# Experimenter Reflection

## Experimenter Activities

I wanted to try out some tools that could be useful in my existing course design, but also be a bit more engaging / useful for my students. I tried to pick activities that I had not already completed in the Curator module (there was some overlap). I ended up selecting:

* **H5P – Branching scenario:** While I use H5P frequently, I had never used a branching scenario and wanted to see if I could use it to design an activity to give students more information about the choice of research project output (podcast or essay). I wasn’t quite sure it would work, but I think I got there.
* **Infographic:** I mostly stick to simple graphics and openly licensed ones. I have never had much success in creating an infographic, but I’ve only just started using Canva for other purposes.
* **Padlet:** I struggled to find another activity on the list that I don’t already use regularly, but also would fit well with my course content. I took a break and then realized that the Padlet might work for having students work collaboratively on a visual analysis task. I want students to see and acknowledge other student’s responses, so creating a padlet with pre-existing sections and questions that the students could respond to made sense. I also enabled the upvoting option so that students could vote on each other’s responses for a bit more interaction.

## Three Lessons Learned

### Accessibility

Increased focus on accessibility is needed when incorporating new technology/apps into the course. I enjoyed creating the infographic with Canva and was surprised that I was able to do this easily (previous attempts at infographics failed miserably with me irritated and giving up). However, though the output was visually pleasing and it exported to a PDF, the PDF itself is not fully accessible (I ran it through the accessibility checker in the full version of Adobe Acrobat) so more work would be needed to make the infographic accessible. Further, I can tell just by looking at it that the design suggested by Canva does not meet colour contrast guidelines. There are likely other issues, but those two jumped out at me. So, even though the result was quite visually appealing, I’m still going to have to account for those accessibility problems (Canva didn’t ask for any alt-text but I used pre-existing graphics, so maybe it was doing it for me).

### Keep it simple

Since my institution upgraded to Blackboard Ultra, I’ve lost access to a few different activity types that I previously used. I’ve been poking around looking for an option for the visual analysis activity (which I may have found with Padlet) but I also need to assess what is easiest from a teaching & learning perspective. I (currently) have this activity set up with Perusall, because it integrates into our LMS and I can assign participation marks using the tool without having to leave blackboard – it integrates into the gradebook. I like the look and feel of Padlet, and I see there is an embed code, so I will need to do more experimenting to see what that looks like, or if Padlet is also an option for gradebook integration. If I still want to provide participation points for the activity, I may have to go with the most simple option. That said, if there were a lot of activities that lent themselves well to a Padlet type response, it might be worth the students getting used to. The last thing I want to do, though, is require them to download more apps and things to their phones. And, layering a Padlet inside Blackboard Ultra may also cause more complications – we really do need to test these student preview of our courses on phones and tablets.

### Go beyond my standard choices

There are lots of options for embedding interactive pieces into my existing lessons. While editing my fairly standard H5P course presentations to accommodate some more learner choice into the major research project, I simply added extra slides and embedded videos and resources related to the choices. When I look at the branching scenario options, this could be a much nicer experience for students, so I have to make sure I do get out of my comfort zone sometimes to try and improve the learner experience.

## Tablet or Smartphone

I worked on the Padlet with my iPhone 11. I don’t have the newest or biggest phone, so I figured this would give me a good idea of the activity from a student perspective. I used the browser installed on the phone (Safari) to access Padlet instead of downloading an app.

Essentially, it did work. However, I don’t really like scrolling horizontally in ANY medium, and it was a bit awkward on my phone. When I tried to add sections into the Padlet, my phone seemed to glitch a bit and I ended up with 5 or 6 blank items that opened when I was punching keys and it didn’t seem to be opening. As well, I accessed the Padlet by emailing myself the direct link. I suspect (as noted above) that layering this inside Blackboard would make access on a phone even more challenging, so I think we need to be really wary of what our materials look like in that format.

This has also reminded me, in a slightly disturbing way, that I already knew I should be checking my course content on my phone. Since I’ve just spent a couple of months reworking my content for Blackboard Ultra migration, I’m a bit upset with myself that I haven’t gone in to check the format with my phone yet. I will make a note to do that this week, so disaster doesn’t strike too close to the fall semester.

Screencast that demonstrates my H5P branching scenario is available on my [Screencast-o-matic/Screenpal account](https://screenpal.com/watch/c0iXqzVg5fZ)