

# 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](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 event.

### General Information

**Date:** June 11, 2020

**Grant Round:**

**Grant Number:** CON011713

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

**Project Lead:** H. Robert Baker

**Team Members (Name, Title, Department, Institutions if different, and email address for each):**

Marni Davis, Associate Professor, Department of History; marnidavis@gsu.edu

Amani Marshall, Lecturer, Department of History; amarshall@gsu.edu

Jared Poley, Professor, Department of History; jpoley@gsu.edu

Jeffrey Young, Senior Lecturer, Department of History; jryoung@gsu.edu

**Course Name(s) and Course Numbers:**

HIST 2110, U.S. History; HON 3260, Interdisciplinary Studies; HON 3000, Leadership

**Semester Project Began:**

**Final Semester of Implementation:** Summer 2020

**Total Number of Students Affected During Project:** 20

## 1. Narrative

A. *Describe the key outcomes, whether positive, negative, or interesting, of your project.*

*Include:*

- *Summary of your transformation and game creation experience, including challenges and accomplishments*
- *Transformative impacts on your instruction*
- *Transformative impacts on your students and their performance*

B. *Describe lessons learned, including any things you would do differently next time.*

Building a game from scratch requires a combination of subject-matter knowledge and intense pedagogical design. Our game was the Atlanta Sit-Ins, which took place from 1960 to 1961. The idea was to recreate the conditions within which the Atlanta Student Movement took place and ask our students to consider all of the ways in which the students' actions were circumscribed by historical factors. We began with a complicated concept for the game that involved three different factions: protesting students; members of the Atlanta business community and civil rights leaders; and journalists. The game design was set up to have all three groups interacting in such a way that they would each work to influence the possible outcomes while impressing upon students the need to build coalitions in order to make effective changes in society.

After a year of working with this game setting, we discovered that there were two fundamental problems. The first was that our design was asking students to take on the role of people who defended segregation. This was becoming increasingly untenable in an environment where white supremacists were massing in Charlottesville and making their presence felt online more and more. The second was that the game design was exceedingly complicated for instructors to run, as it asked them to manage multiple factions within each of the different groups. The number of moving parts was almost impossible to scale up, and the purpose of the grant was to write a game that would be playable in the U.S. History survey.

After attending the Athens Reacting conference and inviting Nick Proctor to come and work with our faculty and the grant team, we settled on a new game design. We took out the Atlanta business community, and focused on the students and the Atlanta civil rights leaders. This allowed us to have three basic factions: Student activists; Adult civil rights leaders; and student indeterminates. This was still a complex game design, but it was infinitely more manageable.

Plus, it was easy to take the already rich roles that we were developing for the major players and add a number of indeterminates.

In Fall of 2020, we piloted a small version of the game in a seminar class. The seminar was supposed to enroll twenty, but ended up being much smaller. Still, we were able to work out some of the game session mechanics at this time, and we were then ready to roll out a full test of the game in several 2110 sessions. However, the arrival of Coronavirus ended any ability in Spring of 2020 to have live tests of the game.

As a result, we have shifted some of our preparation to creating an online version of the game. As of the writing of this report, our online version is nearly complete, and we will pilot it in a small class (20 students) this Summer. It is our plan to roll the game out in Fall 2020 in an online class with 100, and potentially 400 students. At that time, I will be able to file an amended report that includes qualitative and quantitative data on student impact.

Lessons learned: be ready to change! It is important to understand that the writing of any high-impact pedagogy involves a certain amount of risk taking, and requires a certain amount of flexibility.

## 2. Quotes

*Provide three quotes from students evaluating their experience with the new materials.*

## 3. Quantitative and Qualitative Measures

### Measures Narrative

*In this section, summarize the supporting impact data that you are submitting, including all quantitative and qualitative measures of impact on student success and experience. Include all measures as described in your proposal, along with any measures developed after the proposal submission.*

*[When submitting your final report, as noted above, you will also need to provide the separate file (or .zip with multiple files) of supporting data on the impact of your Textbook Transformation, such as surveys, analyzed data collected, etc.]*

- *Include measures such as:*
  - *Drop, fail, withdraw (DFW) delta rates*
  - *Course retention and completion rates*
  - *Average GPA*
  - *Pre-and post-transformation DFW comparison*
  - *Student success in learning objectives*
  - *Surveys, interviews, and other qualitative measures*
- *Indicate any co-factors that might have influenced the outcomes.*

#### 4. Sustainability Plan

*Describe how your project team or department will offer these materials in the course(s) in the future, including the maintenance and updating of the materials.*

Our team will use this game as part of our delivery of the core every year. As soon as we have successfully piloted the game, we will introduce it to the faculty-at-large for use in both survey and upper-division classes.

The team will put forward a survey for anyone using the materials, and will collect responses and consider revisions on an ongoing basis.

#### 5. Future Affordable Materials Plans

*Describe any impacts or influences this project has had on your thinking about or selection of learning materials in this and other courses that you will teach in the future.*

This project has emphasized the importance of creating free resources for students, including access to high-quality, curated sources that will be accessible and useful. Designing a game has also helped us realize the importance of backward design as a pedagogical principle. While this is something that all of us frequently deployed when creating classes, game writing requires frequent recurrence to pedagogical goals in order to guarantee that all the mechanisms, characters, settings, game sessions—everything—is working together.

#### 6. Future Scholarship Plans

*Describe any planned or actual papers, presentations, publications, or other professional activities that you expect to produce that reflect your work on this project.*

We are in the process of creating an interactive digital map for use in the game. The map will involve multiple layers that will reveal historical factors such as demography, property values, and proximity.

We are also in the process of working with colleagues in Computer Science to create an “outcomes generator.” Part of every Reacting Game is the eventual role of a die to determine outcomes. Our game redesign included a complex formula for determining the outcome of situations that the students plan in the traditional way. However, a complex game model can be developed, based on historical data, that will determine outcomes. As with the interactive map, the outcomes generator would be published, but only available to instructors.