The Book Project:
Engaging History Majors in Undergraduate Research

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THROUGH AN INNOVATIVE course design for the capstone senior seminar, history majors at Virginia Tech have become published authors in recent years. Small classes of undergraduates have collaborated to create edited volumes of original historical essays that, at the end of the semester, are copied, bound, and distributed to class members. More importantly, copies of the volume are deposited in the Virginia Tech Library, where they are assigned an ISBN number and catalogued for future researchers to consult. Called "The Book Project," this innovative class format is intended to introduce undergraduates to the researching, writing, and publishing experiences of working historians. Both qualitative and quantitative assessments suggest that the Book Project, with its sequenced structure for research and writing that culminates in a publicly available publication, enhances student engagement with the learning objectives of the course even as it demystifies the process of research and invites students to self-identify as historians. We believe the results of our efforts to improve the capstone experience for history majors may be widely applicable to other humanities disciplines where student research is a component of undergraduate education.

In 1998, the Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University recommended that universities make "research-based learning the standard" and urged schools to place renewed emphasis on a

goal articulated decades earlier by John Dewey, the pragmatist and founder of progressive education. Learning, according to Dewey and the Boyer Commission, should be based on "discovery guided by mentoring rather than on the transmission of information."[1] Since the Boyer Report urged educators to include research experiences in undergraduate education, considerable ink has been spilt touting the value of such experiences and designing curricular practices.[2] Yet, in general, research universities have lagged behind non-research universities and liberal arts colleges in providing undergraduate research opportunities.[3] Moreover, at research universities, much of the pioneering work has taken place in the sciences; the humanities have been slower to respond to this call for reform.[4] In the historical disciplines, relatively little has been published on undergraduate research,[5] despite the fact that studies have shown that it has positive effects on learning, scholarly socialization, and the inculcation of professional habits.[6] While mentoring of individual history research projects as "independent studies" offers some undergraduates a significant research experience, the Book Project extends the reach of research to large numbers of history majors. It not only opens up opportunities for them to present and publish, but also offers possibilities for concrete assessment of undergraduate skills in research and writing.[7]

As is the case in many history departments, graduation requirements for history majors at Virginia Tech include a capstone course. This course, usually taken in the senior year, asks students to demonstrate familiarity with the historian's craft by writing an original essay grounded in the analysis of primary documents. Enrollment is kept low intentionally, with no more than twenty students per section, and faculty members are encouraged to design the course around their own research interests. At Virginia Tech, like many large research universities, the teacher-student ratio in most courses generally precludes the possibility of assigning labor-intensive writing projects. History students take a required "Historical Methods" class during their second year, a course limited to around twenty students, where we introduce majors to historical research. The skills learned in Historical Methods, however, are not routinely reinforced in upper-level content courses, which are capped generally at forty students but frequently oversubscribed. The intensive involvement with individual students necessary if undergraduates are to undertake independent research—the type of mentoring the Boyer Report specifically urges—is not possible given the size of most undergraduate classes and the other demands on faculty time.

Consequently, as they reach their senior year—and their required topics seminar—our history majors generally do not think of themselves as skilled researchers and writers. Rather, they not only self-identify as consumers

of historical knowledge, but also often fail to grasp the constructed nature of the historical content they have been absorbing. At the same time, even our best students can be overwhelmed by the length and complexity of a fifteen- to twenty-page writing assignment and intimidated by the request to "do" research. The Book Project developed from our perception that students were floundering when faced with the task of researching and writing a substantial research-based essay and seemed to lack some of the basic skills needed to successfully produce such an essay. One deficiency was glaring—students did not understand how to sequence a large project, by breaking up the large assignment into a series of smaller, more manageable tasks. Each of us had also encountered the problem of how to encourage independent work consistently over a full semester, when students are often registered for four or more additional courses with demands that often seem far more immediate than the requirement of a "final paper." The Book Project is meant to challenge students' initial self-perception and help our majors build a professional identity, while at the same time build their research and writing competencies. It provides a clearly sequenced structure for completing the research assignment; it enhances student engagement in the historian's craft; it results in a tangible product to which the entire class contributes; it encourages students to connect their coursework with an audience beyond the instructor; and it transforms the student from a consumer into a producer of historical knowledge.

Since 2005, we have used the Book Project in eight sections of the capstone seminar, and both the project and the structure of the class have evolved as we have gained experience teaching the course and responded to student comments. To date, the development of the Book Project has taken place in two stages. Jones first experimented with the idea in Fall 2005, during a senior-level seminar on the history of murder, and refined it the following year in a course on murder in Virginia. During the second stage, Barrow and Stephens enhanced the basic framework of the project in 2008-2009, when they incorporated more sequencing steps and used them to increase peer collaboration and student-instructor interaction. They also launched a celebration to mark the book's publication and employed extensive pre- and post-course evaluations to assess the project's potential for changing student attitudes and developing student skills.

In the first iteration of the Book Project, where the topic was the history of murder, each student chose a research topic from an instructor-generated list of crimes reported in *The New York Times*. The course began with several weeks of shared readings and discussions of the kinds of questions historians might ask about a murder. During these weeks, students were also collecting the "facts" of their case from national and local newspaper

coverage. During the fourth week of class, students wrote up the story, compiled lists of "facts" that had to be checked, and identified the research question they would explore. Often, the obvious questions shaped their thinking—Why, of all the homicides occurring at that time, did this particular murder captivate the public imagination, and what tensions evident in a particular era did the murder case reveal? Some students expressed interest in the state of crime detection and police procedures evident in the case, while others looked at the consequences of the murder—what changed as a result of this incident. In individual meetings with the instructor, students refined their research question, developed a strategy for answering it, and began to identify useful secondary readings. During class meetings, they shared findings with an instructor-assigned peer mentor.[8]

Two Virginia Tech-sponsored programs influenced the development of the course. A faculty workshop on active and collaborative learning from the Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching provided resources and encouragement for intensifying the research demands on undergraduates. This workshop also highlighted the importance of sequencing semester-long projects. An information literacy grant from the library funded collaboration with the subject librarian to develop tools and assignments for familiarizing students with bibliographic databases. Meshing the active-learning resources with the framework of information literacy led to a research seminar that emphasized a sequenced approach to project planning, prompted students to explore different types of sources, and incorporated a collaborative learning environment. To encourage a professional environment and assess each student's familiarity with historical research, class members completed a "research résumé" the first time we met. Each week for six weeks, students spent some class time in the library learning how to access the working historian's repertoire of primary sources: court records, maps, census records, archival materials, and the different levels of press coverage. At the same time, the common course readings illustrated how historians use these different sources. Educational researchers have found that the instructions students typically receive for a research assignment not only fail to provide a suitable roadmap for the project, but also offer few recommendations for locating and using sources. Close collaboration with the librarian sought to address this deficiency.[9] The library experience and exercises also reinforced the difference between primary and secondary sources, alerted students to the editorial stance of specific newspapers, and taught them to differentiate between sources written for general and scholarly audiences.

To address the issue of student engagement, the Book Project created an audience for student work that extended beyond the individual instructor

and a product that would endure beyond the semester in which it was created. In this first version of the project, each student was tasked with writing a "chapter" for a book about the social construction of murder that would be "published" at the end of the semester and deposited in the library for use by others. Throughout the semester, references to writing a "chapter" for the "book" framed the instructor's discussions of the final product. Students similarly came to talk about their projects in the same terms. "Chapter" is more than a rhetorical device, however; changing the terminology for student work helped foster a shared pride in ownership of the history they were writing.

To reinforce both the notion of an audience and the sense of historical research as a concrete product, students discussed the steps leading to publication. These included the expectations of university and trade presses, the importance of knowing a book's intended audience, and the role of the manuscript reviewer and editor in producing a finished product. With instructor guidance, the class worked together to create a rubric for reviewing the chapter submissions. Students used the rubric to evaluate their peers' work and make suggestions for revisions. To emphasize the importance of this stage in the publication process, students received grades for their peer reviews. When submitting the final version of their chapter, students were asked to indicate how they had addressed their peers' as well as the instructor's comments (or why they had chosen to ignore them). Finally, the class discussed the mechanics of book production. Working together, we designed the "look" for the book, choosing a title, and creating a formatting checksheet for the "camera-ready" final version of the chapters.

The collaborative nature of the class was further highlighted during the last two weeks, when students presented their work in a conference format. Based on the conference presentations, each student wrote their own version of an introduction for the book; the editor/instructor selected the best introduction for inclusion in the published edition of the book. It was also the instructor's job to put the book together, copy, collate, and bind it, and provide each student and the library with copies.

This first experiment with the Book Project placed significant restrictions on student choice of research topic, which had both advantages and disadvantages. Students were required to work within instructor-defined geographic and chronological boundaries, and they chose from a list of pre-identified cases rather than searching for a topic on their own. Although a few students expressed dissatisfaction, these limitations granted all participants virtually a full semester to immerse themselves in their research topic and allowed the instructor to concentrate on tools and process. This first draft of the Book Project also lacked quantifiable assessment tools.

Students had clearly gained valuable research skills and produced quality chapters, while end-of-semester course evaluations suggested general satisfaction with the course. One comment, in response to a question asking students what they learned about themselves as researchers, confirmed the impression that for at least some students, the course had met its goals. This undergraduate wrote simply, "I can research; it's not just for professionals."

In the fall of 2008, we again decided to experiment with this curricular innovation. This time, Barrow and Stephens offered students the opportunity to write chapters for books on "The Beatles" (Stephens) and "America in the Nuclear Age" (Barrow). We were drawn to the pedagogical value the project seemed to offer, but we also believed that the department would benefit in additional ways from this approach to the senior seminar. Like many other universities, Virginia Tech was placing greater emphasis on outcomes assessment, while the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences had begun highlighting undergraduate research through an Undergraduate Research Institute and a student journal (*Philologia*). The process of creating a class book in senior-level topics courses—rather than the more traditional individual papers—seemed to support this expanding focus and offered an effective format for showcasing the research that history majors were doing in their classes. Student-crafted books are both easy to archive and readily available to submit to outside reviewers as part of the History Department's periodic outcomes assessment process.

A second factor influencing the timing of the second stage of the Book Project was a series of departmental discussions about what was and was not working within our major curriculum.[10] One common faculty complaint was the lack of coordination among those who taught our required Historical Methods class and our required capstone courses. Because professors pursued a wide variety of approaches in both classes, student expectations and experiences proved highly variable. To address the problem, the department adopted a set of learning standards for those two required classes, including a stipulation that each student in a capstone course complete a substantial research project during the semester. The history faculty also began informal deliberations about how to improve the quality of student work in all their classes, and how to more fully engage majors in the research process of the required capstone seminar.

Student research papers generally experience a remarkably short life span. Students work on them, more or less intensely, at various points during the term, before turning in a final version sometime near the end. Professors not only provide feedback along the way, but also provide a grade and copious written comments on the final version of the paper. But far too often, all that hard work—on the part of both students and

faculty—quickly falls by the wayside once the semester is over. Students soon file away, lose, or discard their graded final papers; even worse, we have all experienced the frustration of watching a stack of unclaimed papers languish in our offices for months, sometimes years, after the term has come to an end. We hoped the very permanence of a class book, and the fact that copies would not only be distributed to each member of the class, but also deposited in the university library, would prompt students to take more pride in their work for the course by viewing it as having a life beyond the fifteen weeks of the semester.[11]

Promoting student engagement thus guided this second experiment with the class book.[12] We sent the students a brief introductory e-mail announcing the Book Project before the first scheduled class meeting. Unlike the first iteration of the experiment, this time, students also received as much choice as possible regarding their individual research topics.[13] We each selected a broad subject area to give our courses some focus, but within those general areas, students had a great deal of leeway to pursue the particular research topic that they found most compelling. From the beginning, however, we made it clear that working together to produce a class book would be at the very heart of the course.

In the second version of the Book Project, we also gave more attention to sequencing as a strategy for tackling large, long-term projects. The syllabus and assignments broke down the process of chapter production into a series of discrete stages, each building on the previous one. During the first six weeks of the fifteen-week semester, students completed common readings on the course topics to build a shared knowledge base for collaborative work and to provide the basic background needed to launch their research projects. Students also identified potential topics for their research by completing three short chapter concept proposals. Along with submitting the concept proposals for comments from their instructor, students shared their initial ideas with the rest of the class. We wanted them to receive peer feedback and learn about their classmates' projects, but we also wanted students to become more aware of how to frame a research-worthy project. In this initial phase of the course, students analyzed model chapters, practiced locating appropriate online and printed sources, and reviewed proper source citation practices along with strategies for avoiding plagiarism. Both instructors went through the basic steps involved in constructing a successful chapter and met individually with students to ensure that each had a plausible research topic that could be completed in the time allotted as well as a strategy for locating and engaging with the sources.

In week seven, using a template we provided, students completed a one- to two-page abstract formulating a specific research question (the answer

to which would ideally become their thesis).[14] They also completed a working bibliography, discussed how their list of primary sources would answer that question, and described how their secondary sources would help them establish the appropriate historical and historiographical context for their chapter. We graded and provided extensive written feedback on both the abstracts and the working bibliographies.

Over the next four weeks, students completed their research, and in week eleven, submitted a first draft of their chapter. Class convened less often during this particularly intense phase in the research process, and when we did meet, students shared their progress, successes, and challenges, and collectively devised a title and organizational structure for the class book. We also encouraged students to meet individually with us to discuss problems or questions related to their research projects.

Instructors and students provided critiques of these first drafts using a detailed instructor-designed rubric. At this stage, the feedback focused on content issues like thesis, evidence, and organizational structure. Two weeks later, students submitted a second draft of their chapter, in which they responded to the comments and stylistically polished the chapter. The class then repeated the process of instructor and peer reviews, but this time with a focus on presentation issues, like format, style, and grammar; in essence, each paper was line-edited for publication. Each student also offered a five-minute informal in-class presentation on their research and any challenges they were still facing. Class members turned in the final, "camera ready" version of their chapters during the last week of class.

Since many of the students found coming up with a proper introduction to be particularly challenging, students in the sections taught in 2009 completed draft introductions a week before submitting the full chapter draft. On the day these introductions were due, both classes were divided into groups of three or four students, each of which analyzed a small number of introduction drafts using the following questions as guidelines: 1) Did the introduction provide an effective "hook" to grab the reader's attention? 2) Did it have a proper thesis that was clearly identified with an appropriate signal phrase? 3) Finally, did it discuss how the chapter related to previous historical research on the topic? The students generally did an effective job of analyzing each other's chapter drafts, and the exercise not only exposed them to some of the strengths and weaknesses of their classmates' work, but also raised their own individual awareness about how to craft an effective introduction.

To celebrate the significance of what the students had accomplished, we planned a special book release party held shortly after the end of the semester.[15] However, to provide students with their own personal copies of the class book before they scattered for break, we spent several intense

days completing the final formatting, crafting a table of contents, finishing the cover and preface, and compiling everything into a single document. We polled students about their preferred publication medium (print or electronic), but even this "digital native" generation indicated they wanted a hard copy of the class book rather than a PDF or an online version. Trying to complete the publication details at the very end of the semester, generally the busiest time of the teaching year, proved particularly trying and meant that students had to turn in their final chapter versions no later than the last week of class.[16] To relieve a bit of this pressure on students and themselves, we decided not to schedule a book release party the second time we taught the course; rather, we had students drop by to pick up their books once the semester was over. In hindsight, we felt that something was lost by the failure to gather together with the class one last time to acknowledge what they had accomplished.

For the second version of the Book Project in 2008 and 2009, we deliberately sought to turn our initial suspicions about the value of a tangible product in the capstone seminar into a pedagogical research project.[17] We wanted to be able to answer the question: Does working collaboratively to write a book actually improve student commitment and learning? To discover the answer, we designed two discrete online survey instruments: one completed at the beginning and again at the end of the course to measure self-reported improvement and a second survey to gauge the impact of the project on self-reported effort and satisfaction.

The first survey instrument, which we continued to call the "research résumé," consisted of sixty quantitative and qualitative questions. The bulk of the questions were quantitative and divided into three sets. The first set contained fifteen questions asking students: "How would you describe your familiarity with the following sources of information often used in historical research?" These questions gauged the students' confidence dealing with sources both in the abstract (primary vs. secondary sources) and more specifically (e.g., newspapers, maps, songs, and films). The second section contained twenty-three questions assessing student familiarity with the tools and databases historians commonly use, ranging from individual library catalogs and WorldCat through databases such as Historical Abstracts and Lexis/Nexis, and from bibliographic programs such as *Endnote* and *Zotero* to common software programs like *Word* and *Excel*. The final quantitative section of twenty-two questions asked for a self-assessment of their skills in the research and writing process, from formulating a question to the written and oral presentation of completed work. All of the questions used a 1-to-5 scale, with 1 as the least competent and 5 as the most. Students completed this survey during the first week of classes and again during the final week, allowing us to gauge self-reported

progress. The second survey, which students also completed during the final week, was more qualitative, focusing on the experience of the class and the ways in which the Book Project altered the students' perception of themselves and the course.

We administered these surveys to five sections of the course taught between August 2008 and December 2009. The total student sample (n=84) was large enough to draw statistically valid conclusions about the data. Comparison of the before and after "research résumés" suggest the following results from our use of the Book Project:

1. The students reported, on average, an increase in their knowledge and skills in 59 of 60 categories.[18] It is not without some irony that the one category that they reported a decrease in their own self-perception was in "following directions."

2. Average gains in self-reported skills and knowledge calculated from the 1-to-5 scale ranged from 0.015 (citing sources) to 2.528 (WorldCat). The most significant gains, unsurprisingly, came in categories with a low initial average, indicating a relative unfamiliarity with those specific tools (interlibrary loan, *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, ArticleFirst), or the resources that were emphasized in the courses (WorldCat, Google Scholar, *Zotero*). Also predictably, the categories with the smallest increases tended to be those that the students had rated themselves highly at the beginning of the class (encyclopedias, *PowerPoint*, *Word*, taking good notes). Moreover, the parts of the process that students had struggled with the most during the semester showed little improvement (proofreading, citing sources, creating an outline).

3. The increases in 43 of 60 categories are statistically significant.[19] Those deemed insignificant clustered in the results with the smallest increase, including the six categories cited above as small improvements. The greatest statistical significance tended to lie in the first two categories (sources, tools), with a lower significance clustered in the third category (research and writing skills). The most likely explanation for this result is the relatively higher initial self-evaluation scores on the third section. Students did indicate, on average, an increase in these skills, but their high initial average combined with the challenges they experienced carrying the projects to fruition led to a much lower increase in self-evaluation scores.

In sum, analysis of the "research résumés" suggests the Book Project significantly improves students' self-evaluation of their ability to utilize the sources and methods of historians. But the data also shows that before students begin the project, they significantly overestimate their skills in research and writing.

The second survey, which was designed to capture the students' perceptions of the experiment itself, led to the following conclusions:
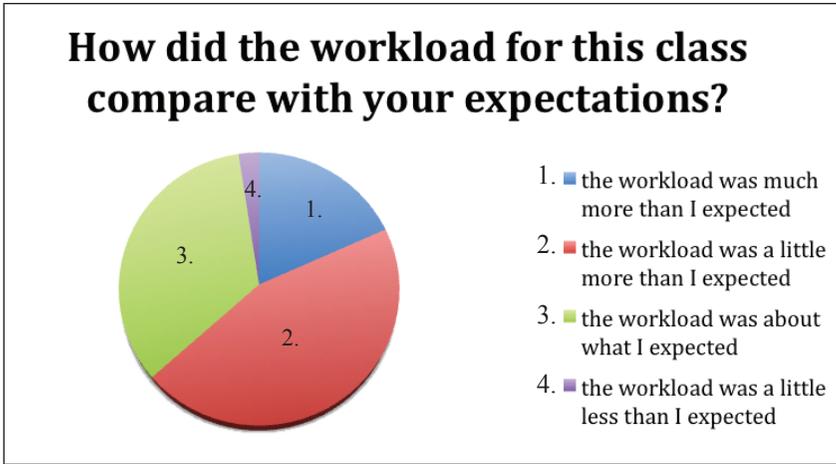
How did the workload for this class compare with your expectations?

1. ■ the workload was much more than I expected

2. ■ the workload was a little more than I expected

3. ■ the workload was about what I expected

4. ■ the workload was a little less than I expected

Figure 1: Student feedback results on workload expectations.

How satisfied were you with your final chapter?

1. ■ I was extremely satisfied

2. ■ I was somewhat satisfied

3. ■ I was neutral
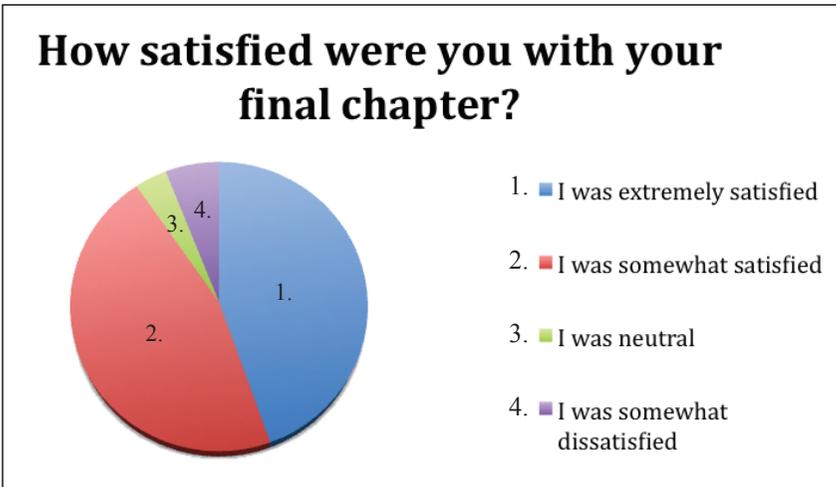
4. ■ I was somewhat dissatisfied

Figure 2: Student feedback results on satisfaction.

1. Most students found the workload involved in producing a book chapter was greater than their expectations.

2. Most students expressed satisfaction with the final version of their chapter.

In a follow-up question, the students were asked to explain their relative satisfaction. The comments fell into two groups. One group
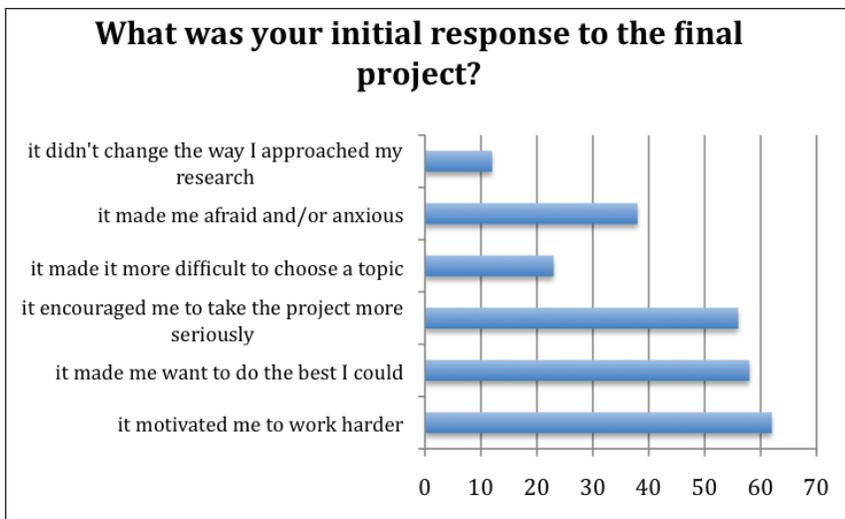
Figure 3: Student feedback results on initial response to project.

was very proud of what they had accomplished. "I loved my topic from the beginning and enjoyed reading/researching everything about it," one student wrote. "I feel that I produced a valuable and worthwhile historical work." Another commented, "It feels good to have spent so much time and energy on something." A second group proved to be more self-critical: "I am a perfectionist. I think I can still improve," one student claimed, while another put a positive spin on the question: "I think there is always room for improvement in my work." The few students who felt unhappy with the experience proved to be honest about their shortcomings and misgivings. "I feel that I struggled on the assignment and don't feel it was my best work," one student admitted. In an unexpected twist, even the students who were unsatisfied with their chapters tended to place the blame squarely on themselves and external obstacles rather than on the instructor or the assignment.

　　3. When asked about the effect of the Book Project on their motivation, students claimed that publishing the results of their research had a significant influence. Students could choose more than one response to the question. Most said it made them work harder, but more than half also felt that the pressure of publication caused them anxiety. Far fewer students claimed that the Book Project had no impact on the way they approached historical research.

　　4. When asked about the advantages and disadvantages of the Book Project and specifically about creating an edited work, the students were

largely in agreement. As advantages, they listed working together on a larger project, the creation of a concrete product that would possess an afterlife beyond the course itself, and the benefits to their own résumés. "It makes students feel as if they are part of something bigger and better," one student opined. "A single research paper will often just be seen by the professor, but a chapter in a compiled book will allow the student's peers to read their work as well." Another student captured the general class sentiment:

> Knowing that I had to write a chapter for a class book, it really motivated me to make it the best I could. Knowing that my fellow classmates would get a copy and read it, and that a copy would be given to the VT library, I really wanted to make a good, solid, convincing, and effective chapter that was well researched. I really wanted to work hard.

Students also identified some troublesome aspects of the Book Project. They found the exercise "more stressful" than an unpublished research paper, objected to the amount of work required, and complained about the limitations on the topics they were able to pursue. Many of the respondents recognized that what they liked and disliked about the project were related. One student perceptively noted, "The primary drawbacks are also probably part of its benefit." And, one student worried about the potential misuse of his/her research: "There exists the possibility of it being plagiarized in the future."

Our experiment shows that undergraduate research does not have to remain the privilege of a few exceptional students. The shared sense of mission and the promise of a tangible, lasting product can increase student commitment to their own learning, enhancing accountability by creating pride of ownership. The Book Project requires more effort, from both students and the instructors, than a senior seminar structured around individual projects. Yet we remain convinced that this work pays dividends in student engagement that make it worth the investment.

The Book Project has now become a regular part of the curriculum in the history department at Virginia Tech. The process of implementing and refining this reform has led to far-reaching discussions among history faculty, many of whom have begun to adopt publishing as a pedagogical strategy in their own senior seminars. The results of our experiences have also had a significant influence on the way that we as a department are now exploring broader curricular issues. Our collaboration on the Book Project has brought issues of student preparedness for undertaking a major research project to the forefront of our departmental discussions. As we begin overhauling our curriculum, we plan to build in more of the sequenced stages of the research process into our content-specific courses. We also hope to expand the access to the undergraduate research our

students are undertaking by expanding to Internet distribution the books they have authored.

Twelve years ago, the Boyer Report stressed that public research universities provide the optimum atmosphere for undergraduate research to flourish. The process of making this a reality in the humanities, however, is still a project in its infancy. We hope that the Book Project offers a way to think about how we can all make meaningful undergraduate research experiences more widely available, to make it the rule rather than the exception.

Notes

1.   The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University, "Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities," <http://naples.cc.sunysb.edu/Pres/boyer.nsf/>.

2.   Wendy Katkin, "The Boyer Commission Report and Its Impact on Undergraduate Research," *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, no. 93 (Spring 2003): 19-38.

3.   Shouping Hu, George Kuh, and Joy Gayles, "Engaging Undergraduate Students in Research Activities: Are Research Universities Doing a Better Job?" *Innovative Higher Education* 32, no. 3 (October 2007): 167-177.

4.   Implementing collaborative undergraduate research in the humanities has been called "a tough nut to crack, and perhaps even an oxymoronic proposition." Mark S. Schantz, "Undergraduate Research in the Humanities: Challenges and Prospects," *CUR [Council on Undergraduate Research] Focus* 29, no. 2 (Winter 2008): 26-29, on 26. See also Carolyn Ash Merkel, "Undergraduate Research at the Research Universities," *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, no. 93 (Spring 2003): 39-53; Frank Caccavo, Jr., "Teaching Undergraduates to Think like Scientists," *College Teaching Journal* 57, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 9-14; John Ishiyama, "Does Early Participation in Undergraduate Research Benefit Social Science and Humanities Students?" *College Student Journal* 36, no. 3 (Spring 2002): 380-386; William McConnell, Roger G. Albert, and John P. Marton, "Involving College Students in Social Science Research," *Transformative Dialogues: Teaching & Learning Journal* 2, no. 1 (August 2008): 1-8; James M. Dean and Melanie Kaiser, "Faculty-Student Collaborative Research in the Humanities," *Council on Undergraduate Research Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (Spring 2010): 43-47.

5.   Exceptions include: Carol Toner, "Teaching Students to Be Historians: Suggestions for an Undergraduate Research Seminar," *The History Teacher* 27, no. 1 (November 1993): 37-51; Thomas J. Frusciano, "Bridging Generations: Undergraduate Research Opportunities on the History of Women at Rutgers University," *Journal of Archival Organization* 1, no. 2 (April 2002): 77-88; Robert M. Rakoff, "Doing Original Research in an Undergraduate Environmental History Course," *The History Teacher* 37, no. 1 (November 2003): <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ht/37.1/rakoff.html>. Robert Stephens and Josh Thumma, "Faculty-Undergraduate Collaboration in Digital History at a Public Research University," *The History Teacher* 38, no. 4 (August 2005): <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ht/38.4/stephens.html>; Ellen Eisenberg,

"Looking for Zalman: Making Historical Scholarship Visible to Undergraduates," *The History Teacher* 38, no. 3 (May 2005): <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ht/38.3/eisenberg.html>.

6. Peter Scott Brown and Jace Hargis, "Undergraduate Research in Art History Using Project Based Learning," *Journal of Faculty Development* 22, no. 2 (May 2008): 152-158; "Impacts of Student Engagement in Research and Creative Activities," *ASHE Higher Education Report* 33, no. 4 (November 2007): 33-43; Anne-Barrie Hunter, Sandra L. Laursen, and Elaine Seymour, "Becoming a Scientist: The Role of Undergraduate Research in Students' Cognitive, Personal, and Professional Development," *Science Education* 91, no. 1 (January 2007): 36-74.

7. Russell Olwell and Ronald Delph, "Implementing Assessment and Improving Undergraduate Writing: One Department's Experience," *The History Teacher* 38, no. 1 (November 2004): <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ht/38.1/olwell.html>.

8. Use of peer review in our research seminars was guided by Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff, *Sharing and Responding*, third ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1999).

9. Kelly Truong, "Research-Assignment Handouts Give Students Meager Guidance, Survey Finds," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (27 July 2010). For an example of good practice, see Lisa Baglione, "Doing Good and Doing Well: Teaching Research-Paper Writing by Unpacking the Paper," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 41, no. 3 (2008): 595-602. William Cronon and the graduate students in one of his recent seminars have produced an extremely useful website designed to guide students through the process of historical research: "Learning to Do Historical Research: A Primer for Environmental Historians and Others," <http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/>.

10. For a recent discussion of history curriculum reform, see Stephen D. Andrews, "Structuring the Past: Thinking about the History Curriculum," *Journal of American History* 95, no. 4 (March 2009): 1094-1101; Linda J. Borish, Mitch Kachun, and Cheryl Lyon-Jenness, "Rethinking a Curricular "Muddle in the Middle": Revising the Undergraduate History Major at Western Michigan University," *Journal of American History* 95, no. 4 (March 2009): 1102-1113; Scott E. Casper, "More than the Sum of Its Parts: Rethinking the History Curriculum," *Journal of American History* 95, no. 4 (March 2009): 1092-1093; John C. Savagian, "Toward a Coherent Curriculum: Teaching and Learning History at Alverno College," *Journal of American History* 95, no. 4 (March 2009): 1114-1124.

11. To be sure, publication options for individual student research projects have become popular. A few individual history departments have begun to publish journals of undergraduate research, and the Virginia Tech department plans to publish its first undergraduate research journal volume in winter 2012. Phi Alpha Theta, the history honor society, publishes *The Historian* for articles "written by members with interests in all fields of history" and recognizes the publication of undergraduate work only through a prize for the "best undergraduate history journal." Moreover, a recent study of psychology teachers suggests that faculty are often unaware of opportunities for undergraduate research publication. See J. Weyers Ferrari and S. Davis, "Publish That Paper—But Where? Faculty Knowledge and Perceptions of Undergraduate Publications," *College Student Journal* 36 (2002): 335-343.

12. For another example of the value of innovative research assignments for promoting student engagement in a history course, see George T. Blakey, "Breathing New Life into Research Papers," *College Teaching* 45, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 3-7. Undergraduate research of all forms is one of a series of "high-impact" educational practices that affect student learning and student engagement. See George Kuh, *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter* (Washington, D.C.: Association of Colleges and Universities, 2008).

13.   Research consistently shows that undergraduates tend to be much more engaged with their education when they are given choices about what assignments and topics to pursue. See, for example, Maryellen Wiemer, *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

14.   When we again taught the senior seminar in 2009, we decided that for a successful book, it was important to get students involved in their research projects as soon as possible in the term. We therefore reduced the time spent on background reading and made the abstract and working bibliography due in the sixth rather than in the seventh week.

15.   On the value of celebrations of student research, see Roxanne L. Sullivan, "Celebrating Student Research: Campus-Wide Student Research Events," <http://teachpsych.org/resources/e-books/ur2008/6-2%20Sullivan.pdf>.

16.   Jones did not—in her classes, books were mailed to students, providing extra time to finish the work required in putting together the book.

17.   See William W. Cutler, III, "The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and Student Assessment," *The History Teacher* 40, no. 1 (November 2006): 69-73.

18.   The changes in self-perception were determined by subtracting the preliminary average in each category from the final average.

19.   The statistical significance was determined by using the statistical averages of the individual courses as the basis for a standard two-tailed, paired Student's T Test. The results were deemed significant if $p < .05$.