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Cooperation for knowledge: the development of an on-line framework to promote academic skills in Economic History in Bolivia.

1. **ABSTRACT IN YOUR PAPER'S LANGUAGE** (if not English): 500-700 characters
2. **ABSTRACT IN ENGLISH:** 500-700 characters

This paper presents a project which aims to create an academic and research network in the field of economic history and social development in Bolivia, as a way to cooperate in the country's economic development. The project will be implemented with the cooperation of three prestigious universities: University of Barcelona (UB) from Spain, Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (UMSA) from Bolivia and Universidad de Valparaíso (UV) from Chile. The main objective is to implement an academic framework to develop research and teaching skills in economic history. One of the main results of the project will be the implementation of an interactive web for knowledge cooperation.

KEYWORDS: Knowledge network, Economic history, research in developing countries

3. **FIELD OF KNOWLEDGE:** Arts and Humanities and Social and Legal Sciences
4. **SUBJECT AREA:** Cooperation In and For Knowledge
5. **PRESENTATION CATEGORY:** Oral Presentation
6. **DEVELOPMENT:** 25.000 characters (with spaces)

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1. OBJECTIVES

Teaching economic history: a way to promote economic development

Economic growth and economic development in historical perspective was being studied broadly during the last decades as an important tool to improve the effectiveness of economic policies. A long run view could be relevant to quantify the impact of some policies in the future. Were infrastructure investments positive? Were regional transfers negative? Which are the main factors in a sustained process of economic growth? Which was the impact in the long run of continuing public deficits? Many important questions to answer arise and the knowledge of the economic performance of a country appears as a relevant topic.

In that sense, the promotion of these studies in developing countries becomes crucial in a double sense:

- Firstly, because economic history and economic development studies are in their first stages in these countries and
- Secondly, because these countries require particular sharpness in the choice of economic policy decisions.

The works done by (A. Maddison 1989; 1995; 2002; 2006) and (Smits et al. 2009), who summarize and systematize the investigation of hundreds of researchers worldwide, helped to achieve relevant results. However, lack of information in some regions still remains nowadays. While the area around OECD countries has been very well researched, countries that are not, or have not formed part of the OECD, are left behind in terms of the availability of economic aggregates (Hanson 1988, 1991, and Smits et al. 2009). The existing information made possible the research around the causes of economic growth and development but, due to the lack of reliable data, the causes of failure and economic backwardness are still in considerable nebula and that greatly affects the formulation of economic policies in those countries.

For the long period of modern history, previous to the decolonization era, one of the zones of the world that could contribute to the understanding of economic growth and the mechanisms that stimulate it is Latin America and the Caribbean countries. For more than 120 years (from 1820 to

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1945), the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean constituted the second largest bloc in the world, after Europe in terms of number of independent nations. At this time, Africa and Asia were basically formed by colonies of the great European Empires. Latin America and the Caribbean in the 19th and the 20th century became a real historical laboratory at our disposal to test the validity of available theories on the development and growth.

The Bolivian case is an example of a country with these characteristics: a developing country with an important lack in the knowledge of his economic performance during the last two centuries. A possible way to address these shortcomings is the promotion of this discipline in the Bolivian Universities, either in the formation of students, faculty members, or collaborating with their research projects. This is the reason for that we have design a project which aims to strengthen the capacity of building an academic and research network in the field of economic history and social development in Bolivia, as a way to cooperate in the country's economic development.

The project will be implemented with the cooperation of three prestigious university centers: the University of Barcelona (UB) from Spain, the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (UMSA) from Bolivia and the Universidad de Valparaíso (UV) from Chile. In this triangular relationship, the beneficiary institution is the Bolivian University, meanwhile the main institution that offers cooperation is the Spanish University. The Chilean involvement is due to the willingness to promote existing capabilities in nearby countries to establish long term cooperation networks in the region.

The project has been developed collectively within the framework of the Teaching Innovation Group Consolidated (GIDC) in Economic History, and Social Policy, which is part of the Centre for Educational Innovation at the University of Barcelona (<https://www.ub.edu/oid/es>). At present almost all members of the Department are part of GIDC (Teaching Innovation Group) (2007GID-UB/12) Teaching Innovation Group in Economic History, and Social Policy in 2009 was consolidated by the University of Barcelona (2009GID-UB/09). In the last revision of teaching innovation groups of UB has managed to maintain its qualification as established in recognition of the outputs generated with a rating of 178 points (GIDCUB-11/EPS).

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The implementation of an academic framework to promote economic history in Bolivia

The main objective is to implement an academic framework to develop the competences of economic analysis in historical perspective, in a developing country where such tools are not available. We consider that this cooperation among universities from different countries could improve the knowledge of the economic growth, inequality (regional and personal), industrial development and trade performance in Bolivia. Furthermore, in the project we also include the transfer of both contents and teaching methods developed collectively for many years in the Department of Economic History of the University of Barcelona.

As we have said, Maddison (2006, 2010) and Smiths et al. (2009), among others, have made important contributions in the compilation of world wide data bases from year 1 till recent years, but those countries that have suffered a worse development, have been excluded from this analysis at least for large time periods. This is the case of Bolivia. The economic backwardness and the sharpening of inequality (both regional and per capita) force us to ask some questions about the determinants behind them.

In the present project we aim to achieve the following objectives:

1. A first aim of the project is to transfer the latest novelties in the literature, related to economic development in the long run, to the Bolivian academic staff. To achieve this objective we will build expertise in the analysis of long-term economic, social and institutional causes of underdevelopment. Studies on economic history and long-term development have made considerable progress in recent decades. Some of them are based on geographic and climatic determinism (Gallup, Sachs and Mellinger, 1999; Masters and McMillan, 2001; Sachs, 2001). The geographic distance between rich and poor countries has also led to interpret economic failure as an explanation of economic globalizations (Frankel and Romer, 1999; Estevedeordal, Frantz and Taylor, 2002). Other explanations have also emerged trying to re-evaluate the weight of the colonial legacy (Engerman and Sokoloff, 2000, Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson, 2001a and 2001b) and others which have again raised the old dilemmas in terms of curse or blessing of the natural resources (Sachs and Warner 1995, 2001 and 2005, Auty, 1994). Our goal is to provide the University of Bolivia latest bibliographic materials in this topic. We can summarize this first objective as providing the latest contents on our subject to the Bolivian University.

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2. A second objective is to create an academic network of permanent collaboration where the on-line knowledge will play a crucial role. In this sense, we will build university networks with teachers' teams from Spain, Bolivia and Chile to share teaching objectives around the economic development, the institutional and the social performance of Bolivia, as Kelley Salinas (2010) points out in his chapter on learning gaps between developing and developed countries. This second objective can be summarized as offering the latest teaching methodologies to the Bolivian University.

3. The third objective consists in the inclusion of Bolivia in the international economic history knowledge through the search and gathering of information, consisting on either quantitative data either qualitative evidence. Due to that third objective we will integrate academic research teams from Spain, Bolivia and Chile on the development of economic, social and institutional indicators for Bolivia. The works of Maddison (1989, 1995 and 2001), which summarize and systematize the investigation of hundreds of researchers around the world, have helped to achieve relevant empirical data bases on the international context. However, there still remains a lack of knowledge about the evolution of the economy in some regions, especially in some of the most backward countries, such as Bolivia. In that sense, Bolivia appeared as an example of a country with little progress in this topic and, as a direct consequence, it is out of the most relevant works on long term economic performance. Through the cooperation of researchers from all the countries included in this project, we plan to fill the absence of information from Bolivia in the literature of global economic history.

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2. DEVELOPMENT

Face to face teaching actions: a Seasonal School in La Paz (Bolivia)

To achieve the objectives listed below, we have proposed three actions: to offer a *Seasonal School* in La Paz, to give three scholarships for the best Bolivian students to attend higher training in Economic History in Valparaíso (Chile) and the development of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to support the whole project.

The first action consists on the implementation of a *Seasonal school* at the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (UMSA), which offers degrees in historical topics, but until now has not focus the economic history as a teaching or researching discipline. This *Seasonal school* would help the Bolivian University for a further implementation of Master studies in the field of Economic History. It will be done through the UMSA coordination with other teaching institutions in Bolivia. The course will be held from 4th June to 3rd August this 2012 year. It will be free for the Bolivian students, thanks to the financial support of the Spanish Foreign Affairs Ministry (AECID- Agencia Española para la Cooperación Internacional al Desarrollo).

The course would be taught by professors from the three universities participating in the project. It will be the only face to face collaboration of the three academic teams. Related to the contents of the course, it will address the main recent topics in economic and social history, with Latin America as a particular case study. Teachers from the University of Barcelona will cover the topics related to the European Economic History, meanwhile teachers from the Chilean University will explain the main questions concerning to Latin American Economic History and, finally, Bolivian teachers will focus on the Bolivian Economic History.

Through these three fields of expertise, we plan to give the students an overview on the main questions and interests of the discipline. We will stress the main knowledge of current literature, as well as the lacks of knowledge we still have on some regions and some particular topics. Our ultimate objective is to promote further study of issues related to the economic history of Bolivia, according to the standards of international research.

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The second action is to offer financial support for some of the three best students of the *Seasonal School* to complete their formation in Economic History abroad. They will complete their training in economic history and development studies in Chile, where there are subjects in economic history in a Master of the History Institute of History and Social Sciences at the University of Valparaíso, which at the same time is closed linked to the academic team of Barcelona. The main promoter of the present action, Professor César Yáñez, is at the same time close involved in the Master of Valparaíso. In addition, most of the Chilean teachers of the master have had their academic training at the University of Barcelona. Some of them are also involve in the present project and they will teach some lectures in the *Seasonal School*. Finally, some teachers of the University of Barcelona will also go to teach specific monographic seminars to the University of Valparaíso.

Figure 1- Promotional poster of the *Seasonal School*



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Figure 2– Teaching Plan of the *Seasonal School*

PROGRAMA DEL CURSO		
HACIA UNA NUEVA HISTORIA ECONÓMICA DE BOLIVIA		
HISTORIA ECONÓMICA MUNDIAL ■ Introducción a la Historia Económica Anna Carreras Universidad de Barcelona 5 de junio ■ Economías de base orgánica Anna Carreras Universidad de Barcelona 7 de junio ■ La Revolución Industrial y Gran Divergencia Anna Carreras Universidad de Barcelona 8 de junio ■ Difusión de la industrialización Alfonso Herranz Universidad de Barcelona 12 de junio ■ La Globalización Alfonso Herranz Universidad de Barcelona 14 de junio ■ La inestabilidad de entreguerras Alfonso Herranz Universidad de Barcelona 14 de junio ■ Época "dorada" del capitalismo Alfonso Herranz Universidad de Barcelona 21 de junio ■ Crisis del petróleo y estancación Alfonso Herranz Universidad de Barcelona 21 de junio ■ Liberalización de mercados y 2a globalización Alfonso Herranz Universidad de Barcelona 21 de junio	HISTORIA POLÍTICA Y SOCIAL DE AMÉRICA LATINA ■ Estado y sociedades oligárquicas (siglo XX) Patricio Quiroga Universidad de Valparaíso 26 de junio ■ Democracias incompletas Patricio Quiroga Universidad de Valparaíso 28 de junio ■ Los desequilibrios del tiempo presente Patricio Quiroga Universidad de Valparaíso 29 de junio HISTORIA ECONÓMICA DE AMÉRICA LATINA ■ La herencia colonial Pablo Castillo Universidad de Valparaíso 3 de julio ■ Economías primario exportadoras Pablo Castillo Universidad de Valparaíso 5 de julio ■ La Gran depresión en América Latina Pablo Castillo Universidad de Valparaíso 6 de julio ■ La industrialización dirigida por el Estado Vicente Neira Universidad de Valparaíso 10 de julio ■ Crisis de la Deuda Externa y Consenso de Washington Vicente Neira Universidad de Valparaíso 12 de julio ■ Desarrollo y desigualdad en América Latina Vicente Neira Universidad de Valparaíso 13 de julio	HISTORIA POLÍTICA Y SOCIAL DE BOLIVIA ■ El siglo XIX boliviano Raúl Calderón UMSA 17 de julio ■ El siglo XX boliviano Magdalena Cajías UMSA 18 de julio ■ La Bolivia del tiempo presente Magdalena Cajías UMSA 19 de julio HISTORIA ECONÓMICA DE BOLIVIA ■ La Pos-Independencia (1825-1873) José Peres Universidad de Barcelona 24 de julio ■ La 1ª Globalización: la minería (1872-1929) José Peres Universidad de Barcelona 26 de julio ■ Exportaciones, intervención estatal y mercado interno (1930-1985) José Peres Universidad de Barcelona 27 de julio ■ Diversificación y riesgo de dependencia? José Peres Universidad de Barcelona 31 de julio ■ Seminario de Historia Económica de Bolivia José Peres Universidad de Barcelona 2 de agosto ■ Balance historiográfico José Peres Universidad de Barcelona 3 de agosto

The Web-Based Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) as a tool for collaborative teaching and researching.

The third action consists on the implementation of an interactive web of knowledge. This on-line framework will allow creating collaborative networks of teachers, researchers and students from the three universities involved in this project. It will also contribute to establish lasting assistance in teaching subjects related to the fields already mentioned (either from the impulse of virtual teaching or by the collaboration around the research projects, that may arise from this partnership or other that may arise in the future). We will focus in more detail in this third action in this section because it is the most related to issues of innovation in teaching.

The development of a Web-Based Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), an on-line tool to promote the collaboration among faculty members, students and researchers, is one of the main actions to be developed in this cooperative project. We consider here the following definition of a Web-Based Virtual Learning Environment: 'a software system that combines a number of different tools that are used to systematically deliver content online and facilitate the learning

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experience around that content' (Weller, 2007). In this part we are interested in detail in the characteristics of this Web-Based Virtual Learning Environment (Virtual Campus -VC henceforth).

The purpose of any Web-Based Virtual Learning Environment is to facilitate e-learning. All the faculty members and students, who will take part in the courses and in the research projects, will have access to the VC, regardless of their university affiliation. The VC will provide all participants with the materials and the contents of the course and, simultaneously this will be implemented as a repository of economic history and economic development resources.

To obtain a dynamic and agile VC, we will design a versatile campus that could be updated during the course, by the faculty members, and to adapt it to new courses in the future. One of the key elements of the VC is that through internet it facilitates two-way communication and that is not limited by time or place. And because of that, it becomes a central point to one project such as ours, in which so many agents have to interact in so different countries and with even such a huge time differences.

The VC will follow a similar structure as the one used at the University of Barcelona (a VC based on Moodle) and it will be hosted on the server of the same university. As it is well known, Moodle has been designed following a cognitive approach to learning. Although the University of Barcelona gives essentially face teaching, it has for some years complemented it with the virtual resources of a VLE. The experience of the teaching team from the University of Barcelona in working with VLE will also be transferred to the Bolivian University, where face to face teaching is still the dominant only way of teaching.

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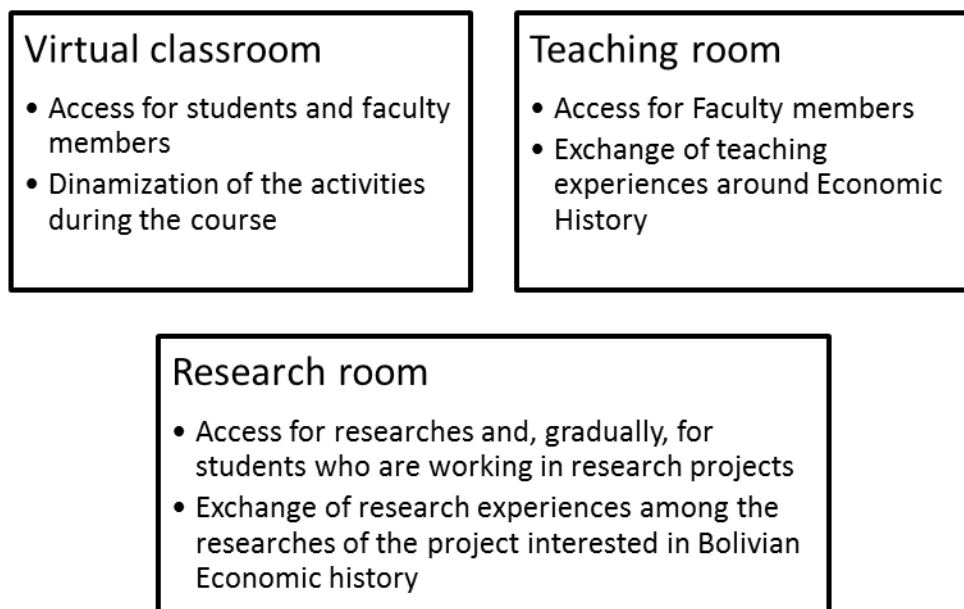
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Figure 3 – Structure of the Virtual Campus (VC) of the project



The VC of this project will be designed considering three different blocks (see figure 3):

1. *Virtual Classroom:*

It is a space where the faculty members and students could be in contact during the course. Classroom PowerPoint presentations, e-books, articles and other media documents will be posted in this space, as well as, additional information. This classroom is designed bidirectional, i.e., students could participate in the classroom with questions, proposing topics to discuss or providing new materials to complement the pedagogical objectives of the course. In sum, the virtual classroom will combine two sides of the education process: contents and feed-backs.

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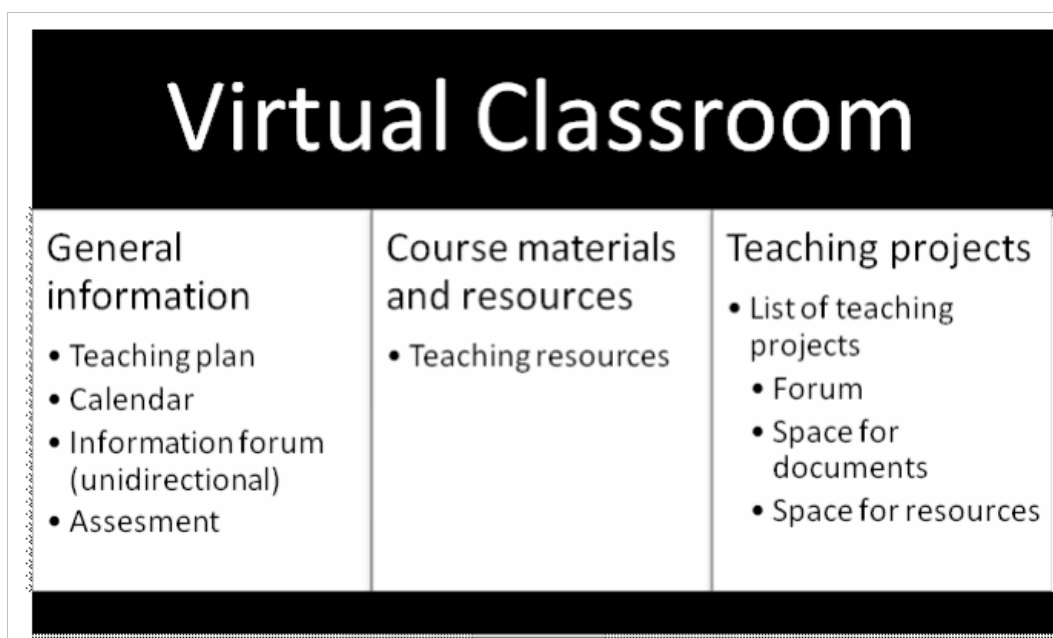
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Figure 4 - Virtual Classroom



2. *Teaching room:*

It is a place where faculty members could be in touch to exchange experiences, teaching materials, media resources and, at the same time, the place which the members of the project will use to design future courses, teaching seminars or other related topics linked with the teaching side of the project. We consider one single room for all the courses implemented in the project because all the students will participate in all of them. This unique room will make easier the participation of all the members of the project.

The specific inner design, will divide the space in three additional blocks: the first one where all the main daily information will be posted (planning, important news...); the second one will be another block with a forum where students and faculty members could send questions, answers, opinions... This will be the space where faculty members could send the resources used during the course, and a set of complementary resources to go further in the knowledge of the different topics

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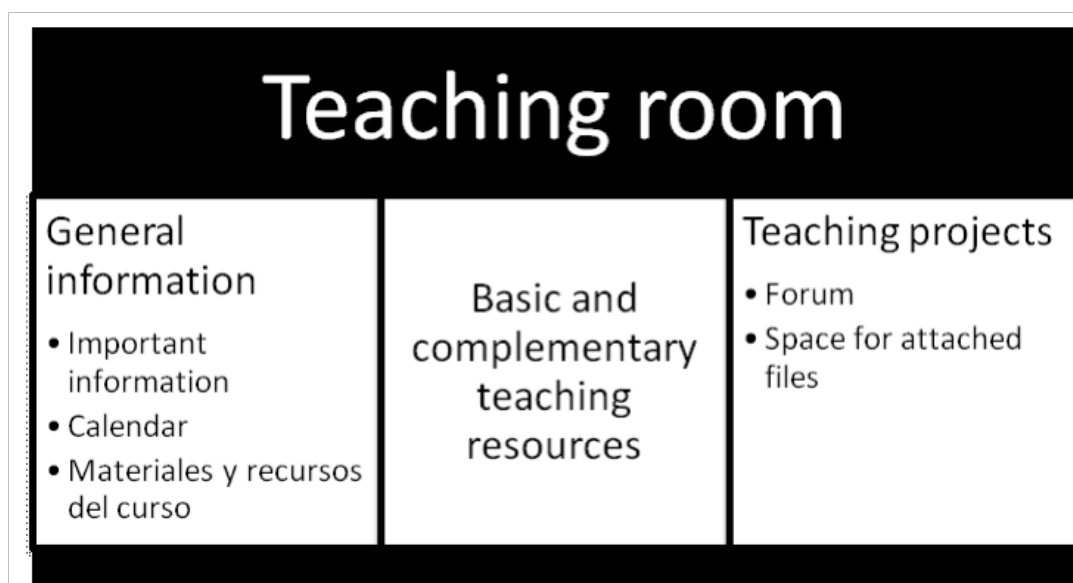


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considered. This part will be the more dynamic one because it should be modified according the requirements of the course. It also should be adaptive for the other courses in the future.

The last part, the third one, will be designed to elaborate, discuss and implement teaching projects around the topics considered in this project. Faculty members of the projects could decide which projects should be implemented during this course.

Figure 5 - Teaching classroom



3. *Research room:*

It will be a room oriented to research in economic history and development studies, with two main objectives:

- Firstly, it will be a place where researchers in economic history and in economic development studies of Bolivia, could start to discuss their works in progress to obtain feedback in an early stages of the investigation and to improve final outputs.

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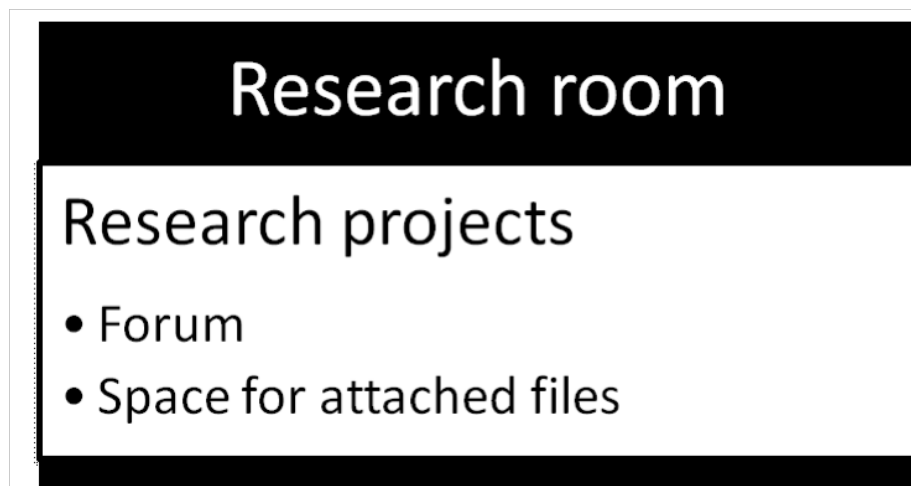


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- And secondly, a formative place where the research projects resulting from this course, could be discussed, improved and evaluated. Only the members of the project will have access to this virtual space.

Although the research area is an independent one, there should be close connections between teaching and researching activities, due to the fact that we will try to teach the students to learn how to go into a research project. Somehow the research area will provide better new contents for the two other teaching areas.

Figure 6 - Research room



As we have said, all the students and the faculty members who participate in the project will have direct access to the VC. We will also build a public space to publish the main results of the project and those firsts' works resulting from the research project, implemented during the course. Disseminating the results of the project and the project itself will also be an important part of the public space on the web.

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3. RESULTS AND/OR CONCLUSIONS

As we have said, this project aims to cooperate in the formation of academic skills in the field of economic history and development. It provides concrete actions that will strengthen Bolivian academics in topics such as the long-term economic analysis. It also promotes the implementation of studies that gathered the most innovative topics, methodologies and contents in economic history.

The capabilities in this area are being offered by the University of Barcelona from Spain and the University of Valparaíso from Chile, both at the service of the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés from Bolivia. It will be developed through a team of expert researchers on issues on the long-term economic development in Latin America. At the same time, the project wants to include deposit references books and historical statistical sources in the library of the University in La Paz, and as far as possible, also deposit the collection of documents that can be reproduced with current digital systems. This project is part of a collective team in teaching innovation, included in the Team of Teaching Innovation in Economic, Political and Social History (GIDC) of the University of Barcelona.

In the present project we aim to achieve the following objectives:

- 1- A first aim of the project is to transfer the latest novelties in the literature, related to economic development in the long run, to the Bolivian academic staff. To achieve this objective we will build expertise in the analysis of long-term economic, social and institutional causes of underdevelopment. Our goal is to provide the University of Bolivia latest bibliographic materials in this topic. We can summarize this first objective as providing the latest contents on our subject to the Bolivian University.
- 2- A second objective is to create an academic network of permanent collaboration where the on-line knowledge will play a crucial role. In this sense, we will build university networks with teachers' teams from Spain, Bolivia and Chile. This second objective can be summarized as offering the latest teaching methodologies to the Bolivian University.
- 3- The third objective consists in the inclusion of Bolivia in the international economic history knowledge, through the search and gathering of information, consisting on either quantitative data either qualitative evidence. Through the cooperation of researchers from

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all the countries included in this project, we plan to fill the absence of information from Bolivia in the literature of global economic history.

One main action of the project will be a face teaching in Bolivia which will imply the collaborative work of teachers from the three universities involved in the project. This will be done through a *Seasonal School* in La Paz, from 4th June to 3rd August. The classes will be taught by teachers from the University of Barcelona, from the Chilean University and also from the Bolivian University. Each one of these teams will teach each own field of expertise related to the European Economic History, the Latin American Economic History and the Bolivian Economic History. Special attention will be paid to the lacks of information regarding developing countries as in comparison to the information for the richer ones.

The three best students in this school will enjoy a scholarship to attend higher training in Economic History at the University of Valparaiso (Chile). These two face teaching activities will be free for the Bolivian students thanks to the financial support given by AECID (Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development).

One of the branches of the cooperation with Bolivia will consist in transferring knowledge on teaching innovation methodologies. In this sense, the experience of the teaching team of the University of Barcelona will allow the development of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to be implemented in the Bolivian University. The design of the VLE will be based on three main blocks: a Virtual Classroom, a Teaching Room and a Research Room.

The Virtual Classroom will be the place where students will find the contents of the teaching and they will also have the opportunity to give some feed-backs. The Teaching Room will be more devoted to promote the exchange of materials and experiences among teachers, trying to promote academic skills in the Bolivian higher education system. Finally, the Research Room will be the place where new knowledge will be created and as a consequence new contents will enter into the Virtual Classroom.

In order to maintain a constant relationship among the Bolivian students and scholars from the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, from the University of Barcelona and from the University of Valparaiso, one of the main results of the project will be an interactive web for knowledge cooperation. The design of a virtual environment for learning and communicating on-line will be geared to the sustainability of the project beyond the strictly duration of it, allowing the

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community of teachers and researchers from the three universities involved, establishing more collaborative networks (Sife et al. (2007)).

At his point of the project we cannot offer final results due to the fact that the main actions have been designed but not yet implemented. It won't be able to do that until the project will be finished in October 2012. Despite this, we have some preliminary outputs of the project, as the design of a VLE devoted to promote academic skills in Economic History, from the point of view of the contents as well as of the teaching methodologies. We have tried in the whole design of the project to combine the face teaching with the virtual learning environment, and to link teaching and research as well as contents with feedback system which we believe is the best way to innovate in teaching.

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