and we had to pivot quickly to move the game online.

My concerns were that the game would be confusing for students if I couldn’t help them in person and that students wouldn’t “buy into” the experience remotely. I was wrong on both counts. The students surprised me with their excellent work and creativity. Some mentioned in evaluations that playing online gave them more courage to dress up and step into the personalities of their historic characters. I am sold on the reacting game experience to help students think critically and communicate effectively, goals for all coursework in Journalism and Mass Communication. I look forward to playing it again in person.

B. I am new to reacting game pedagogy, so I would say that the major lesson I learned is that these games work. My students were engaged, and based on their performance, achieved the learning goals I established. If I had to do anything differently, I would do a better job of explaining my expectations regarding how students should attribute historical sources, and as I refine the game I will add more nuances and surprises to the game mechanics.

# Quotes

**What they liked:**

*My favorite part about playing the game was immersing myself into my character. It was so fun to dress up and get to speak the kind of language they would back in 1913.*

*Writing letters and speeches that concerned the time period*

*I enjoyed seeing how creative my classmates were.*

**What they didn’t like:**

*My least favorite thing about the game was that it was hard to come up with new things to talk about in each letter or speech every week. My character was pretty minor and I couldn't really come up with more things to defend Leo Frank about.*

*The research-- there were a lot of news articles (all on the same day) to dig through.*

**Would they be interested in playing another game in the future?**

*I would be interested in playing this game in person but I do feel that it was a lot easier to be able to record speeches and upload them rather than make them in person.*

*Possibly. The online version was less nerve-wracking since we didn't have to perform in front of an audience. But I would've most likely still loved the experience.*

# Quantitative and Qualitative Measures

## Measures Narrative

No students dropped the class. Two received an “incomplete” and will make up the research and writing. This was due to pressures of the Covid-19 shutdown rather than the game. Thus, 95 percent of students completed the game and course. The vast majority of students received an A or A- for the game. One student opted out of speeches, which dropped her game grade to a C. As this was the debut of the game, I do not have longitudinal data.

Unfortunately only 9 students out of 35 completed the post-game survey. Obviously the COVID-19 shutdown had an impact on the outcomes, in particular the survey participation. Next time I will make the survey mandatory rather than handling it like a voluntary course evaluation.

I hired a University of Georgia student to be a “peer mentor” for the class. This was her report to me at the conclusion of the game. Student names have been removed.

*Hello,*

*By far, this has been the best class I’ve had the pleasure to peer mentor.  Even with the shift to online classes, your students went above and beyond in bringing the atmosphere of the 1900s to life! I enjoyed reading everyone’s letters and recipes, watching speeches (an overwhelming amount complete with period dress and effects), and perusing the playlists a few students posted to the discussion boards.  As I went through the posts, I took note of who really went above and beyond each week, based on research, period elements, and presentation:*

*Week 1:*

*Op-Ed (The Jeffersonian)*

*Position Paper (Atlanta Journal)*

*Letter to Bishop Turner*

*Atlanta Georgian*

*Week 2:*

*Response to Albert Lasker*

*Rae Frank Position Paper*

*Speech*

*Speakeasy speech*

*Albert Lasker Addressing Speakeasy*

*Week 3:*

*Letter to Friend (Temple Community Member)*

*Governor Speech to people of Atlanta*

*Response*

*Protest plea from a factory worker (speech)*

*Speech addressing congregation*

*Week 4:*

*Letter to Atlanta Georgian*

*Moonshine Joe at it again (speech)*

*Speech (Hugh Dorsey at speakeasy)*

*Speech (Adolph Ochs)*

*Speech (Rae Frank to Leo Frank supporters on June 20th)*

*Overall, factions did a great job of coordinating online.  After listening to the debrief session, I am so impressed with how much students have learned and how eloquently they conveyed their perspectives on issues of context, ethics, and modern parallels with the current pandemic.  If you would like me to do anything else associated with the game, please let me know—it’s awesome that the mechanics excel in an online format!*

# Sustainability Plan

My plan is to play the game in my media history course, probably every other year. The Journalism major is a four-semester program. Skipping a year in between will keep the game fresh and surprising because it is less likely the students will talk with each other about it. Too, I have a favorite semester-long project that I do with the Special Collections Libraries that I will rotate every other year.

I will share the experience, and the game, with my colleagues from the American Journalism Historians Association.

# Future Affordable Materials Plans

I will continue to work on removing required textbooks from my class and move toward using materials accessible through UGA Libraries and online archives.

One thing that really stood out for me during this experience: Giving students agency increases their enthusiasm and improves their work.

# Future Scholarship Plans

On February 8, 2020, I participated in a panel discussion at the annual meeting of the Georgia Association of Historians

Authoring and Using Reacting to the Past, an Active-Learning Pedagogy: A Roundtable Discussion (University Hall 248) Chairs/Commentators: Thomas Chase Hagood and Naomi J. Norman, University of Georgia

“Atlanta Sit-Ins,” Michelle Brattain, Georgia State University

“Game of Sages: Diplomacy and War in China, 223 BCE,” Sandrine Catris, Augusta University

“Atlanta 1913: Justice for Mary Phagan and Leo Frank,” Janice Hume, University of Georgia

“UNSCOP and the Question of Israel, 1947,” Jason Slone, Georgia Southern University

“Black Uplift in Atlanta, 1905,” Montgomery Wolf, University of Georgia

I plan to propose a panel in gaming pedagogy for the 2021 annual meeting of the American Journalism Historians Association.