

TLEF Sustainment Report Summary

Prepared by the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology



Report Outline

In 2018 and 2019, UBC faculty whose TLEF project support ended 2009–2019 were asked to report on the sustainment of their projects. The three main purposes of the survey were:

1. to identify the factors that lead to project sustainment;
2. to document the ongoing impact of the TLEF program; and
3. to curate a list of scholarly contributions the TLEF program has supported.

From the 71 survey responses, we have produced the following summary, to help current TLEF holders understand the longstanding impact that TLEF projects can have and common roadblocks for continued sustainment.

Summary of projects after closure

The majority of Principal Investigators (PIs) indicate that the targeted students and/or TAs continue to experience benefits from the TLEF project after project closure. Ongoing project benefits are predominantly seen in the form of created materials still being relevant, and project outcomes informing other initiatives and resources.



60% of projects continued to expand even after the TLEF support period ended. These expansions have taken the project beyond the original course, to other departments and faculties and even beyond UBC.

What factors contributed to sustainable development of TLEF projects?

The analyses of this section are derived from the responses of PIs who indicated that resources, tools and practices from their TLEF project continued to be relevant. The majority of the respondents mentioned that the TLEF enabled further innovation and expansion beyond the initial aims and had subsequent impact in educational and professional development. Supporting statements:

We continue to build upon results and resources stemming from this project. Lessons learned have informed further work being conducted on courses not listed above, both in projects supported by TLEF and in un-funded course improvement efforts.

The lessons I learned from the experience of that course redesign have had a notable impact on my subsequent course design and teaching practice.

The TLEF project focussed on evaluating our course but also provided funds to hire students to develop course materials and infrastructure. The evaluation led to further improvements to the course and the materials and infrastructure continue to be used.

Projects that sustained beyond their original TLEF support period demonstrated adaptation to the pedagogical context and concern with continued engagement of the targeted population. The respondents highlighted the need to

update and promote projects to ensure applications and tools stayed relevant. For projects with a disciplinary focus, refined priorities supported continuation and improvement.

The TLEF allowed us to develop tools to support students with disabilities, those tools are still being utilized.

A sustainable resource was developed that we continue to use, update, and share.

Regular exposure, workshops and CTLT expert supports provided a necessary 'push' to engage faculty and change culture.

The modules created are still relevant and being used to support student transition into institutional practicums. The modules are also being used by students as a "refresher" and ongoing resource.

Successful projects shared commonality in having a strategic approach to maintenance, development, evaluation and expansion of the initial TLEF proposal. They showed continual engagement with the targeted audience (students, TAs, instructors) and strategies for promotion to that audience. They were active in disseminating outcomes and establishing partnership (within their department, the university, and/or industry). They sought ongoing unit and/or faculty utilization of their educational enhancement, and collected feedback from their audience. They were also flexible in making modifications and improvements to reach their intended goal.

What factors hindered sustainability of TLEF projects?

The TLEF PIs were appreciative of the opportunity and support they received. They acknowledged that they received sufficient support from the TLEF program staff during the project. They also indicated the application processes were straightforward and the funds helped development and maintenance of their initiatives.

The following comments are representative of the participants' responses, including those who faced challenges in sustaining their project after the TLEF period had ended.

The thing I find most challenging and would benefit from the most is assistance with the administration of a project — e.g., recruiting and hiring staff.

We enjoyed the program and believe that budget and resources should be a line item for every department to link community partners with students. Our staff are just too busy to continue it.

It is difficult to maintain and sustain the quality and content current without sustainable administrative funding or support.

The specific resources needed to move this project along faster and to completion were not always available, and/or not a fit for TLEF-funded students to undertake. As a result, there have been slow-downs and gaps in the project, relative to the initial plan.

Among those factors that hinder sustainment were lack of human resources, lack of clear milestones/strategies to evaluate progress, insufficient promotion strategies, lack of initiative to seek feedback from the targeted audience, and lack of sustained efforts to update and improve after development.

The analysis of the responses provided are suggestive of the following actions and decisions that may contribute to sustainable projects:

1. Ensure that the project has ongoing staff support.
2. Incorporate flexibility in project lifecycle.
3. Enhance support for evaluation of TLEF aims.
4. Set goals for demonstration and dissemination of outputs.
5. Align the project with priorities of the targeted audience.

Improvements made to the TLEF program

Based on the feedback received, changes and improvements were made to the TLEF program. Some of these changes occurred prior to 2019, when the report data was collected, but were not available for the PIs at the time of their project.

For example, in 2018 we introduced a biannual workshop on how to evaluate TLEF goals, which provided PIs support in developing clear evaluation questions, how to conceptualize areas of impact, and guidance on research methods. We also enhanced the [resources on project evaluation](#) available on the TLEF website, and now offer increased in-kind support from the Research and Evaluation team at the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT).

Next steps

To help encourage dissemination and sharing of project outcomes and outputs, citations provided by TLEF PIs in their closure and sustainment reports are being compiled to be included on the TLEF website, with the goal of making this collection available by the end of 2021.

In the coming years, the CTLT and the TLEF team will continue to support the sustainment of TLEF projects by refining support available to TLEF project teams through the various stages of planning, development, implementation and evaluation. We also encourage teams to share strategies, resources and findings with the larger UBC community.