

**Digital Across the Curriculum: A Practice-Based Learning Proposal**  
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**Submitted to the Innovations in Education Fund**  
**The New School**  
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**Nature:** Digital Across the Curriculum, a faculty development strategy for teaching digital humanities, will put digital humanities (DH) fellows in four classes for 2015-16 to implement and support one DH assignment in each class. Beginning with a prototype year, the program will be fully established in 2017-18 with enough capacity that all undergraduates can have at least one class with a DH component.

**Goals:** The goals of the project are to promote and support digital retraining of the humanities and social sciences faculty through practice-based learning; digital literacy among students; and New School scholarly, curricular and assessment initiatives that rely on digital literacy.

Expected project outcomes: Project outcomes include successful implementation of the DH minor in the Bachelors Program for Adult and Transfer Students; institutional capacity to assess the essential capabilities, as outlined in the Middle States Report, through successful adoption of the Learning Portfolio; and the development and implementation of a practice-based model for pedagogical and curricular reform in the undergraduate programs.

**Narrative:** Digital Humanities (DH), an emerging discipline within the liberal arts, links technology and design to teaching essential capacities: close reading, writing, visual and data analysis, and critical thinking. DH is also a skill set and an epistemology that has broader implications for the intellectual development of students and faculty at The New School. The Humanities Action Lab (HAL) requests \$10,000 as seed money to design and implement a digital teaching fellows prototype Digital Across the Curriculum (DAC). Beginning with two teaching fellows in 2015-16, the program would also use the grant year to seek outside funding for scaling up to a curriculum-wide effort over three years.

Patterned on successful programs that have put creative practitioners in university classrooms to teach writing across the curriculum, DAC will be coordinated by HAL co-director and Professor of History Claire Potter, the principle investigator for the IEF grant. Potter, in

collaboration with Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer Anand Padmanabhan and Director of Distributed Education James O'Connor, will choose and train teaching fellows already immersed in DH methodologies. Faculty members that have agreed to participate in 2015-16 will implement one digital assignment in their classes. Potter and the teaching fellows will help faculty plan, implement and advise these short-term projects; fellows will attend class and hold office hours to support student success. To date, faculty who have agreed to collaborate in creating the program next semester are: Ricardo Montez, Gina Luria Walker (who will also lead the project assessment), and Rachel Heiman of the Bachelor's program for Adult and Transfer Students (BPATS); Michelle Materre (BPATS and School of Media Studies.) Michele Kahane, of the Milano School, will consult.

Funds from the IEF grant will be spent primarily on our most crucial resource, the teaching fellows. We anticipate hiring graduate students from Parsons and/or Media Studies; each will be paid 17.00/hr. for 250 hours over two semesters. We will urge faculty to use open source tools and apps that allow students to interact with user communities, making a small fund available in the event that a particular tool seems most appropriate to an instructor's needs. We will apply for supplementary funds from the school deans to support the creation of poster sessions at the end of each semester, where students will share their work publicly in the lobby of the 66 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street building or the Lang Center. By displaying students' digital scholarship, and sparking spontaneous conversations with other students and faculty passing through public space, we will lay the basis for expanding the program by familiarizing colleagues and students with DAC, with the fellows program, and with the excitement of DH methods.

The poster sessions underline the fact that DH scholarship is publicly engaged by its very nature, dovetailing with The New School's historic mission. Furthermore, nearly every function of teaching, learning, research and student support already occurs routinely in, or is facilitated through, a virtual

environment. This important shift means that we must all be capable of learning digital tools and thinking critically about their use. Through DH, students can make their intellectual achievements, as well as their mastery of creative design and technology, visible to future employers. Assessment practices and scholarly collaborations everywhere increasingly rely on savvy use of digital platforms. Enhancing digital literacy advances The New School's strategic goal of implementing learning portfolios, currently in use at Parsons and selectively released at BPATS, across the university.

A capacity to teach digital literacy across the curriculum will be a competitive advantage for The New School in the coming years. The New School is at a challenging moment, but because of our distinctive position in media and the visual arts, many faculty and students around The New School are technology leaders and already engaged in DH. HAL has already established a DH curriculum, soon to become a minor, a collaborative relationship with the MFA Design and Technology Program at Parsons, and a working relationship with Ann Balsamo, Dean of Media Studies and a founder of FemTechNet. THATCamp, sponsored by HAL and the American Historical Association, and Potter's membership on the AHA Ad Hoc Committee on the Evaluation of Digital Scholarship for Hiring, Promotion and Tenure, has allowed HAL to plug The New School in to a national community of scholars dedicated to bringing DH practices into the classroom.

Digital practices enhance our capacity to teach the traditional humanities as well. They sharpen close reading and editing skills. DH allows students to publish their work and to create new arguments through design, visualization, text editing, analyzing metadata, mapping and other practices associated with DH. But the importance of implementing DH across the university goes well beyond individual classrooms. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we all are, and must be, digital learners. Yet a great many faculty at The New School do not have the support they need to make imaginative, or even practical, use of digital resources currently made available at The New School. If not encouraged, some

faculty will simply be left behind through no fault of their own, leaving part of our curriculum – and many of our students -- untouched by crucial university investments and aspirations.

DAC is replicable by its very nature: in three years, no undergraduate should graduate without having completed a digital project in at least one class. On a more ambitious scale, DAC would create a replicable model for implementing other new pedagogies out of HAL; and a faculty development model based on practice, rather than asking colleagues for an additional time commitment to attend meetings and workshops whose effects cannot be easily assessed. Faculty and students will learn together through doing and, at the same time, through classroom assignments and the creation of new syllabi, create an environment where our progress in implementing digital literacy can be measured and improved, regardless of where technology takes us next.

**Budget Narrative:**

Two teaching fellows will be hired for 250 hrs. @ 17.00 hr. (recommended by Anand Padmanabhan, for a total fellowship of 4,250 each. The majority of the funds, 9,500.00, will be spent in this way. We are reserving \$250.00 for the possible purchase of apps or tools, should any of the faculty feel that to accomplish the learning goals of the course we must use a product developed outside the open source community. Replication will occur through two poster sessions, one at the end of each semester. Although posters can be done quite inexpensively, it was the experience of my students presenting at the AHA this year that having a good looking poster got them a lot of attention and made them proud of their work. Additional funds about the \$10,000 may be acquired from the school deans; in addition, Anand Padmanabhan may be able to supplement the honoraria for the fellows, should we have to compete with other offers to get the students we want.

**Fees/honoraria:** N/A

**Travel:** N/A

**Supplies and materials:**

- Reserve fund for purchase of tools or apps: 250.00
- Replication/sharing: Poster sessions: 200.00 per class x 4: \$800.00

*Total project costs 10,550.00*