Teaching Hidden History: Student Outcomes from a Distributed, Collaborative, Hybrid History Course

Kelly Schrum, Nate Sleeter,
Anthony Pellegrino, and Celeste Tường Vy Sharpe
George Mason University, George Mason University, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and Carleton College

A 1921 PHOTOGRAPH captures the crowd outside a Cleveland movie theater. Upon closer inspection, everyone in the image is dressed in similar attire. A bowler cap sits perched atop each head. The coats are black and too small, while the trousers are rumpled and oversized. Many individuals hold canes, and small, black "toothbrush" mustaches complete the guise (**Figure 1**). As you might have guessed, the photograph depicts a group of individuals dressed to imitate renowned entertainer Charlie Chaplin. In fact, they were contestants in a Chaplin look-alike competition. Hidden in the image, however, is a larger story about the emergence of the modern celebrity and the global reach of American popular culture.

This photograph, and the story surrounding it, exemplifies the student projects developed during a hybrid graduate history course called *Teaching Hidden History*. Team-taught in Summer 2015 across two universities, the course fundamentally tasked graduate students in history and history education with creating online learning modules based on the idea that hidden within any artifact is a larger

Figure 1: J. W. Sandison, "Charlie Chaplin Look-Alike Contest," photograph, November 5, 1921, courtesy of Whatcom Museum of History and Art, Bellingham, Washington; #203, <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/bobhope/images/vc4b.jpg>.

historical narrative. Course objectives and activities encouraged students to think about how this narrative might take shape and, more broadly, how they could present history to their intended audiences.

Starting with a primary "first-order" artifact, such as the Chaplin contest photograph, each student created a module based on their own research and interests. Students were encouraged not only to describe the historical context surrounding their artifact, but also to model the process for thinking historically, interpreting evidence, and employing both contextual elements and supporting resources to craft historical narratives.[1] Students designed their modules to teach the "what" and "how" of history to specific audiences, such as students in secondary schools, higher education institutions, or individuals outside of formal classroom environments. In the process, the course also challenged students to develop and present their research digitally while working across institutional contexts to engage in class discussions and peer review with classmates hundreds of miles away. In this article, we share the story of the course development, include findings from our evaluation of the course and student work, and consider ways in which the initial iteration of the course might evolve to focus on specific components of historical thinking and student collaboration. In so doing, we hope that others interested in hybrid humanities classrooms and digital history education may find ideas and outcomes to support furthering these fields.

Background

In 2010, Virginia began a statewide initiative (4-VA) that was designed to promote collaboration and provide innovative learning opportunities among Virginia public universities. This funding enabled George Mason University and Virginia Tech to offer *Teaching Hidden History* as a shared, hybrid course using on-campus teleconference rooms and an interactive course website.[2] For eight weeks, fifteen graduate students met face-to-face and online—both synchronously and asynchronously—as a class, in small groups, with a feedback partner, and individually with instructors from both campuses.

The overarching goal of the course was to have *Teaching Hidden History* students better understand teaching and learning history with digital methods by creating their own real-life products—online modules based on their research interests. This approach emerged from a previous experience creating a digital history education project. In 2010, the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University developed an asynchronous online course for K-12 educators entitled *Hidden in Plain Sight*.[3] The course structure emphasized an inquiry-based, reflective approach to learning about the past through artifacts in U.S. history, such as an eighteenth-century musket ball or a can of instant coffee. In addition to teaching about specific topics and time periods, *Hidden in Plain Sight* modules modeled and taught historical thinking skills. Users were encouraged to draw connections between historical evidence and the ways in which historians use these sources to craft historical narratives. Designing and teaching *Hidden in Plain Sight* inspired the idea that creating an original module would serve as a valuable research project for history and history education students—a real-world product that incorporates historical research and analysis, concise writing, and digital skill development.

In planning *Teaching Hidden History*, we thought carefully about how best to structure the course to support the creation of online modules. Given the compressed nature of a summer course, it was imperative that students choose a topic and begin their preliminary research quickly. The first four weeks of the course also featured readings and discussions related to digital methods, pedagogy, and historical thinking. As students developed project ideas and conducted historical research, they integrated project-

specific examples into their coursework and discussions. After four weeks of in-person meetings, students spent three weeks planning, researching, interacting with instructors synchronously and asynchronously, and providing feedback to each other with a strong focus on their individual projects. The class then met again in person for the remaining weeks.

An essential component of the course was to ensure that student projects encouraged users to think historically about the featured objects. Likewise, students focused on developing modules using skills and strategies aligned with historical thinking. For our purposes, we defined historical thinking as the complex process of analysis, reading, and writing necessary to understand the past. We envisioned this course as an opportunity to engage and build students' skills in historical analysis, research, and writing, including contextualization, corroboration, close reading, and sourcing.[4] These skills support the key components of historical thinking: analyzing primary sources, understanding historical context, engaging multiple accounts and perspectives, and developing clear claim-evidence connections. In *Teaching Hidden History*, historical artifacts served both as the focal point for the educational modules and as springboards for thinking historically about how everyday objects connect to and reveal larger historical narratives. This approach encouraged students to make explicit their analytical processes, both to classmates throughout the course and to future audiences through the sources, annotations, and thematic essay included in each module.

Creating an online module not only required learning about historical thinking, research, and pedagogy, it also meant acquiring digital skills to implement modules online. Students came to the class with a wide range of familiarity with digital methods, from a student who had built websites in digital humanities courses to students with no experience creating content for the web. We directed some technology instruction at the whole class, such as locating and editing images for the web and discussing how copyright issues factor into publishing online. We created a detailed handout with instructions and screenshots to guide students through the process of posting work to the course website. In addition, we individualized instruction, practicing select tasks together in class to diagnose problems and address concerns about working with new technologies. Every student, for example, uploaded an image

to the course website in class before beginning to build a module. Students selected a variety of source materials, including images, audio, and video. We worked individually with students outside of class, in some cases teaching them basic HTML programming, to ensure that their resources displayed correctly. By incorporating these digital skills into the development of an online learning history module, students gained first-hand experience in the practice and possibilities of teaching and presenting history digitally.

History Pedagogy in the Classroom

The work conceptualizing *Teaching Hidden History* drew upon the growing body of literature about ways of knowing and thinking in the disciplines. Over the past two decades, history pedagogy in K-12 and higher education classrooms has increasingly focused on historical thinking and inquiry-based learning.[5] Inquiry has become the central theme anchoring the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) C3 Framework for K-12 classrooms as well as the focus of the American Historical Association's Tuning Project centered on higher education environments.[6] An inquiry-based approach in history helps teachers, as educational theorist Paulo Freire noted, "provoke the discovering of need for knowing and never to impose the knowledge whose need was not yet perceived."[7] In recent decades, research has provided rich qualitative descriptions of students' abilities to think historically based on practices that foster the tenets of history.[8] Likewise, case studies have offered evidence of successful implementations of inquiry-based projects.[9] Lacking, however, is sufficient research on course-wide practice opportunities that enable informed instructional decisions in history pedagogy.[10]

Researchers focused on history in higher education within the scholarship of teaching and learning have investigated the value of conveying the historian's ways of knowing and habits of mind to undergraduate and graduate students. Lendol Calder, William Cutler, and T. Mills Kelly encouraged historians to view pedagogy as its own body of knowledge.[11] Along these lines, Leah Shopkow, Arlene Díaz, Joan Middendorf, and David Pace developed the History Learning Project (HLP) to help university instructors "decode the discipline" of history and make the implicit thinking of the expert explicit for the student.[12] Working with pre-service teachers, Linda Sargent Wood

has explored the utility of "history labs" to model the process of historical inquiry—including posing a historical problem, analyzing primary and secondary sources, and developing an interpretation.[13] With *Teaching Hidden History*, we sought to build on these models by providing graduate students an opportunity to explore the teaching of historical inquiry using digital tools.

Scholars have increasingly made creative use of digital tools and digital student projects to promote active learning and historical thinking in higher education. Kelly proposed five ways instructors can facilitate historical thinking in the digital age and make use of the digital spaces that young people already inhabit—"thinking," "finding," "analyzing," "presenting," and "making."[14] Similarly, the Organization of American Historians (OAH) blog, *Process*, features scholars exploring the potential of teaching history in the digital age.[15] *History Engine* represents another successful example of utilizing digital methods to increase student engagement.[16] It allows undergraduates to engage in historical research on a small scale to create meaningful projects featured together on the *History Engine* site. *History Harvest*, created by William Thomas at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, provides another model of students using digital tools to learn history research methods. Students in the *History Harvest* course solicit historical artifacts from the general public, digitize them, and create curated online collections that frame each artifact in its historical context.[17] In each of these models, as in *Teaching Hidden History*, students using technology create "real-world" products that are relevant to their interests and career goals.

Students in *Teaching Hidden History* also learned to create digital history modules while engaging in online learning through the hybrid nature of the course. College campuses have recently seen an increase in the offerings of hybrid classes in an attempt to meet the needs of students and to reach students in multiple locations. A hybrid course is typically defined as a combination of face-to-face traditional meetings and online distant learning. These courses, as suggested by Sarah Hall and Donna Villareal, require a balance of organization, flexibility, self-regulation, and motivation from all stakeholders.[18] Researchers are currently examining the impact of hybrid courses on student learning and attitudes. Research on hybrid courses is a new field and best practices are just beginning to emerge.[19] We designed a hybrid course to fit the needs of our learning

environment and student population while consciously experimenting with various strategies and focusing on learning outcomes.

We conceived *Teaching Hidden History* to help students develop historical thinking and digital skills to interpret and present the past. The team documented the process and conducted an extensive evaluation of the course, including student work, to improve our practice and to share strategies for teaching history, history education, and digital history in a hybrid setting.

Course Assignment: Creating A Digital History Module

The process of developing an online module in *Teaching Hidden History* was designed to teach students historical content and historical thinking skills, along with digital skills. We used an iterative and reflective approach to build understanding with substantive feedback at multiple points in the process. Each student crafted a module with the following components:

1. a historical artifact that serves as the central source and conceptual core of the module;
2. two hypothesis questions designed to engage the user with the source and to think about its connection to themes in history;
3. eleven additional annotated resources (primary and secondary sources) that work together to tell a larger story and place the central artifact in a broader context;
4. multiple "rethink" questions that ask visitors to reconsider their hypotheses based on their new understanding of the original source and larger historical context; and
5. a 500-word, synthetic "connections" essay that draws together the module sources, narratives, and themes.

These sections work together to model the historical thinking process. Throughout the module, students had the opportunity to make evident their lines of inquiry through framing questions and analytical text. In this way, each module presents the student's interpretation of the topic while opening up spaces for module users to work through the material within a structured framework to develop their own historical thinking skills.

Each module begins with a single historical artifact—such as a porcelain teacup from the Colonial Era or a tattered boot worn by

a Civil War soldier—and then asks users to explore the "hidden" history behind that source. The teacup, for instance, can be used to tell a story about the coming of the American Revolution, social ties with England, and the ways in which colonists created a collective national identity. The Civil War-era boot connects to the expansion of federal government powers brought on, in part, by the need to raise and supply the Union army. *Teaching Hidden History* students chose a wide variety of central artifacts, from a Scottish tartan to a 1930s wind-up toy car, to anchor their projects.

To help lay the foundation for the connections between the primary artifact and broader historical themes, students compose two hypothesis questions about the item's significance: one that prompts users to closely inspect and describe the primary source, and one that asks users to try to figure out how that artifact connects to a larger historical narrative. After the hypothesis is submitted, the user is then presented with twelve resources. The central artifact serves as the first of the twelve. Each resource page features a primary or secondary source, such as a map or a scholar introducing a broader historical concept, and a brief narrative text (300-400 words) that provides additional historical context. Resource pages model the ways in which historians use sources to craft an argument about the past by making explicit the kinds of questions scholars ask and answer. *Teaching Hidden History* students carefully select and annotate these resource pages, revising and reconsidering their choices throughout the module creation process.

After examining each page, the user returns to the initial primary artifact to rethink their hypothesis in light of what they have learned from the resources. Students craft these questions carefully to draw the user in and to encourage the user to consider all of the perspectives and ideas they explored. Lastly, a connections essay (500 words) pulls together the sources and themes presented throughout the module into a concise overview of the topic. *Teaching Hidden History* students work on their connections essay throughout the course.

The process was carefully scaffolded throughout the course. As a summer class, it was especially important to dive in and to keep the pace. In the second week of class, students submitted a module topic, identified their intended audience, and began to research primary and secondary sources. They met individually with an instructor to talk through the module idea with the goal of refining and revising

it. By the third week, students submitted draft annotations for their central artifacts, identified additional primary and secondary sources, met with a critique partner, and met with an instructor to discuss the module. They submitted a blog post reflecting on the module, its development to date, and questions or challenges. Over the next few weeks, students continued to finalize resources, write annotations, draft a connections essay, and enter content online. They also continued to meet with classmates and instructors. When the module content was complete, students received thorough feedback from classmates and instructors and made final revisions. This iterative process shaped student modules in important ways as instructors and classmates asked for clarity, deeper analysis, or more coherence. All components of the module are essential, but the central artifact and the connections essay emerged as especially critical to the student learning experience.

While the basic format for the modules was predetermined, *Teaching Hidden History* students selected and framed their own module topics. Students could explore one moment in depth or look at change across time. In addition, students were encouraged to approach their topics and sources with their own professional contexts in mind. Several students who taught middle school or high school created modules designed for their students. Others working in public history framed their projects with broader audiences in mind. Allowing students to tailor their modules to their research interests and career goals increased motivation and authentic learning. Students created online modules that they could use, and many did so in the months following the course.

Research Questions

Built into the *Teaching Hidden History* project was a core research focus on using student data to examine outcomes and determine ways to improve the design and implementation of the course. The exciting and unique challenges in examining *Teaching Hidden History* centered on the myriad design and content components that supported learning objectives related to collaboration and developing digital and historical thinking skills. As a result, our research efforts included an examination of the learning environment that required students to collaborate across institutions, providing

feedback and support to classmates. Related to the online learning module outcome, we also examined student use and sense of self-efficacy with the technology and affordances employed in the course. Fundamentally, successful development of the online modules required that students deeply understand how to think historically and help module users to do so as well. We, therefore, looked at how student interactions and course components supported this learning objective. This combination of factors shaped our research questions and approach to data analysis.

The research questions developed for this project were as follows:

a. Was there a significant change in student self-perceptions of collaboration, technology, and historical thinking skills during the course?

b. What course structures and activities supported student collaboration, technology skill development, and historical thinking skill development?

Methods

In Summer 2015, data were collected from the fifteen students enrolled in the graduate-level history course *Teaching Hidden History.* Nine students enrolled through George Mason University and six enrolled through Virginia Tech. Both are Virginia state institutions with large graduate-level history and education programs. Participants represented a range of educational backgrounds, including M.A. and Ph.D. students in history, practicing K-12 social studies teachers and higher education teachers, pre-service teachers, and individuals preparing for or enhancing careers in public history.

Data Sources and Analysis

To study the research questions, we used a variety of data sources, including module drafts, peer feedback, instructor feedback, course blog posts, post-course reflective blogs, final presentation observations, and final student modules. These data were content-analyzed to look for themes related to collaboration, technology skills, and historical thinking. Students also completed a questionnaire in the first and final sessions of the course to measure self-perceptions of efficacy in collaboration, technology skills, and historical thinking.

The questionnaire was developed based on self-efficacy scales from a variety of fields, including general self-efficacy, collaboration and technological self-efficacy, and historical literacy self-efficacy based on Peter Seixas's benchmarks of historical thinking.[20] This scale included sixteen questions from three categories: collaboration, technology, and historical thinking (see **Appendix**). The questionnaire was pilot-tested with fourteen graduate-level teacher candidates in the Secondary Education-History/Social Studies program in Spring 2015. Based on their feedback, changes were made to clarify the wording and to revise the question order. The questionnaire was administered during the first and last course sessions using an identical protocol that included sending students a link to the scale and allowing students the opportunity to complete the questionnaire during a designated time in class. All students completed the questionnaire each time.

Review of data included quantitative analysis of the pre- and post-questionnaire and qualitative content analysis of student work and feedback provided during module development. Together, the variety of measures employed enabled us to strengthen the validity of the research findings.[21]

Findings and Analysis: Quantitative Data

Descriptive and parametric measures were used to analyze quantitative data from the pre- and post-course questionnaire. To answer the first research question—whether or not there was a significant change in overall student self-perceptions of collaboration, technology, and historical thinking skills during the course—we conducted one-tailed, paired sample *t*-tests. The overall mean score for the questionnaire increased from 8.28 to 8.76 (out of a possible 10) from pre- to post-course. Results from the *t*-tests indicated that there were statistically significant differences between pre-course and post-course responses for the students in the class in terms of their overall self-perceptions in collaboration, technology, and historical thinking skills, suggesting a connection between the major objectives of the course and an increase in student self-efficacy in these domains. Separate analysis was used to measure changes in the specific elements of collaboration, technological skills, and historical thinking skills—subcomponents of the questionnaire.

Descriptive Statistics and *t*-Test Results for Questionnaire: Overall and Subtests

Outcome	Pre-test		Post-test		n	95% CI for Mean Difference		*t*	df	sig.*
	M	SD	M	SD						
Overall	8.282	.933	8.763	.630	14	-.856	-.106	2.7735	13	.016
Collaboration Skills	8.793	.332	8.657	.249	14	-.711	-.043	1.078	4	.345
Technology Skills	6.757	1.029	8.818	.453	14	-2.749	-.358	3.705	4	.020
Historical Thinking Skills	8.904	.160	9.226	.153	14	-.523	-.119	3.551	10	.005

Note: $*p < .05$ M = Mean SD = Standard Deviation CI = Confidence Interval

Figure 2: Descriptive Statistics and *t*-Test Results for Questionnaire

Statistically significant differences were found in technology skills and historical thinking. Changes in collaboration were not significantly different (**Figure 2**).

Parsing out responses on specific questionnaire items provided a glimpse into the level of efficacy among these students at the outset of the course. In terms of technology, students began the course with relatively low self-efficacy related to using technological tools as well as how technology might be used to develop historical thinking. By the end of the term, students felt far more confident in the tools and affordances of the technologies used for this course. In fact, the largest increases from questionnaire responses came from questions related to these specific technological ideas. One question that asked whether students believed they could "effectively create content for an online course" saw an increase from 6.90 to 8.40. Average scores as to whether they could "use digital tools to help students understand history" increased from 6.70 to 8.40.

The two other themes of collaboration and historical thinking, however, were rather different. Responses related to questions about collaboration, for example, averaged 8.80 at the beginning of

the course. This suggests a strong sense of confidence that students exhibited in their abilities to collaborate at the outset of the course. A similar finding was evident in historical thinking, where students began the course with the belief that they understood historical thinking and were confident in their abilities to think historically (8.90). We used qualitative data to dissect these findings and help determine how the themes of collaboration, technology integration, and historical thinking evolved.

Findings and Analysis: Qualitative Data

Data from observations and student artifacts allowed us to examine student behaviors in the three categories outlined in the course objectives and mirrored on the questionnaire. Peer feedback occurred throughout the course and offered rich insight into collaboration between classmates, technological skill development by students, and the connection between content knowledge and historical thinking skills.

In most exchanges, peer feedback focused on the content of the module under review. Peers often included suggestions for additional resources or reminders about expectations of the module. One student, for example, commented about potential copyright issues with a resource and the viability of using this resource in the module. In cases where students were not knowledgeable on specific topics, their understanding of historical thinking was beneficial. In his feedback to Gary (student names are pseudonyms), for example, Vince asked, "Who is your audience? What are you attempting to do with the image? How does this relate to your module?"[22] In feedback to Vince, Gary suggested, "I would stay away from making generalities about who might know information and when they know it and just lead off with the story or information."[23] Others suggested additional perspectives that might add to the narrative. In feedback to Jennifer on her module about Appalachian working conditions, Robert asked whether she might consider "looking at governmental responses" to mining disasters.[24]

The peer exchanges extended to the final module submission and presentation. As students shared a summary of their module, showed the main and supporting artifacts, and provided the historical narrative they chose to interpret, previously assigned partners

were tasked with reacting to the module as presented. Through this exercise, we learned how the development of these modules affected their creators, but also how they affected their peers. In Vince's module using an eighteenth-century French coin to elucidate the importance of international intervention during the American Revolution, his assigned peer reviewer, Charles, responded that he "really liked how he made this a story about an international conflict." He further discussed how the artifact (the French coin) was "simple" and allowed "so many opportunities for nuanced historical interpretation."[25]

Jeff used an image of a Works Progress Administration (WPA) building project for his main artifact. In his presentation, he noted how developing this module helped him notice buildings around him and the significance they hold. He helped us model one of the key objectives of the class when he commented that these artifacts were, in fact, able to "make that hidden history visible."[26] His peer reviewer, Philip, appreciated the module since the school where he taught was also built through the WPA. Jeff's project helped him see a personal connection and seek ways to integrate this local history into the larger New Deal narrative of relief, reform, and recovery.[27]

The fact that *Teaching Hidden History* was a shared course between two institutions added another dimension to the collaboration. Throughout the course, instructors purposefully worked to build connections between students at each university. Philip and Jeff, for example, were assigned as peer reviewers partly because of their backgrounds as a K-12 teacher and a pre-service teacher, but also because they were located at different universities. Technology helped bridge the distance as students used an array of platforms—Skype, Google Hangout, e-mail, and the course website—to communicate with each other. This practice of actively encouraging collaboration across universities led to a number of productive interactions, as in the case of Philip and Jeff.

In other situations, feedback was less collaborative in nature. For some partners, this became emblematic of the type of collaboration in this course. Students who were knowledgeable about their peer's topic often shared these ideas to make their peer's modules better. When the course website or e-mail were the medium of exchange, however, rather than a phone call or video chat, this sometimes resulted in feedback moving in one direction and resembled an

"expert" helping a "novice" rather than peers trying to grapple together with the complexity of a topic. Some students offered a series of comments suggesting specific resources the reviewer felt must be included, while others "corrected" what they viewed as a skewed or misleading perspective.

In terms of technology use, final modules and presentations supported questionnaire responses that showed significant increases in students' self-perceptions of using technologies and their affordances for teaching and learning history. Rob, who used the image of a Charlie Chaplin look-alike contest described earlier to envisage Chaplin's renown and the rise of global celebrity, found the digital modules created in *Teaching Hidden History* "perfect for media studies."[28] This module, Rob wrote, could be used to "show students film clips and focus in on why this is important." Moreover, he saw the module as more than just a presentation tool; it was a "chance to do analysis within this format and structure." In reflective blog postings written for class, other students also noted the transition from skepticism about how technology might be suited to historical inquiry to recognition that this medium has the potential to resonate with students as "the perfect marriage of subject matter and learning technologies."[29] Peter suggested that *Teaching Hidden History* was "a unique way to think about teaching."[30] He continued, "Not only has it become a useful addition to my digital portfolio, *Teaching Hidden History* gave me specific ways of promoting deeper connections to history among our students."

With regards to historical thinking, the emphasis this course placed on a reflective approach was evident in the final modules as well as in the formative data we used to track changes in students. Students exhibited a great deal of confidence in their abilities to think historically in the pre-course questionnaire. They were nearly all "highly certain" in their abilities to seek and understand multiple perspectives, interpret historical evidence, and construct a historical argument. Echoing Sam Wineburg's seminal book, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*, however, we noticed that, for these students, "doing history" was less "natural" than they anticipated.[31] Many indicated that they were challenged to think differently about certain topics and sources when tasked to create an online module using an inquiry framework.

Students used their wide range of content knowledge, and connections thereof, as entry points into their projects. Rob's background in media studies, Philip's experiences as a secondary teacher, and Charles's role in local public history, for example, offered launching points for their respective work in the course. What emerged, however, was that while the content knowledge each student had in specific areas may have contributed to confidence in the ability to think historically, it did not automatically translate into the ability to contextualize a topic in ways that translated into effective modules for their intended audiences. Robert, for example, commented specifically about his learning and research process during the final presentation. He noted that, initially, he thought thematically about a topic of interest to him, then gradually reflected on how his module might be more effective if he offered specific, carefully selected aspects of the historical context and allowed viewers to make connections through his supporting evidence. Patricia and Anthony articulated similar struggles to make connections between sources in essays about supporting artifacts. In final presentations, both indicated that they gradually came to realize the importance of the process students undergo in understanding historical significance. In her final course posting, Jennifer reflected that as the course went on, "ideas began to click like crazy" in terms of how the objects could relate to the process of thinking historically.[32]

Discussion and Implications

The work done in *Teaching Hidden History* demonstrated that a cross-institutional hybrid course where students develop digital learning modules based on tenets of historical thinking can effectively balance objectives related to collaboration, technology, and historical thinking. It is undoubtedly the presentations and final modules that best demonstrate student success in the course. The notion of "ideas beg[inning] to click like crazy" is always welcome news to a teacher, and noting the manifestation of these students' ideas was a powerful indication of how we might envision a dynamic and relevant history course. During the presentations of final modules, students summarized their efforts, remarked on their biggest challenges, and noted the ways with which they decided to create narratives based on their primary artifacts. Several students

Figure 3: John Trumbull, *Surrender of Lord Cornwallis*, oil on canvas, 1820, Architect of the Capitol, <https://www.aoc.gov/art/historic-rotunda-paintings/surrender-lord-cornwallis>.

reflected that they had to think critically about the scope of the project and had to work to focus on a particular aspect of a larger topic.

Frequently, the selection of the main object complemented this process. Jeff, for example, explained that in researching the Battle of Yorktown for his module, he came to focus on the role of the French, which he felt his middle school students had trouble understanding.[33] To support this perspective, Jeff selected as his main artifact the 1820 John Trumbull painting, *Surrender of Lord Cornwallis*, that hangs in the United States Capitol rotunda and is often used in textbooks (**Figure 3**). The painting, Jeff explained, depicts both French and American military officers accepting the surrender of the British and provides an excellent starting point for exploring the importance of France's contributions to American independence.[34]

In terms of collaboration, most students noted the valuable insights gleaned from their peer reviewers. Angela, for example, said that she appreciated the "thought-provoking" questions her peer

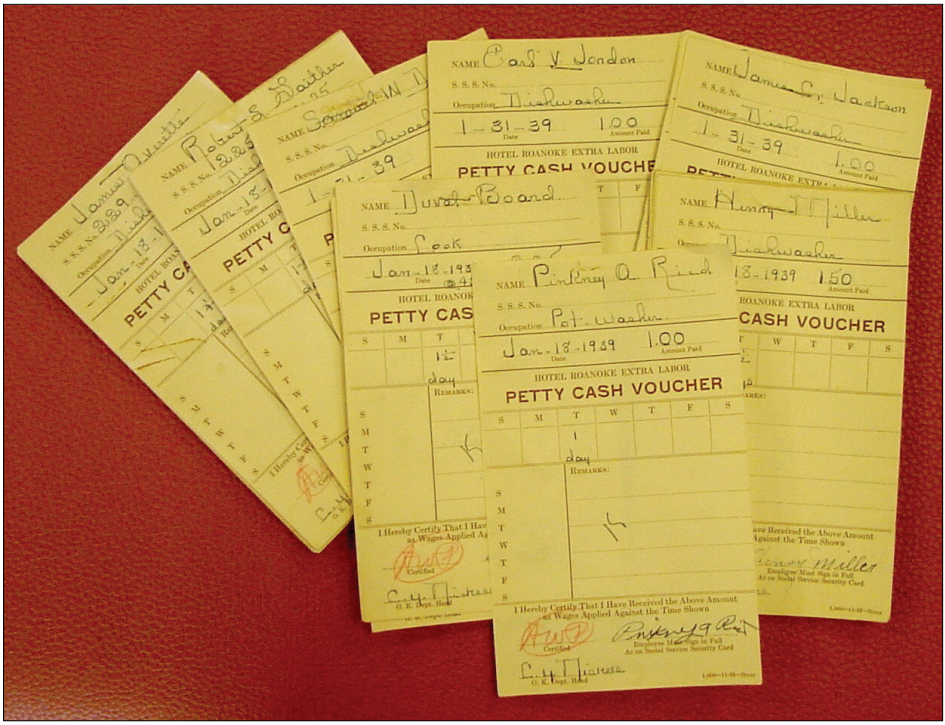
reviewer made, noting, "It made my work better."[35] Additionally, many commented on the challenges of navigating the technological expectations of the course. This revelation comports with findings from the questionnaire that showed low self-efficacy scores in this category at the commencement of the course and significant growth by the conclusion.

At the core of each module lies the content used to create a complex narrative around a single primary artifact. During in-class presentations, students demonstrated their ability to engage with complex concepts and to model sophisticated historical thinking skills. Not only did these modules model the use of multiple resources, they challenged viewers to interpret the resources for themselves rather than take them as fact. Likewise, students recognized the power of engaging viewers through explorations of how historical sources can inform interpretations. One example, a narrative of the environmental movement in the U.S. that starts with a striking photograph of oil-covered hands, illustrates the compelling nature of this work. Upon reflection after the course, several students posted blogs that noted the ways in which their efforts in this class gave them new perspectives on studying the past. Peter noted that his study "took on new possibilities" and that *Teaching Hidden History* had a "very different ultimate goal" from what he normally encountered in graduate courses, which offered less student choice and autonomy. The course design, he reflected, imparted lessons that will be "useful in teaching as well as in my future public history writing."[36]

Moving Forward

With all of the success students found in *Teaching Hidden History*, the data we collected and analyzed showed several areas where we can improve the course and support students' learning more effectively. As evidenced by the students' relatively minimal gains in the self-efficacy scores related to collaboration, we will focus on this aspect more explicitly in a revised version of this course. A more structured workshop process for reviewing draft modules coupled with detailed expectations may enhance the power of collaboration.

Facilitating collaboration represents a significant challenge in a hybrid course, but it is a challenge worth taking on. During the final



NAME Pinkney A. Reid
S. S. S. No.
Occupation Pot-Washer
Jan-18-1939 Date 1.00 Amount Paid

HOTEL ROANOKE EXTRA LABOR
PETTY CASH VOUCHER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1 day				

REMARKS:

I Hereby Certify That I Have Received the Above Amount as Wages Applied Against the Time Shown

AWP Certified

Pinkney A Reid Employee Must Sign in Full As on Social Service Security Card

C. J. Harrison O. K. Dept. Head

Figure 4: Samantha Parish, "Hotel Roanoke Petty Cash Receipts, Roanoke, VA [1939]," photograph, June 20, 2015. Used with permission.

class meeting when students presented their modules, articulated their overall argument, and justified the choices they made with regard to resources and topic, they frequently came to new insights regarding their projects. With this in mind, in future iterations of the course, we believe it would be beneficial to require peer meetings with an emphasis on discussing module goals and the decision-making process. In addition, we would like to extend the course an extra week to allow students to incorporate these useful ideas for revising their modules and feedback from the presentation into final drafts.

Additionally, in subsequent iterations of this course, we will consider new ways to measure aspects of historical thinking that capture changes from pre- to post-course beyond self-assessment. We envision, for example, asking students to systematically engage

in historical thinking practices, such as analyzing primary sources and providing an example of teaching with a primary source, at the beginning and end of the course. With this data, we would be able to modify the course to better address specific aspects of teaching historical thinking.

Overall, we were able to demonstrate considerable student growth from participation in the *Teaching Hidden History* course. The innovative nature of this course—a cross-instructional collaboration grounded in historical inquiry that challenged students to create online modules for diverse audiences—remains unique and relevant. Our goal moving forward is to continue improving this course based on the findings we discerned and within the framework we have established. Whether exploring the global phenomenon of Charlie Chaplin's celebrity or uncovering the rich complexities of the Appalachian backcountry through material culture (**Figure 4**), digital tools can help students connect the specific and tangible to the general and thematic. For both the students in *Teaching Hidden History* and the instructors, embracing the possibilities of collaboration and a process that values reflection has proven key to productive success. Moreover, this model provides a strong foundation for further innovation at the intersection of historical research, digital technologies, and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Notes

1. See Frederick D. Drake and Lynn R. Nelson, *Engagement in Teaching History: Methods for Middle and Secondary School Teaching* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Division of Prentice Hall, 2005); Sam Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001).
2. See 4-VA, <https://4-va.org>.
3. See *Hidden in Plain Sight*, <https://hipshistory.org>.
4. See Celeste Tường Vy Sharpe, Nate Sleeter, and Kelly Schrum, "How We Learned to Drop the Quiz: Writing in Online Asynchronous Courses," in *Web Writing: Why and How for Liberal Arts Teaching and Learning*, ed. Jack Dougherty and Tennyson O'Donnell (Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan Publishing, 2014); Kelly Schrum and Nate Sleeter, "Teaching History Online: Challenges and Opportunities," *OAH Magazine of History* 27, no. 3 (July 2013). See also

Stanford History Education Group <https://sheg.stanford.edu> and "What is Historical Thinking," *Teaching History* <http://www.teachinghistory.org/historical-thinking-intro>.

5. Lisa L. Farley, "Radical Hope: Or, the Problem of Uncertainty in History Education," *Curriculum Inquiry* 39, no. 4 (September 2009): 537-554; Bruce VanSledright, "Narratives of Nation-State, Historical Knowledge, and School History Education," *Review of Research in Education* 32, no. 1 (February 2008): 109-146; Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*; Sam Wineburg, Daisy Martin, and Chauncey Monte-Sano, *Reading Like a Historian: Teaching Literacy in Middle and High School Classrooms* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2011); "Standards in Your State," Common Core State Standards Initiative (2012), <http://www.corestandards.org/standards-in-your-state/>; "Resource Library," Council of Chief State School Officers (2012),<https://ccsso.org/resource-library>; "History Standards," National Center for History in Schools (1996), <https://phi.history.ucla.edu/nchs/history-standards/>; National Council for the Social Studies, *College, Career & Civic Life: C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards* (Silver Spring, MD: National Council for the Social Studies, 2013).

6. National Council for the Social Studies, *College, Career & Civic Life: C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards*; "Tuning the History Discipline in the United States," American Historical Association, <https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/tuning/history-discipline-core>.

7. Myles Horton and Paulo Freire, *We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change*, ed. Brenda Bell, John Gaventa, and John Peters (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1990).

8. Peter Lee and Rosalyn Ashby, "Progression in Historical Understanding among Students Ages 7-14," in *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History: National and International Perspectives*, ed. Peter N. Stearns, Peter Seixas, and Sam Wineburg (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 199-222; Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*; Bruce A. VanSledright, "Can Ten-Year-Olds Learn to Investigate History as Historians Do?" *OAH Outlook* (August 2000).

9. Shu Ching Yang, "A Case Study of Technology-Enhanced Historical Inquiry," *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* 46, no. 2 (May 2009): 237-248; Lindsey M. Guccione, "In a World of Mandates, Making Space for Inquiry," *The Reading Teacher* 64, no. 7 (April 2011): 515-519; Pedro Hernández-Ramos and Susan De La Paz, "Learning History in Middle School by Designing Multimedia in a Project-Based Learning Experience," *Journal of Research on Technology in Education* 42, no. 2 (Winter 2009): 151-173.

10. Susan Adler, "The Education of Social Studies Teachers," in *Handbook of Research in Social Studies Education*, ed. Linda S. Levstik and Cynthia A. Tyson (New York: Routledge, 2008), 329; G. Williamson McDiarmid and Mary Clevenger-Bright, "Rethinking Teacher Capacity," in *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Questions in Changing Contexts*, ed. Marilyn Cochran-Smith, Sharon Feiman-Nemser, and D. John McIntyre, third ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 134-156.

11. Lendol Calder, William W. Cutler III, and T. Mills Kelly, "History Lessons: Historians and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning," in *Disciplinary Styles in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Exploring Common Ground*, ed. Mary Taylor Huber and Sherwyn P. Moreale (Menlo Park, CA: American Association for Higher Education; Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2002).

12. Leah Shopkow, Arlene Díaz, Joan Middendorf, and David Pace, "The History Learning Project 'Decodes' a Discipline: The Union of Teaching and Epistemology," in *Ebbs, Flows, and Rips: The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning In and Across the Disciplines*, ed. Kathleen McKinney (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 93-113.

13. Linda Sargent Wood, "Hooked on Inquiry: History Labs in the Methods Course," *The History Teacher* 45, no. 4 (August 2012): 549-567.

14. T. Mills Kelly, *Teaching History in the Digital Age* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2013).

15. *Process: A Blog for American History*, <https://www.processhistory.org/?tag=teaching-history-in-the-digital-age>.

16. Marilyn M. Lombardi, "Approaches That Work: How Authentic Learning Is Transforming Higher Education," paper presented at the annual meeting of the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI), Atlanta, Georgia, 27 July 2007.

17. Marc Parry, "'History Harvest' Project May Spawn a New Kind of MOOC," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Wired Campus (blog), 21 December 2012, <https://chronicle.com/blogs/wiredcampus/history-harvest-project-may-spawn-a-new-kind-of-mooc/41329>.

18. Sarah Hall and Donna Villareal, "The Hybrid Advantage: Graduate Student Perspectives of Hybrid Education Courses," *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* 27, no. 1 (2015): 69-80; Harold W. Webb, Grandon Gill, and Gary Poe, "Teaching with the Case Method Online: Pure versus Hybrid Approaches," *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education* 3, no. 2 (July 2005): 223-250.

19. Hall and Villareal, "The Hybrid Advantage," 69-80; Webb, Gill, and Poe, "Teaching with the Case Method Online," 223-250.

20. Ralf Schwarzer and Matthias Jerusalem, "The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE)," *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping* 12 (2010): 329-345; Peter Seixas, "Benchmarks of Historical Thinking: A Framework for Assessment in Canada," *Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness, University of British Columbia* (August 2006), <http://historicalthinking.ca/sites/default/files/files/docs/Framework_EN.pdf>.

21. Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Measures* fourth ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014).

22. "Vince" (pseudonym), peer feedback to "Gary" (pseudonym), *Teaching Hidden History*, June 29, 2015.

23. "Gary" (pseudonym), peer feedback to "Vince" (pseudonym), *Teaching Hidden History*, July 1, 2015.

24. "Robert" (pseudonym), peer feedback to "Jennifer" (pseudonym), *Teaching Hidden History*, July 5, 2015.

25. "Charles" (pseudonym), student presentation, *Teaching Hidden History*, July 14, 2015.
26. "Jeff" (pseudonym), student presentation, *Teaching Hidden History*, July 14, 2015.
27. "Phillip" (pseudonym), student communication, *Teaching Hidden History*, July 14, 2015.
28. Rob Farr, "THH: A Student-Teacher's Perspective," online posting, *Teaching "Hidden" History* (blog), August 31, 2015. Student name used with permission.
29. Ibid.
30. Peter Jones, "Student Reflection: Peter Jones on 'the Clue' and Teaching Hidden History" online posting, *Teaching "Hidden" History* (blog), August 21, 2015. Student name used with permission.
31. Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*.
32. "Jennifer" (pseudonym), student communication, discussion board posting, "Course Feedback," *Teaching Hidden History*, July 20, 2015.
33. "Jeff" (pseudonym), student presentation, *Teaching Hidden History*, July 7, 2015.
34. In-class discussion, *Teaching Hidden History*, July 14, 2015.
35. "Angela" (pseudonym), student communication, discussion board posting "Class Observations," *Teaching Hidden History*, July 20, 2015.
36. "Peter," student communication, "Student Reflection," *Teaching Hidden History*, July 2015.

Appendix

Teaching Hidden History Self-Efficacy Scale

Please rate each of the following statements based on your degree of confidence by recording a number between 0-10 using the scale below:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cannot do at all				Moderately certain can do				Highly certain can do		

A. Collaboration

1. I can work well with others to solve academic problems.
2. Communicating clearly with others verbally in person is not a problem.
3. Communicating clearly with others verbally in a virtual group is not a problem.
4. Communicating clearly with others in writing in a virtual group is not a problem.
5. I see myself as a strong group partner in collaborative situations.

B. Technological

6. I can effectively navigate an online course.
7. I can effectively create content for an online course.
8. I can use digital tools (e.g., WordPress, Drupal) to create online history education content.
9. I can use digital tools to help students understand history.
10. I can evaluate digital tools for their effectiveness in teaching history.

C. Historical Thinking

11. I am confident in my ability to see historical events from various perspectives.
12. I am confident in my ability to identify and discuss the complex relationship between cause and consequence in the past.
13. I can use primary source evidence to help me make sense of the past
14. I can use secondary source evidence to help me make sense of the past.
15. I am confident in my ability to analyze sources to determine historical significance.
16. I am confident in my ability to construct a historical argument.