Documenting the Impact of the Public Humanities in Higher Education

A TOOLKIT

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The National Humanities Alliance (NHA) is a nationwide coalition of organizations advocating for the humanities on campuses, in communities, and on Capitol Hill. Founded in 1981, NHA is supported by over 250 member organizations, including: colleges, universities, libraries, museums, cultural organizations, state humanities councils, and scholarly, professional, and higher education associations. It is the only organization that brings together the U.S. humanities community as a whole.

The NHA is a 501(c)(4) non-profit association and is strictly nonpartisan. The National Humanities Alliance Foundation is the 501(c)(3) supporting foundation of the National Humanities Alliance. It works to research and communicate the value of the humanities to a range of audiences including elected officials and the general public.

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INTRODUCTION

For some, the goal of measuring seemingly intangible concepts is daunting. We know that engaging with the humanities can profoundly change a person's understanding of others, the world, and their role as a local, national, and global citizen, but how do those conducting humanities work measure, document, and share these impacts with others? This toolkit is intended to help higher ed-based public humanities practitioners learn about research methodologies for documenting the impact of the public humanities and how to apply these methods to their own work.

Since 2017, the National Humanities Alliance has been working with faculty, community members, and project directors around the United States to document the impact of humanities initiatives. In 2019, NHA launched *Documenting the Community Impact of Your Humanities Program: A Toolkit*, authored by Cecily Erin Hill and Emily McDonald, which continues to be a resource for documenting community and public impacts of humanities programs. Building off of that previous work, this toolkit brings to bear our experiences documenting the impact of public humanities projects with and for higher education partners. Through these efforts, we have partnered with a wide range of projects and conducted surveys, focus groups, and interviews with many types of project participants. Included among our impact research partnerships are internship programs, publicly engaged courses, prison abolition study groups, oral history projects, professional development programs for students at HBCUs, and many more.

Why document impact?

The data you gather and interpret can open doors for communicating with a variety of audiences about the value of your project and the value of publicly engaged scholarship more generally. Through impact research data, you can link the specific goals you have for your program with goals that are important to the stakeholders you want to reach:

❚ **Campus-based stakeholders** including administrators (such as provosts, presidents, deans, department chairs, etc.) or center directors might be motivated to sustain support for innovative humanities initiatives when they can see and reflect on the product of your efforts. Constructing, administering, and analyzing impact research can help you clarify your programmatic goals and demonstrate that you are meeting those goals.

❚ **Grantmakers** are persuaded to fund projects that can make a strong case for investment and demonstrate the efficacy and value of their work.

❚ **Policymakers** at the local, state, and federal level have an interest in supporting public humanities work that serves the public good in demonstrable ways.

❚ **Community collaborators** learn how public humanities projects contribute to local cultural and civic conversations in their communities and how they can leverage the resources of universities to further their efforts.

❚ **The project team** itself can utilize data to assess and improve upon ongoing activities for the benefit of the overall project.

Finally, in addition to providing you with important feedback that you can communicate to others, a well-crafted research instrument can be used as a pedagogical tool. Questions based on your project's goals can convey to participants what you hoped they would gain from it. At the same time, responding to your questions provides participants with the valuable opportunity to reflect on and make sense of their experiences, extending the impact of your work.

Toolkit overview

This toolkit begins with an overview of three common methodologies for documenting the impact of public humanities programs: surveys, focus groups, and interviews. We explore the pros and cons of each methodology, tips on how to construct questions, and other suggestions for designing effective research instruments. In these first three sections, we also identify common public humanities projects that might be appropriate for each methodology (e.g., a podcast, website, or museum exhibition are likely to be best suited to surveying). You will also find sidebars throughout that give more information about technology, such as survey platforms and transcription services, for each methodology.

After outlining these three methodologies, we then offer a few additional considerations related to logistics, ethics, and accessibility before beginning to document the impact of your program. Finally, we turn to strategies for analyzing and communicating about the qualitative and quantitative data you have collected.

Applying this toolkit beyond the public humanities

While many of the examples provided throughout this toolkit are specific to public humanities projects, the information on research methodologies, creating research instruments, and analyzing, interpreting, and mobilizing data all apply to a variety of higher ed-based humanities projects that are not publicly engaged. For example, you might want to survey students in a cohort program or those who are taking an innovative interdisciplinary course, interview students who are graduating with a new minor, or run focus groups with students who worked on faculty research projects. This toolkit will help you design and implement a research instrument, analyze and interpret the data you collect, and share your results with others whether or not your project is publicly engaged.

IMPACT RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

The first step in documenting the impact of your work is to choose a methodology for your data collection. This section will help you learn about a variety of research methodologies. We specifically dig into surveys, focus groups, and interviews and offer pros and cons for each methodology, tips on writing questions, and types of public humanities projects that might work well for each. We also offer introductions to a few additional methodologies for instances when surveys, focus groups, or interviews don't feel like they will fully capture the impacts of your work. At the end of the toolkit, we provide sample research instruments (see page 37) to help you get started.

In this section:

Surveys

Surveying the participants in your project can be an easy and cost-effective way to gather quantitative and qualitative evidence of the impact of your work. Unlike focus groups or interviews, surveys allow you to ask quantitative questions that can help you measure changes in attitudes, behaviors, or perceptions. Compared to more time-intensive methods, they also reach a larger number of participants and yield responses that represent a wide range of perspectives. In addition, surveying can be a good methodology to choose when you don't have close contact with your participants and it might not be reasonable to expect them to contribute their time for an interview or focus group. Surveys also ensure that each participant has an opportunity to respond to the same set of questions, which can help you better understand how participants of different backgrounds experienced your project.

TECHNOLOGY: SURVEY PLATFORMS

What platform will you use to run your survey? There are many to choose from, depending on your budget and what kinds of survey questions you want to ask.

Here are a few options, although there are many more and you should do a little research to make sure you're using the best platform for your needs. Always check to see if your institution has an account with any paid survey platforms.

Google Forms—this option is free with any Google account and can host basic survey questions (multiple choice, text entry, etc.). Responses can be automatically exported to a Google Sheet for easy sharing and tracking. There is no built-in functionality for data analysis; instead, you would utilize the spreadsheet to create charts or manipulate your data.

SurveyMonkey—this option supports more robust types of survey questions and has both free and paid subscriptions. The free version allows up to 10 questions on surveys. It also has some built-in functionality for data analysis.

Qualtrics—this option allows for a more robust survey design experience, including question types like drill down, heat maps, and more, as well as significant control over the look and feel of individual surveys. Qualtrics hosts powerful data analysis and reporting tools, allowing you to manipulate data, create visualizations, and conduct a range of statistical analyses directly in the platform. In addition, many universities host institutional accounts with Qualtrics, providing free use to students, staff, and faculty.

Other options you might consider include **Typeform, Jotform,** and **Alchemer,** among many others.

PRE- AND POST-SURVEYS

Before considering what kinds of questions you want to ask, take some time to consider when you may be able to survey your participants. For certain types of projects, you may be able to survey your participants both before they become part of your project and immediately after their participation. The benefit of conducting both pre- and post-project surveys is that you can more accurately track changes in attitudes and/or behavior over time and connect those changes to your project.

You might want to use both pre- and post-project surveys if your project involves a sustained engagement (a week-long workshop, a semester-long course, a year-long program, etc.). In these cases, it is helpful to know the attitudes or behaviors of your participants before they become involved with your project so you can measure any changes in those attitudes or behaviors after they participate in your project. Of course, it is not always practical or possible to conduct both surveys because you will need access to your participants on both ends of your project. For example, you might run a pre-project survey if you are holding a workshop that people must register to attend, and you collect their email addresses ahead of time. Alternatively, you might run only a post-project survey if you are hosting an archiving event where community members arrive organically, and you only collect their contact information once they connect with you.

PROS AND CONS OF SURVEYING

While surveying is the most common form of impact research, the methodology comes with both upsides and downsides. Here are a few:

Pros:

Inexpensive

Easy to reach a large number of participants

Ability to ask both quantitative and qualitative questions (see below for more on types of survey questions)

Platforms like Qualtrics have built-in data analysis and reporting functions

Ability to analyze different impacts on subgroups of respondents

Small time ask of respondents

Cons:

People have survey fatigue

Unlikely to receive a response from every participant

If a survey question doesn't elicit the response you're looking for, there's no second chance or follow-up question you can ask

Impersonal

Some participants might have privacy concerns about sharing personal details in writing

TYPES OF SURVEY QUESTIONS

There are two main types of survey questions: quantitative and qualitative, which are complementary and essential components of your survey. Quantitative questions are structured and give respondents a selection of answers from which to choose. These are not only numerical questions (e.g., ranking satisfaction on a scale of one to ten); the term quantitative includes any question in which the options for answers are predetermined, including multiple choice, rating, ranking, and more. As the survey designer, you control the response options seen by respondents when they take the survey and thus also control how they respond to the questions. Qualitative questions are open ended, giving respondents the option to write their own responses, which allows them to provide more elaboration and nuance than they're able to when answering quantitative questions.

You will want to make sure your survey has enough variation in question type so that it is engaging for respondents while also collecting the kinds of data you need. Answering too many qualitative questions (or too many in a row) can be exhausting for the survey taker while too many quantitative questions (or too many in a row) can cause survey takers to stop paying attention and choose the same answer to each question (e.g., "agree" or "no opinion") without considering what each question is asking.

Generally, you are looking to strike a balance between qualitative and quantitative questions and ensure that they work well together. As an example of an instance in which quantitative and qualitative questions can complement each other, you could ask respondents a quantitative question about their engagement with civic activities, followed by a qualitative question that asks them to elaborate on how they engage with their communities. This way, you have both presented respondents with a curated list of activities that you have deemed relevant to your project and also given them space to tell you about their individual experiences.

In other situations, one question may be better than two. For example, it might be your first instinct to ask a quantitative *Yes/No* question such as "Did you talk about giving your oral history with your family?" followed by a qualitative question such as "Please elaborate on your response above. What did you share with your family about your experience giving your oral history?" In cases like these, you should always consider if you absolutely need two questions to get at the same idea. In the example above, you could ask one qualitative question like "Please tell us about any instances in which you've discussed your experience giving an oral history with others. What kinds of conversations did you have?" A question like this will both ask less of the survey taker because it's one fewer question and also prompt them to consider a deeper qualitative response because it asks them to think about a range of conversations they might have had rather than only those with family.

Quantitative questions

Some quantitative questions are list-based, in which you provide respondents with a list of items and they select one or all that apply to their experience. For example, if you held a series of events, you might provide the list of possible events and each respondent would select the ones they attended. Other quantitative questions are framed as statements and give respondents a Likert (pronounced LIH-kurt) scale of responses from which to choose.

A Likert scale is generally a five- or seven-point scale that assumes things like agreement, frequency, quality, or importance can be measured in a linear fashion. For example:

Agreement:
Strongly disagree │ Disagree │ Neutral/don't know │ Agree │ Strongly Agree

Frequency:
Never │ Rarely │ Sometimes │ Often │ Always

Importance:
Not at all important │ Not too important │ Important │ Extremely important

Likelihood:
Much less likely │ Less likely │ No change │ More likely │ Much more likely

While many Likert scales have an option in the center that is neutral ("No change," "I don't know," "No opinion," etc.), it is not always necessary for scales that measure opinions, such as agreement or importance. Sometimes, survey takers who don't feel strongly about a topic will reflexively select the neutral option. By not offering a neutral option on the Likert scale—for example, strongly disagree / disagree / agree / strongly agree—you prompt your respondents to consider their true feelings about the topic and select an answer that falls on one side of the spectrum. In these cases, the respondent reflects more deeply on their experience and all of the responses you receive will be associated with one end of the linear scale, with no in between.

In other situations, a neutral option is important. For example, when asking questions about changes in behavior, such as how likely a person is to engage in a certain activity after participating in a program or course, an outcome such as "No change" is certainly valid and should be included.

Qualitative questions

Qualitative questions are open-ended and designed to provide details about the subject and capture the nuances of respondents' experiences that may not necessarily fit into pre-defined scales. Qualitative questions use prompts such as "In your own words, tell us what you got out of this program?" or "What idea/theme/text stood out to you most?"

Qualitative questions can produce results that are particularly useful in communicating impact to stakeholders, such as powerful individual quotations that provide depth to and explanation of quantitative results. Further, they can help you interpret your results, providing necessary context for understanding participants' experiences in and impressions of your program. Make sure you are giving your program participants the chance to tell you what the impact was on them in their own words.

Choosing how to structure a question

It can be tricky to decide if you should ask a question quantitatively or qualitatively. Let's consider a question about skills gained in a public humanities course. Here's how you could ask questions about this topic in different ways:

Quantitative:
What skills did you gain by taking this course? Select all that apply.

❙ Writing

❙ Research

❙ Text analysis

❙ Image analysis

❙ Storytelling

❙ Other (please specify) _____

Qualitative:
What skills did you gain by taking this course? What part(s) of the course facilitated your growth in these areas?

With a quantitative question, you can control how the respondents answer your question because you have given them a specific set of skills that you expect them to have gained throughout the course. This is useful because you know that you will gather data on each skill that you selected to include and you can expect to have something to share about those skills when you report on your data. On the other hand, the qualitative question allows respondents to offer their perception of the skills they gained, which may or may not be the same as the skills you hoped they would gain. They can also provide more insights into how they learned these skills with their written response as well as their value or application beyond your course. You might learn that they experienced things in your class that you never expected.

❙❙ WRITING SURVEY QUESTIONS

One of the easiest ways to begin writing a survey is to start with your project goals, which you have likely already articulated in some way (perhaps in a grant application, course syllabus, or progress report). Why are you doing this work? Who is it for? Who is going to be involved and what do you hope they learn or take away from your project? List the things you hope your project will accomplish and then think about how you could actually measure those outcomes. For example, if your project offers courses that introduce undergraduates to methods of the public humanities through public-facing assignments, you might want to know how the experience of taking a course like this has impacted students' perceptions of their communities. You could ask a number of quantitative and qualitative questions that speak to this topic. For example:

Quantitative
This class helped me see how knowledge and skills gained through the humanities help me to better serve my community.

Strongly disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree

This class helped me think about my role in my community in new ways.

Strongly disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree

Qualitative

Courses that are offered as part of the Public Humanities Lab initiative include experiential learning opportunities and public-facing work. What do you think you gained by doing this kind of work?

Writing for clarity

You want your survey questions to be as clear and direct as possible, avoiding jargon, abbreviations, and slang that might not be familiar to your respondents. For quantitative questions, avoid using conjunctions such as "and" that muddy the responses. For example, if you ask them how much they agree with the statement "This course helped me see how I can apply public humanities methodologies to my career and future education," respondents might have different opinions about applicability to their careers and education. Therefore, these should be split into two questions.

Avoid writing qualitative questions that are framed as yes/no. For example, "Would you recommend this course to other students?" Many respondents will write "yes" or "no" and move on. Alternatively, you could ask: "Please tell us why you would or would not recommend this course to other students." On the other hand, sometimes yes/no questions are necessary. You don't want to assume that respondents have had a certain experience or response to your project, so sometimes you need to ask if they had an experience and then invite them to reflect on how or why they experienced it. This is useful for questions about deeper, more personal topics. For example: "Has participating in this course changed how you see your individual relationship to social justice or organizing? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?"

Disaggregating survey respondents

Consider the kinds of statements you ultimately want to make when you report on your data. If you want to be able to make a statement about how participants with different backgrounds experienced your project, be sure to ask questions that will provide you with that information. Once you've received the survey responses, you can filter the results by the data point of your choice to identify patterns across their responses. Some of the most common filters we have used are:

- Demographics (age, gender identity, race/ethnicity)

- Specific experiences (first-generation student, first time visitor to a museum, has given an oral history before, humanities major)

- Knowledge (never heard of [X program] before, unfamiliar with [X historical event])

- Behavior (took a class to fulfill a general education requirement, attended [event] for a specific reason)

Keep in mind that when you present the data about how different sets of respondents experienced the program/course, you want to avoid broad generalizations and stick to observations based on the data itself. For example, you might write that "a pattern emerged among responses from first-generation students that did not appear in responses from continuing-generation students." All analysis of data should make clear that you are making a statement about responses from a specific group, not a statement about the group itself.

Ensuring anonymity

When writing survey questions you should think about the anonymity of your respondents. If you've already told your respondents that their participation is anonymous, it's important to reassure them that any potentially identifying questions (such as demographics) are voluntary. It's helpful to provide context to these questions with a few sentences about why you are asking these questions and what you will do with the data. For example, you could include a paragraph like the following, tailored for your own use:

> This section of the survey focuses on demographic questions. Please note that these are voluntary and anonymous, unless you choose to provide identifying information in your response. Please feel free to skip any or all questions. The data gathered from these questions will help us understand both the larger impact of [project], as well as the more nuanced impacts it may have had on individuals.

True anonymity can be quite difficult to achieve, especially if you personally know the survey respondents. In many cases, respondents will answer questions with information that inadvertently reveals their identity. It is your responsibility to ask questions in ways that do not ask for identifiable information. For example, let's say your project involved pairing youth with a mentor from their community. You should not ask a question such as: "How did your mentor's role in their community shape your conversations?" To answer the question, respondents are prompted to reveal the identity of their mentor, and thus their own identity. Alternatively, you could ask: "How did your mentor help you think about your role in your community?" This gets at a similar idea, but encourages responses that address broad topics and outcomes. If they choose, respondents can still fully answer the question without revealing specific information.

Finally, you may want to offer an incentive, like a gift card or extra credit, to those who complete your survey (see page 28 for more on offering incentives). To deliver the incentive to the individual recipient, you will need an email address, phone number, or other piece of identifying information. Your goal should be to keep this identifying information as separate as possible from their survey responses. Here are a couple suggestions:

▌ If you are using Qualtrics, you can set up your survey so that when respondents hit the final submit button, they are automatically redirected to another link. This could be something simple, like a one-question Google form, where they submit their contact information to receive the incentive. Their response to that question will be entirely separate from the survey they just completed.

▌ You can ask for their information at the very end of the survey. When you are done collecting survey responses, create a master spreadsheet that contains all their data and then protect the document via password so that only you have access to it. Any spreadsheets shared with others or used for analysis should have the identifying information removed.

For more information on keeping your respondents anonymous when reporting or writing on the data you collect, see page 35.

Reaching audiences

While some project participants are captive audiences and likely to respond to a survey (such as students in a course), it can be tricky to convince others to fill out a survey about their experience in your project. People receive requests to fill out a survey for everything from their experience at the grocery store to their medical appointments. One of the best ways to combat survey fatigue among your participants is to be extremely transparent about your survey, its purpose, and specific ways their feedback will contribute to next steps or change. If possible, let your participants know about the survey as soon as you can—for example, when introducing a public lecture, on a sign at the entrance to an exhibition, or at the beginning of a workshop or guided tour. This knowledge both ensures that participants aren't surprised when presented with the survey and encourages them to think about their experience as they are having it.

You'll need some way to get the survey to your participants. Some of the most common are:

❚ Email—if you have a list of email addresses for your attendees, such as from a registration form or other sign-up sheet, you can send them an email with the link to your survey.

❚ QR code—at in-person events where you may not gather contact information, such as museum exhibits or public lectures, you can hang up printed copies of a QR code that leads to your survey when scanned with a smartphone camera. Some survey platforms like Qualtrics have a built-in QR code generator for your survey; many free websites will generate a QR code for any link; and in most web browsers, right clicking on a page will bring up a menu with an option to create a QR code for that page.

❚ Social media—in cases where you don't have contact information for your participants, sharing the link on social media can be a good way to encourage responses.

❚ Other online spaces—depending on your project and participants, there might be additional opportunities to post a link to your survey on spaces such as Blackboard or Canvas for students, the Humanities Commons website, or newsletters or email blasts.

❚ Paper—in cases where access to the internet might not be available, you can print copies of your survey and ask participants to fill them out by hand. Depending on your project, you could collect them immediately or provide stamps and envelopes for participants to mail them back to you at a later date. You might need to use paper surveys to reach participants who live in rural areas, are incarcerated, or are too young to have smartphones or computers.

If you're not sure if you should survey your participants, or which participants to survey, try putting yourself in their shoes. Imagine you participated in your project as they did. How would you like to share your feedback? How would you like to be approached about sharing your experience?

APPLYING SURVEYS TO THE PUBLIC HUMANITIES

Surveys can be used to document the impact of a wide variety of public humanities projects. In this section, we share some common types of projects that can fit well with surveying and the audiences you might survey for each.

Project type	Audiences to survey
Higher ed-based courses with a public engagement component	Students Faculty (if there is a cohort of faculty designing and/or teaching these courses)
Podcasts and websites	Listeners and/or viewers
Museum exhibitions	Attendees
Documentary and other films	Viewers
Public lectures	Attendees
Community conversations	Attendees/participants
Community cultural heritage digitization events	Attendees
After-school programs for K-12 students	Students Students' families
K-12 curriculum development projects	Teachers/participants
Walking or bike tours	Participants

Focus Groups

A focus group is a facilitated conversation among a small group of participants to learn about their experiences in a project. Generally, a focus group lasts about one hour with four or five participants, excluding the facilitator, and can be a good way for participants to reflect on shared experiences, as it allows participants to have more organic conversations about how they each experienced the project or initiative. This can make focus groups one of the more unpredictable methods of impact research, as participants will often pick up on topics introduced by others. However, focus group facilitators also have the opportunity to ask follow-up questions and follow new lines of conversation based on the participants' answers, which is not possible for static methodologies like surveys.

‖ PROS AND CONS OF FOCUS GROUPS

As with all forms of impact research, focus groups come with both upsides and downsides.
Here are a few:

Pros:

Allows participants to build on each other's responses and talk to each other about their experiences

Can be a good middle ground between surveys and interviews, balancing time and depth

Hear from several participants at once in a more intimate setting

Can ask follow up questions and pursue interesting lines of conversation that you might not have anticipated

Can combine with a short demographic survey to add context to their responses, if needed

Cons:

Time consuming for both participants and the facilitators

Groupthink can happen among participants

Risk of having quieter participants who don't speak up when there are more active participants in the room

Can be difficult to preserve anonymity in results due to the conversational nature of focus groups

Requires a certain level of knowledge from the facilitator (e.g., project director might need to conduct the groups themselves)

Could require third-party assistance in administering; participants might be reluctant to share honest feedback when participating in a focus group moderated by the project director

WHY USE FOCUS GROUPS?

You might use focus groups when:

▍ There are groups of participants who might have experienced the project in similar ways.

▍ The total number of participants is small (four or five).

▍ You exclusively want qualitative data and the opportunity to ask follow-up questions about participant experiences.

▍ You can reasonably expect participants to take the time out of their schedule to take part in a focus group (usually one hour).

▍ You have the time and resources to conduct one or more focus groups.

WRITING FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOLS

Similar to survey writing, one of the easiest ways to begin writing a focus group protocol is to start with your project goals. Why are you doing this work? Who is it for? Who is going to be involved and what do you hope they learn or take away from your project? List the things you hope your project will accomplish and then think about how you could measure those outcomes. In a focus group, each participant is expected to respond to each question, which—depending on how many participants you have—can take up a lot of time. You'll likely have time in a one-hour focus group to ask four or five questions, including introductory and closing questions.

When writing your protocol, make sure you avoid fluff questions—maximize your time as much as possible. Even when you ask participants to introduce themselves, have them also include a piece of important information (such as their biggest takeaway from their experience, favorite part of the initiative, etc.) that you can use in your analysis later.

Plan to ask your participants about three different impacts of your project. Once you've selected those impacts, prioritize them in order of importance. There are always one or two focus group participants who take a long time to answer questions, so ask your questions in order of priority (most important first) to ensure you cover the most necessary topics. On the other hand, you should also have a backup list of questions readily available. You never want dead air and sometimes participants don't have much to say, so you always want to have extra questions or follow-ups ready to go. Focus groups are inherently unpredictable, so plan for as many scenarios as possible.

Here is a suggested format for a focus group protocol:

1. Introductions + one small impact that participants can share quickly
2. Question about impact #1—most important to you, guaranteed to be discussed

3. Question about impact #2—will most likely get discussed
4. Question about impact #3—might not get to it if the focus group runs long or if other topics are brought up organically
5. Closing question

See page 50 for sample questions you might ask during a focus group.

RECORDING AND TRANSCRIBING

Conducting focus groups virtually, such as via Zoom, is an easy way to bring together participants from different locations and record and transcribe the conversation. The transcription and recording will give you multiple options for analyzing focus group responses and seeing the patterns that arise—plus, the transcription will allow you to quickly copy verbatim quotes if needed. Even if the focus group is held in person, audio should be recorded because it is imperative that you can listen closely to the participants' responses once the focus group is over and consider the patterns that arise across their answers to the questions. Before you schedule your first focus group, you should consider what technology you will need to record the conversation (e.g., will a handheld recording device give you what you need, or should you use computer software?) and any costs that might be associated with the recording and transcription process.

TECHNOLOGY: RECORDING AND TRANSCRIPTION

There are many platforms available for recording and transcribing audio and video. Video calling platforms like Zoom and Webex have built-in recording and live caption functionality. In addition, there are many services that will provide transcriptions for video and audio recordings, such as Otter.ai, Rev.com, and even Microsoft 365. In some cases, you can quickly receive an automated transcript and edit it yourself. In others, you'll pay a higher price but a human will transcribe the audio, resulting in a more accurate transcription that will take less time for you to edit. No matter what, you should determine if your university holds institutional memberships, which may allow you to access these services for free or at discounted rates.

|| APPLYING FOCUS GROUPS TO THE PUBLIC HUMANITIES

Focus groups can be used to document the impact of a wide variety of public humanities projects. In this section, we share some common types of projects that can fit well with focus groups and the audiences you might tap for each.

Project type	Audiences to convene in focus groups
Oral history collections	Those who shared their oral history
Small higher ed-based courses with a publicly engaged component	Students Faculty (if there is a cohort of faculty designing and/or teaching these courses)
Internship programs	Interns Internship supervisors
Documentary films	Viewers Individuals interviewed in the film
Public discussion series	Participants
Publicly engaged research project with a large project team	Student researchers Non-student researchers
Community-based professional development program	Participants
Mapping projects	Research team members Community partners

Interviews

One-on-one interviews can be a good option when you want to have in-depth discussions about your project with those who participated extensively. Those might be people who participated in the activities of the project (whether they attended an event, gave an oral history, were a student in a class, etc.) or members of the project team itself (community partners, undergraduate or graduate research fellows, faculty teaching a course, etc.). While interviews should follow a structured protocol of pre-developed questions, the one-on-one nature of the discussion allows interviewees to speak about their personal experiences and you to ask personalized follow-up questions specific to those experiences. The number of interviews you should conduct will vary by project. For example, if interviews are your only research methodology, you should conduct at least three so that you can begin to identify patterns across responses. However, if you are also running a survey or a focus group, you could conduct fewer interviews and combine the data you collect across methodologies to identify patterns in responses.

PROS AND CONS OF INTERVIEWING

As with all forms of impact research, the interview methodology comes with both upsides and downsides. Here are a few:

Pros:

One-on-one setting can allow for more frank conversations

Interviewees are not influenced by the responses of others

Can ask follow-up questions and pursue interesting lines of conversation that you might not have anticipated

Signals to participants that you are personally interested and invested in their opinions and experiences

Cons:

Time consuming for both participants and facilitators

Anonymity can be very difficult to preserve when reporting results

Participants might be reluctant to share honest feedback in an interview with the project director

Only getting one perspective at a time

Can be difficult to aggregate information from multiple interviews into reports

Transcription and analysis can take time and money

WHY CHOOSE INTERVIEWS AS YOUR RESEARCH METHODOLOGY?

Similar to the reasons you might choose a focus group, you might conduct interviews when:

❚ The number of participants is very small.

❚ You have a strong relationship and sense of trust built with participants.

❚ You can reasonably expect participants to take the time to schedule and take part in an interview (one hour is standard).

❚ You have the time and resources to commit to conducting the interview(s) and recording, transcribing, and analyzing them.

❚ You are looking for fewer, more in-depth perspectives on your project.

WRITING INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

An interview is an opportunity to dig deeply into how individuals feel about your project and their personal experiences of your work. You should plan for each interview to take approximately one hour, which is generally an acceptable amount of time to ask of your interviewees. Also be sure to consider any additional time you are asking of them, such as travel time if you are conducting in-person interviews.

When writing your interview protocol, similarly to focus group protocols, you should avoid fluff questions, plan for interviewees to speak for longer than you anticipate, and have extra questions prepared in case you need them.

While you want to keep the main structure of your protocol as similar as possible for each interview, you can create personalized follow-up questions or slightly adjust questions to learn as much as possible about one individual's experience with your work. Some follow-ups will be spontaneous based on the interviewee's responses, but you can also prepare some ahead of time that are specific to each person you are interviewing based on their positionality within your project. For example, if your project partnered with multiple community organizations, you might want to interview one or more staff members at each organization to gather their feedback about the impact of the project on them, their work, and their organization as a whole. Your protocol for each interview would be very similar, but you can come to each interview with sets of follow-up questions that relate to the different organizations' work or role they played in your project.

RECORDING AND TRANSCRIBING

Conducting an interview virtually, such as via Zoom, can be an easy way to connect with a geographically diverse range of participants as well as a simple method of recording and transcribing the conversation. You will need a transcript of each interview to help you identify patterns across multiple interviews and utilize verbatim quotations. All interviews should be audio recorded whether they are held virtually or in person. Before you schedule your first interview, you should consider what technology you will need to record the conversation (e.g., will a handheld recording device give you what you need, or should you use computer software?) and any costs that might be associated with the recording and transcription process.

TECHNOLOGY: RECORDING AND TRANSCRIPTION

There are many platforms available for recording and transcribing audio and video. Video calling platforms like Zoom and Webex have built-in recording and live caption functionality. In addition, there are many services that will provide transcriptions for video and audio recordings, such as Otter.ai, Rev.com, and even Microsoft 365. In some cases, you can quickly receive an automated transcript and edit it yourself. In others, you'll pay a higher price but a human will transcribe the audio, resulting in a more accurate transcription that will take less time for you to edit. No matter what, you should determine if your university holds institutional memberships, which may allow you to access these services for free or at discounted rates.

APPLYING INTERVIEWS TO THE PUBLIC HUMANITIES

Interviews can be used to document the impact of a wide variety of public humanities projects. In this section, we share some common types of projects that can fit well with interviewing and the audiences you might tap for each.

Project type	Audiences to interview
Oral history collections	Those who shared their oral history
Internships	Internship supervisors
Publicly engaged research project	Student researchers Non-student researchers Community partners
K-12 curriculum development projects	Teachers/participants
Community-based professional development program	Participants Community partners
Higher ed-based courses with a public engagement component	Faculty
Mapping projects	Research team members Community partners

Other Methodologies

There are, of course, other approaches to documenting the impact of public humanities projects. Below, we offer a few additional ways to collect and analyze data about your project that can work in tandem with surveying, focus groups, and interviews to understand and showcase the impacts of your project to a variety of audiences.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Depending on your project, social media can be an excellent way for participants to share their experiences and encourage participation from others. Some social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram offer polling or other interactive data collection methods that you can run yourself. You can also facilitate online interaction with your project by creating individual accounts, hashtags, filters, locations, and geotags that participants can tag and share with others. You can analyze how participants engage with your project on social media and what they post (for example, by viewing public tweets that have tagged you or public Instagram posts shared at your event) to gather data on the impact of your work. When reporting on the data you've gathered, you could share how much social media engagement you received, the kinds of feedback people shared about your project, poll results, and more.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS

Photographs and videos can offer a visual record that can be analyzed to better understand how people engaged with your project. Photographs and videos of community conversations, for example, might give a sense of whether participants were engaging with people in different age groups or from different backgrounds. A video of participants' interaction with an exhibition might offer a sense of where people spent more or less time. You could take these photographs or videos yourself with a smartphone, dedicate a project team member to taking photos and videos throughout a specific event, hire a professional photographer and/or videographer, or connect with your college or institutional communications office to invite the institution's photographer to attend and document your event. In any case, it should be clear to attendees that their photo or a video is going to be taken and how it might be used. If necessary, gather signed waivers from participants—your institution likely has a standard form available online that you can use.

WRITTEN OR RECORDED TESTIMONIALS

Whereas surveys, focus groups, and interviews ask participants to share their experiences—positive or negative—across a range of topics, testimonials are specifically sourced as positive responses to your work. They are generally short blurbs that you can share in their entirety to showcase positive aspects of your project. You can solicit testimonials in a number of ways, including in person (e.g., pieces of paper at an event), via email (e.g., following up with a specific participant after an event), and online (e.g., sharing a call for testimonials on social media).

INSTITUTIONAL DATA

There is a vast amount of data collected by your institution that you may be able to leverage to document the impact of your project, particularly if your work is centered around students. You may be able to partner with your institution's office of institutional research, registrar's office, or your own college/department to gather relevant student data (such as course-taking, diversity of students in specific courses, etc.). If your project is grant funded, you may be able to connect with your college or institutional development office to gather data on the impact of your grant, which may be compelling to institutional audiences like the president, chancellor, or provost. You might even consider speaking with your IT or related department to help you learn how to access data through your institutional software, such as Banner, PeopleSoft, SalesForce, etc. Reach out to as many offices and departments as you can to see if they can help you—frequently, there are extremely knowledgeable individuals working on your campus who are willing to help and you just need to ask!

OTHER TYPES OF FEEDBACK

There are a number of additional ways that people might share feedback with you about your work. Perhaps someone sent an email thanking you for your efforts or making note of a difficult aspect of your project, or a local newspaper published an article about or photo of your event. A participant may have shared their thoughts about your project with you verbally. You should take notes and compile all of these forms of feedback as part of your data collection.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

As with any work that asks time and energy of its participants, there are many additional considerations about your impact research that should be addressed as early as possible. While each project will have its own concerns, we have laid out a few areas that can help you avoid common pitfalls later in your impact research journey.

Incentives and honoraria

An incentive is some kind of prize or reward that you offer to encourage people to participate in your impact research. An honorarium is a larger amount of money offered to recognize participants' contribution to your project. Generally, incentives are small (such as a free coffee or a $5 gift card) and offered to those who complete a survey. Incentives can be a good option when you have a large pool of participants in your project and you want to get as many of them as possible to complete your survey. For example, you might offer an incentive for a post-event survey when there were many attendees. You can offer a small incentive to each person who completes the survey or collect their information and enter them into a drawing for fewer (and perhaps larger) incentives.

Honoraria are larger amounts of money (often $100+) that recognize the time and effort of your participants and their contributions to your research. They are typically offered to those who participate more extensively in your research, such as through a focus group or interview.

You should think about incentives and honoraria as early in your project as possible, as they may need to be written into your budget or you may need to find additional funding for them (for example, sometimes institutions will offer grants specifically for compensating community partners or research participants). See the following sections for logistic and ethical questions about offering money to your participants.

Logistics

It's frustrating to reach the midpoint of your impact research project and realize that you missed preparing for an important part of the research process. Here, we present a few questions that can get you started thinking about the logistics of your project before you begin.

- Who will review your research instruments (surveys, protocols, etc.) for you? (Always have more than one set of eyes!)
  - It can be helpful to have two reviewers: one who is connected with the project and can identify specific areas of concern and one who is completely removed from the project and can offer objective feedback on the instrument itself (for example, someone from your institutional research department or a faculty colleague may be able to help).

- Will you need to submit your research instrument(s) to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at your institution?
  - While most research that documents the impact of a single project is considered program evaluation and is thus exempt from IRB approval, you may want to consider submitting your instruments to your IRB anyway—especially if your overall project is subject to IRB approval.

Every institution has its own IRB with sets of rules and requirements that are specific to the institution's context, so be sure to review your IRB website and, if needed, consult with a representative of your IRB to learn more about what will be required for your individual project.

▌ What platforms or technology will you need?

• For surveying, you'll need to choose a survey platform. See page 8 for tips on how to choose the right one for your project.

• For focus groups and interviews, how will you record them? Will you pay to have them transcribed or do it yourself? See pages 19 or 23 for more information about recording and transcription.

• For other methodologies like videos or social media campaigns, what do you need to set up before you get started? What will cost money that you need to build into your budget? For example, you might want to hire a photographer or videographer, purchase a subscription to a video editing service, or pay to promote a post on social media.

▌ Will you offer incentives or honoraria to those who participate in your research? These could be gift cards offered for filling out a survey or cash paid directly to community members for participating in a focus group or interview, among many other options.

• Are there any parts of your project that might prohibit or affect your ability to offer incentives or honoraria, legally or ethically? For example, your institution may discourage incentivizing students to provide feedback about courses before grades are submitted, or community organizations may have their own rules around accepting honoraria.

Ethics

There are often well-placed concerns about the extractive nature of higher ed-based research that involves communities. Beyond the public humanities projects themselves, impact research is another layer of research that asks more time and labor of the project participants. Here, we offer a few questions to help you consider ways to ensure your impact research is as non-extractive as possible.

▌ Do you need to protect the identities of your respondents? This might be the case for vulnerable populations (e.g. refugees or justice-involved participants) or students in a course who will want their feedback to stay anonymous vis-a-vis their professor.

• If so, you should reassure your participants of your plan for them to remain anonymous as quickly as possible. Generally, this would be a note at the beginning of a survey or part of your introduction to a focus group or interview.

▌ How will you honor the time of the people you ask to participate in your research, especially those at already-stretched community organizations?

• This might look like asking them to fill out a survey as part of their committed time to the project, offering honoraria for participating in an interview or focus group, or other ways— particularly monetary—to ensure that their time is recognized and valued.

❚ What is your plan for the data after you collect it, and how will you utilize what you learn to give back to your participants?

- At the beginning, participants should have a clear understanding of how their responses will be used (e.g., included in a grant report or shared with institutional stakeholders) and at the end, you should share what you learned with your participants and how their input will affect the project or community. For example, after analyzing your data, you might write an op-ed in a local newspaper sharing what you learned and next steps for your project or write it up in a newsletter or email that goes out to your participants and their communities. In any case, your research should be as non-extractive as possible.

Accessibility

Every public humanities project will interact with a diverse range of participants, and you should think about how they will approach your materials. This includes ensuring that the written materials (e.g., surveys or invitations for focus groups or interviews), spoken language (such as when conducting focus groups or interviews), physical spaces (when conducting in-person research), and all other aspects of your research are accessible to those who will interact with them. Here, we offer a few questions and considerations to help you get started thinking about how to make your research as accessible as possible.

❚ Do you need to translate your written materials into multiple languages? For focus groups or interviews, do you need to hire a multilingual moderator? Do you need sign language interpreters?

❚ Is the internet readily accessible to all your participants? If not, you may need to consider offering a paper survey and/or traveling to meet participants in person to conduct focus groups and interviews.

❚ Have you screened your materials for jargon and other terms your participants might not recognize? Many community members and organizations are not familiar with the language of higher ed institutions, so be sure to spell out acronyms, explain processes, describe your grant and its purpose, and so on.

❚ Additional accessibility considerations:
- Compatibility with screen readers and other assistive devices
- Colorblind-friendly designs
- Mobile-friendly surveys
- Physical accessibility when conducting in-person research (particularly when your project involves historic buildings)
- Font and font size in written materials

INTERPRETING AND USING YOUR DATA

Now that you have administered a survey, run a focus group, or conducted interviews, you need to make sense of the data you've gathered.

The first step is to organize your data. If you've collected survey responses, put them all in one place where you can easily see them, such as a spreadsheet. Organize your focus group or interview transcripts into easily identifiable sections so you can see where a question was asked and each person's response. These early organizational efforts will help you identify patterns and avoid mistakes when reporting numerical data.

Writing a Data Summary

Writing a summary of your data can be an extremely useful exercise. The summary can start with the basics: write a couple paragraphs about how and when you administered the research instrument, how many people responded, and one or two observations about the respondents (Were the majority humanities majors? Were all the focus group participants from one community organization?). Next, try to write at least one paragraph about the responses to each question, including quantitative survey questions. Look for patterns within the responses to each question. As you progress through the research instrument, writing about each question, you'll notice larger patterns. For example, respondents may have shared positive quantitative feedback in one question while later in the survey their qualitative responses reveal that they found a specific part of the project difficult. Include quotations or data from responses to support your observations so that you don't need to sift through the larger corpus of responses each time you want to reference compelling data.

At the end, make a note of any connections you made across the responses and any larger patterns you identified. Include additional data points or quotes that you found particularly compelling. You should also note any concerns you have about the responses, how you asked questions, and any changes you should make in the future, either to the research instrument itself or to your project overall. This exercise, while somewhat time consuming, gives you a solid understanding of your data because you focus on each response while actively searching for patterns. It also gives you something to share with others, and it can serve as a blueprint for other writing you want to do about your results.

Reporting Quantitative Data

If you use surveying as your research methodology, you'll likely have some quantitative data to analyze. Quantitative data should be contextualized within the sample size, which can help you guard against over-privileging outlier responses when reporting your data. While you want to take negative feedback into consideration, you don't want to overemphasize it in the face of more substantial positive results. For example, if one participant was unhappy and gave a critical response, but was one of eleven respondents, their response can skew your data. Demonstrating how many people took the survey (n=11, for example), can help readers make better sense of percentages. Alternatively, it might be simpler to state "10 out of 11 respondents." Most people understand that complete uniformity in opinion is improbable and that a small percentage of negative responses is to be expected even in very strong programs. When reporting on small numbers of survey responses, it is especially important to provide your readers the context they need to understand your data.

When writing about responses to Likert scale questions, it's important to be transparent about how you have manipulated the data. For example, it's a common practice to combine responses on the ends of an agreement scale (e.g., combining "agree" and "strongly agree" responses into a single number). When

you write about these, it should be clear how you've arrived at the data point being shared. You might write: "95% of the surveyed respondents agreed or strongly agreed that…" or present your data with an attached footnote about how you combined responses. You should always be able to easily follow the thread from your raw data (individual responses) to the data you present to others.

Visualizing Data

You might also want to create data visualizations to share the quantitative data you collected. There are many options for presenting data, including bar or column graphs, pie charts, line graphs, and more. Here are a few tips on creating data visualizations:

❚ Make your visualizations as clear and easy to understand as possible. If creating a bar or column graph, the X and Y axes should be clearly labeled and each data point should be a percentage or other easily distinguishable number. Each bar or column should be clearly labeled and shaded with a distinct color that is easy to distinguish for colorblind or visually impaired readers.

❚ When presenting data based on percentages, always show the reader what 100% looks like. In a bar or column graph, this means having the percentage axis go to 100% no matter what your data looks like. For example, if you are presenting data from a Likert scale question and your four responses are "strongly disagree: 12%; disagree: 25%; agree: 20%; strongly agree: 43%;" you might be tempted to cut your axis off at 50% because none of the bars or columns will exceed that level. However, doing so misleads readers because it artificially tricks their eye into thinking that 43%, which fills almost the whole graph, is close to 100%. It is a much more accurate representation of your data to show the responses on an axis that goes to 100%. Similarly, pie charts should only include data that adds up to 100%, and all pieces of the pie should be clearly labeled with their percentages attached to the label.

Figure 4.1
I feel more connected to my community after participating in this project.
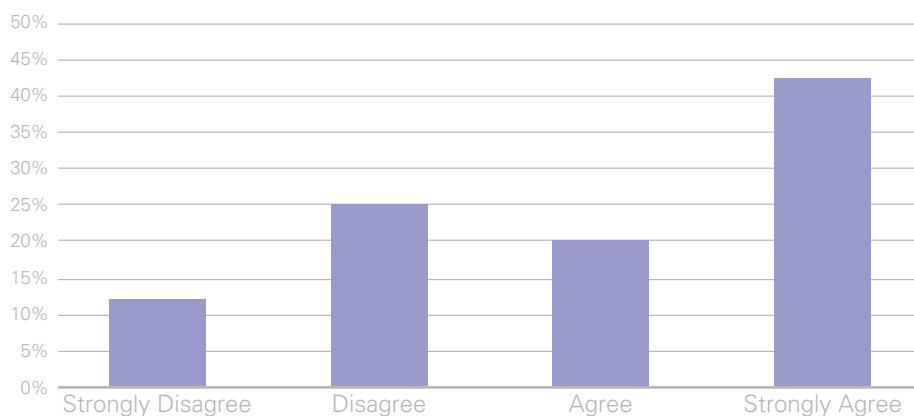

Figure 4.1 is an example of how *not* to visualize your data. In this chart, the vertical axis, which shows percentages, only goes to 50% but at first glance, you might assume that the "strongly agree" responses are close to 100%. There are also no precise data points for the individual columns, leaving you to guess where they fall between the grid lines.

Figure 4.2
Survey Responses
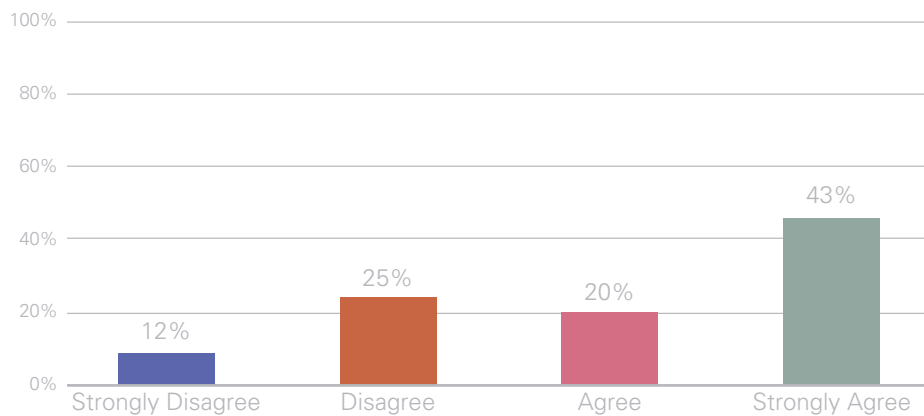"I feel more connected to my community after participating in this project."

Figure 4.2 is an example of a much better graph. The vertical axis goes to 100%, more accurately portraying the data points in relation to each other; each column has a clearly marked data label so you can see the exact percentage; and each column is a different color, which is both visually engaging and can help colorblind and visually impaired readers differentiate the columns. The title of this graph also indicates that the data comes from a survey. If you plan to use your visualizations on their own (for example, as part of an infographic or as an image to share on social media), you'll want to make sure that all relevant information is included, such as the total number of responses and a brief description of the survey, so that viewers without context can understand the graph.

Reporting Qualitative Data

If you write a data summary as suggested earlier in this section, you will be well on your way to reporting the results from your qualitative data. Identifying patterns across the responses is the most important first step in analyzing your data; connecting those patterns to each other and to the larger goals of your project should be the main focus when reporting on your qualitative data. When sharing your results, you should write synthetically about the pattern or outcome you observed, followed by a supporting quote taken directly from your responses. It is important to provide quotes for two reasons: 1) the voices of your participants are often the strongest and most compelling and 2) it shows your reader that your reporting is based on the responses you received and lends credibility to your observations.

If you use surveying as your research methodology, you'll likely have both quantitative and qualitative data to analyze. Review your quantitative results and see where the qualitative responses can help give more context to your quantitative findings. For example, you might ask participants whether they feel more connected to their community as a result of your project. If you received high, positive quantitative scores and then found many qualitative responses themed around learning more about local history or feeling proud of their community, you could report these findings as positive reinforcements of one another.

Finally, you might also consider ways you can quantify your qualitative data. When looking through your data, did you find that a large majority of respondents wrote or talked about a particular moment or experience? This can be quantified and reported as a numerical variable. For example, you can state: "When asked to qualitatively describe how content from the course translated to other areas of their lives, 55% of the surveyed students wrote about how they leveraged the course content to deepen their conversations with peers and family members." Statistics like these can be paired with quotes that support the statement, allowing you to capitalize on both numbers and written feedback to strengthen the case that you achieved a particular project goal.

Protecting Respondent Anonymity

As shared on pages 14 and 29, your respondents' anonymity should be one of your first considerations when documenting the impact of your project. Even so, by the time you've collected all the data, there may be any number of reasons why identifiable information ended up in your data set—for example, you might have collected email addresses to send incentives to survey respondents; interviewees might be identified by name in the transcript; or respondents might have shared information about events, projects, or experiences that inadvertently identifies them. In the cases of focus groups and interviews, it is extremely likely that identifying information is contained in the transcript.

One of the easiest ways to ensure you are protecting your respondents' privacy is to create a master folder that contains all your raw data, including survey responses and transcripts. This should be protected with a password and only one person (such as yourself) should have access to the files. To prepare the files for analysis or to share with other members of your team, go through and de-identify them. This means removing any potentially identifying information and replacing it with generic terminology contained within brackets to signify that the respondents' original words have been amended. Here are a few examples of how you might do this:

"I really enjoyed learning from Dr. Smith…"	"I really enjoyed learning from [professor]…"
"My project focused on how solar energy can help us solve the climate crisis and speaking with experts was really helpful"	"My project focused on [renewable energy] and speaking…" / "My project focused on [topic] and speaking…"
"Growing up in Los Angeles…"	"Growing up in [city]…"

Ultimately, your goal should be to retain as much of your respondent's voice as possible while ensuring readers will not be able to identify them. You might also want to provide some attribution for a quote that is relevant to the content of the quote itself, so make sure you use broad terms like "first-generation student" or "community member." Make sure enough respondents have similar descriptions to keep them anonymous; for example, if only three or four survey respondents identified themselves as first-generation students, you shouldn't include that identifier in your attribution. Similarly, sharing age, gender identity, or racial or ethnic background in attributions is inadvisable.

There may be a case where you want to purposefully share a participant's identity when reporting your data. For example, perhaps an interviewee told a particularly compelling story about their experience but it would be impossible to share without identifying them. In these instances, you should reach out to the individual and ask their permission. When doing so, you should share the exact quote you want to use, how you want to attribute it to them, and the context that will appear with the quote. For example, if you want to use their quote to underscore a paragraph you wrote about how your project helped participants connect with their communities, be sure to include the entire paragraph so they understand how their contribution is being used and the argument it is supporting.

Mobilizing Compelling Data

You might consider sharing your data—and your analysis of it—in several different ways: in interim or final reports for current funders and in proposals for new funding; in reports and presentations to campus administrators to build institutional support for your projects or broader investment in the public humanities in general; or in the broader community through social media or op-eds or letters to the editor in local newspapers. In these contexts, complement the data collected through your research instruments with high-quality photographs, any press coverage, and evidence of social media engagement.

The data you collect can also help your community partners showcase the impact of the work they carried out as part of your collaboration. Your partners can use strong quotations, numbers, and images from your research in their social media posts, annual reports, fundraising appeals, and newsletters.

SAMPLE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

To help you get started, we are sharing some of our most effective surveys and focus group and interview protocols that may be applicable to a wide range of public humanities projects. While all of these are meant to be administered after a project has begun, many of the questions can be modified to fit pre-project surveys. In addition, many of the questions can be adapted across methodologies (e.g., student survey questions might translate into student focus group questions) and audiences (e.g., a focus group question for community members might translate into a focus group question for faculty).

For more on community-based research, survey questions, and sample surveys, see our 2019 toolkit focused on documenting the impact of projects undertaken by community organizations.

In this section:

Sample Surveys

⏐ STUDENTS

This is a survey of undergraduate students who are taking courses with a public-facing component, which might include working with a community partner directly or creating public-facing work like websites or podcasts. This survey seeks to document self-reported changes in students' career/educational plans, relationships with others, understanding of the humanities and their applicability beyond the university, engagement with civic activities, and more. This is intended to be administered a single time near the end of the course.

1. Please select the semester you are taking your *[initiative name]* course.
   (list of options to choose from)

2. What course did you take this semester?
   (list of options to choose from)

3. Has this course changed your immediate or long-term career or educational plans? Please elaborate.
   (open-ended)

4. Please tell us why you would or would not recommend this course to other students.
   (open-ended)

5. Has participating in this course changed how you see your individual relationship to social justice or organizing? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?
   (open-ended)

6. Has the content of this course translated to areas of your life outside of the classroom (family, relationships, job, other courses, etc.)? If so, how? If not, why not?
   (open-ended)

7. The following questions focus on the humanities, which are the exploration of human experience and expression. People engage with the humanities through:

   ▌ A range of academic disciplines, including (but not limited to) history, philosophy, anthropology, ethnic studies, American studies, history of art, religious studies, literature, gender and sexuality studies, and languages

   ▌ Institutions such as libraries, museums, historical societies, archives, and other cultural institutions

   ▌ A variety of activities that engage with humanities content, including book clubs, watching documentaries, listening to podcasts, and learning about music, film, visual arts, foodways, and other cultural products and practices.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.
(Likert scale given for each activity: Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree)

This class helped me understand how humanities knowledge and skills can be applied outside the university.

This class helped me understand how the humanities can help me in my career.

This class helped me see how knowledge and skills gained through the humanities help me to better serve my community.

This class helped me make connections between my experiences and those of others different from myself.

This class helped me think about my role in my community in new ways.

This class made me want to take more classes in the humanities.

8. How would you describe the relationship between the humanities and social justice work?
    (open-ended)

9. We would like to know more about how participating in this class has influenced the kinds of civically engaged actions you might take in the future. For the list of activities below, please consider if participating in this class has directly affected how likely you are to engage in each.

    As a result of participating in this class, how likely are you to engage in the following activities:
    (Likert scale given for each activity: Much less likely than before | Less likely than before | No change | More likely than before | Much more likely than before)

    Vote in local elections (if/where you are eligible)

    Vote in national elections (if/where you are eligible)

    Donate to mutual aid efforts or charitable organizations

    Volunteer for a local organization

    Discuss local political, social, or community issues

    Discuss issues that affect communities beyond your own

    Engage in direct action protests

    Express your opinions on issues or policies via social media or the Internet

    Recruit others to participate in a community or civic activity

    Sign an online or paper petition

    Take a course that deals with social, political, or economic inequality

10. Please elaborate on your responses above. In what specific ways has this course changed your engagement with these activities? How has it impacted your approach to them? *(open-ended)*

11. Courses that are offered as part of the *[initiative name]* include experiential learning opportunities and public-facing work. What do you think you gained by doing this kind of work? How was this experience different from your other humanities courses? *(open-ended)*

12. Did you engage a community partner organization through your class?
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ No

    [Appears if "yes" is selected] Please describe your community partner and the relationship they had with your course.

    [Appears if "yes" is selected] What was your experience working with your community partner this semester?

    [Appears if "yes" is selected] Have you collaborated with a community organization through one of your courses before? If so, was your work this semester different from your previous experiences with community organizations?

    [Appears if "yes" is selected] What do you think you learned from engaging with a community partner this semester?

13. My experience taking this class has contributed to my ability to:
    (Likert scale given for each activity: Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree)

    Have a conversation about controversial issues with someone whose background or views are different from my own.

    Have my views challenged by others.

    Understand people from other cultures, races, or ethnicities.

    Work with others to make a difference on campus or in the community.

    Voice my opinions on campus, at work, or in my community.

14. Participating in this course gave me a better understanding of the specific issues affecting the various communities to which I belong.
    Strongly Disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree

15. What skills or perspectives did you gain (or strengthen) by taking this course? If any, please describe what part(s) of the course facilitated that growth.
    (open-ended)

16. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience in this course?
    (open-ended)

Demographics

This final section of the survey focuses on demographic questions. Please note that these are voluntary and anonymous, unless you choose to provide identifying information in your response. These questions help us understand both the larger impact of the course you took, as well as the more nuanced impacts it may have had on individuals.

17. What is your age?
   ☐ Under 17　　☐ 18–20　　☐ 21–24　　☐ 25–30
   ☐ 31–40　　☐ 41–50　　☐ 51–60　　☐ 61–70　　☐ 71+

18. Please check all that apply to your identified race/ethnicity.
   ☐ Asian
   ☐ Black or African American
   ☐ Hispanic or Latinx
   ☐ Native American or Alaska Native
   ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   ☐ White
   ☐ I prefer to self-describe: _____

19. Please select your gender identity.
   ☐ Male
   ☐ Female
   ☐ Non-binary
   ☐ I prefer to self-describe: _____
   ☐ Prefer not to say

20. Are you a first-generation college student? *(For the purpose of this survey, "first-generation" is defined as: none of your parents/guardians have a bachelor's degree. If you have a sibling who went to college but your parents/ guardians did not, you should answer "Yes.")*
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

21. Are you currently enrolled in a humanities or non-humanities major? If you have not yet declared a major, please select "Undeclared."
   ☐ Humanities major
   ☐ Non-humanities major
   ☐ Undeclared
   ☐ More than one major (please list all declared majors) _____

22. Are you currently enrolled in a humanities or non-humanities minor?
   ☐ Humanities minor
   ☐ Non-humanities minor
   ☐ No minor
   ☐ More than one minor (please list all declared minors) _____

23. Are there other aspects of your identity or background not mentioned here that you would like to share?

24. How did you find that particular aspects of your identity or background shaped your experience of this course?

|| FACULTY

This is a survey of faculty who are teaching (and may have developed) courses with a publicly engaged component as part of a broader initiative that involves multiple courses being taught each semester. Initiatives like these often create a cohort of faculty who are teaching courses in the same semester or year, which creates a good opportunity for surveying groups of faculty. While you can certainly survey faculty as an independent research method, this particular survey was given in tandem with the previous survey of students taking the same courses.

1. What department(s) or campus unit(s) are you affiliated with?
   (open-ended)

2. Please describe your *[initiative name]* course. What did you hope students would learn or gain from your course?
   (open-ended)

3. Why did you choose to teach a *[initiative name]* course?
   (open-ended)

4. What did you learn through your experience that you plan to bring to your other courses or research?
   (open-ended)

5. Did you participate in any training offered by the *[humanities center]* before your class started? What was most beneficial to you? What felt less applicable?
   (open-ended)

6. Thinking about your participation in the *[initiative name]*, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

   I feel confident articulating the value of this project to my department.
   Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | N/A

   I feel supported in teaching my *[initiative name]* course.
   Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | N/A

   Leading this project/teaching this class informed my own scholarly research.
   Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | N/A

7. Through the initiative, do you feel that you learned new ways to help your students...

   ...understand the connections between the humanities and their communities.
   Strongly Disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree │ N/A

   ...consider the relationship between the humanities and social justice.
   Strongly Disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree │ N/A

   ...consider the relationship between the humanities and civic engagement.
   Strongly Disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree │ N/A

8. How would you describe the value of civic learning opportunities for students?
   (open-ended)

9. Did the students in your class seem more engaged in the material than students might be in an ordinary class? Please elaborate.
   (open-ended)

10. How did your students respond to the public-facing and experiential learning parts of your class?
    (open-ended)

11. Has your participation in the *[initiative name]* changed your own perceptions of the role of the humanities in civic engagement and social justice work? How so?
    (open-ended)

12. Has working on this project changed how you engage with your community?
    (open-ended)

13. Did you engage a community partner organization through your class?
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ No

    [Appears if "yes" is selected] Please describe your community partner and the relationship they had with your course.

    [Appears if "yes" is selected] Have you collaborated with a community organization through one of your courses before?
    (yes/no)

    [Appears if "yes" is selected] What do you hope your community partner gained by working with your class this semester?

    [Appears if "yes" is selected] What do you think your students learned from engaging with a community partner?

14. Would you consider teaching another *[initiative name]* course in the future? What would you do differently next time?
    (open-ended)

15. What specific workshops or gatherings during the semester would be helpful as you teach your class?
    (open-ended)

16. Would events that encourage collaboration among the faculty teaching [initiative name] courses be welcome?
    (open-ended)

Demographics

This final section focuses on demographics. These questions are voluntary and you can skip them at any time. However, this information will help us understand more about the impact of the [initiative name] and how we can better serve you.

17. What is your age?
    ☐ Under 17   ☐ 18–20   ☐ 21–24   ☐ 25–30
    ☐ 31–40   ☐ 41–50   ☐ 51–60   ☐ 61–70   ☐ 71+

18. Please check all that apply to your identified race/ethnicity.
    ☐ Asian
    ☐ Black or African American
    ☐ Hispanic or Latinx
    ☐ Native American or Alaska Native
    ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
    ☐ White
    ☐ I prefer to self-describe: _____

19. Please select your gender identity.
    ☐ Male
    ☐ Female
    ☐ Non-binary
    ☐ I prefer to self-describe: _____
    ☐ Prefer not to say

20. Are there other aspects of your identity or background not mentioned here that you would like to share?

21. How did you find that particular aspects of your identity or background shaped your experience of this course?

COMMUNITY MEMBERS #1

This survey was originally included in *Documenting the Community Impact of Your Humanities Program: A Toolkit.* Additional community impact surveys are also available in that toolkit.

This survey was designed to assess the impact of participation in a public humanities storytelling and public conversation series that explores Black and Indigenous histories and experiences in relation to a geographic region. In addition to collecting information about what brought participants to the events, the survey also seeks to measure if the event enhanced appreciation for the local history, the value of exploring underrepresented histories, motivation to continue learning more, and appreciation for shared cultural heritage. This survey is designed for use after a program, without an accompanying pre-program survey.

1. What is your relationship to *[area]*? Select all that apply.

   ☐ I live in *[area]*
   ☐ I grew up in *[area]*
   ☐ I have familial ties to *[area]*
   ☐ I consider myself *[of the area, e.g., "Appalachian"]*
   ☐ I am not from but have visited *[area]*
   ☐ I have never visited *[area]*

2. Where do you live?
   City _____
   State _____
   Country _____

3. What motivated you to participate in this program? Which aspects of the program drew you here?
   (open-ended)

4. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements:

   After participating in this program, I feel more confident about taking part in thoughtful discussions about race.
   Strongly Disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree

   After participating in this program, I feel more confident about taking part in thoughtful discussions about *[area]*.
   Strongly Disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree

   I have a better sense of the stories that are missing from our popular depictions of *[area]* after participating in this program.
   Strongly Disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree

   This program helped me think more deeply about what it means to be *[of the area, e.g. "Appalachian"]*.
   Strongly Disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree

   This program helped me better understand the diversity of the *[area]* region.
   Strongly Disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree

This program helped me better understand *[area]*'s place in the American story.
Strongly Disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree

I was able to see connections between themes explored in this program and contemporary issues in our society.
Strongly Disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree

[If "agree" or "strongly agree" is selected above] What contemporary issues specifically were addressed by this program?
 (open-ended)

It is important that we collectively explore the stories of *[minority/ethnic group]*.
Strongly Disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree

Humanities programs like this one enrich our society.
Strongly Disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree

5. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements:

[If from the local area] I take pride in the fact that this program is being held in my community.
Strongly Disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree

[If from the local area] Participating in this event enhanced my sense of connection to my community.
Strongly Disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree

I have a greater appreciation for the role of *[mode of program, e.g. "storytelling" or "public conversations"]* in our society after participating in this program.
Strongly Disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree

I have a greater sense of the value of *[mode of program, e.g. "listening to stories"]* after participating in this program.
Strongly Disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree

[If "agree" or "strongly agree" are selected above] How so?
 (open-ended)

I appreciated the time to connect with others.
Strongly Disagree │ Disagree │ Agree │ Strongly Agree

6. Select all that apply. As a result of this program, I am motivated to:
☐ Learn more about my own cultural heritage
☐ Learn more about underrepresented histories in my community
☐ Listen to the stories of people whose backgrounds are different from my own
☐ Learn how to share my own stories
☐ Learn more about racial justice in *[area]*
☐ Be a part of dialogues around racial justice
☐ Visit the *[host institution]*
☐ Visit other cultural institutions

☐ Participate in other *[mode of program, e.g., "storytelling" or "public conversation"]* events
☐ Join a community group
☐ Share programs like this one with friends/family
☐ Organize a similar event
☐ Attend a protest/vigil
☐ Vote
☐ Other _____

7. In what ways did this program inform and/or help develop your understanding of *[the topics addressed by the program]*?
   (open-ended)

8. What aspects of the program were the most valuable for you? And why?
   (open-ended)

9. Do you have any suggestions for future programs at the *[host institution]*?
   (open-ended)

10. These programs are funded through *[funding source]*. Is that support important to you? Why or why not?
    (open-ended)

11. Is there anything you haven't shared here about your experience that you would like us to know?
    (open-ended)

12. Please check all that apply to your identified race/ethnicity.
    ☐ Asian
    ☐ Black or African American
    ☐ Hispanic or Latinx
    ☐ Native American or Alaska Native
    ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
    ☐ White
    ☐ I prefer to self-describe: _____

13. Please select your gender identity.
    ☐ Male
    ☐ Female
    ☐ Non-binary
    ☐ I prefer to self-describe: _____
    ☐ Prefer not to say

14. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
    ☐ Did not complete high school
    ☐ High school diploma
    ☐ Some college
    ☐ Associate's degree
    ☐ Bachelor's degree
    ☐ Graduate degree

|| COMMUNITY MEMBERS #2

This survey was originally included in *Documenting the Community Impact of Your Humanities Program: A Toolkit.* Additional community impact surveys are also available in that toolkit.

This survey was designed to assess the impact of participation in a public digitization day where members of a community were invited to bring family artifacts and other cultural heritage to be digitized for a local archive. In addition to collecting information about what brought participants to the event, the survey also seeks to measure if the event enhanced appreciation for local history, appreciation for historic preservation broadly, motivation to continue learning more and practicing preservation, and appreciation for shared cultural heritage. This survey is designed for use after a program, without an accompanying pre-program survey.

1. Have you or any of your relatives lived in *[local city/county]*?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

2. What motivated you to attend this event? Which aspects of the project drew you here?
   (open-ended)

3. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:
   (Likert scale given for each activity: Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree)

   I learned more about my community through participating in this project.

   Participating in this event enhanced my sense of connection to this place.

   This project enhanced my appreciation of my heritage.

   Participating in this event has motivated me to learn more about my heritage.

   Participating in this project enhanced my sense of connection to my community.

   I feel more connected to [host institution] as a result of this project.

   This project helped me make connections between my experiences and those of previous generations.

   I have a better idea of how to preserve my family heirlooms for future generations as a result of this event.

   I take pride in the fact that this program is being held in my community.

   I feel a greater sense of belonging as a result of having a project focused on preserving my cultural heritage in my community.

   Efforts to preserve cultural heritage (like this event) enrich our society.

4. Please describe the impact you believe the program has on our society:
   (open-ended)

5. How important do you think it is that future generations be able to access the heritage preserved through this project?

   Not at all important | Somewhat important | Very important | Extremely important

6. In your own words, please describe what you got out of participating in this project.
   (open-ended)

7. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with this project?
   (open-ended)

8. What is your age?
   ☐ Under 17   ☐ 18–20   ☐ 21–24   ☐ 25–30
   ☐ 31–40   ☐ 41–50   ☐ 51–60   ☐ 61–70   ☐ 71+

9. Please check all that apply to your identified race/ethnicity.
   ☐ Asian
   ☐ Black or African American
   ☐ Hispanic or Latinx
   ☐ Native American or Alaska Native
   ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   ☐ White
   ☐ I prefer to self-describe: _____

10. Please select your gender identity.
    ☐ Male
    ☐ Female
    ☐ Non-binary
    ☐ I prefer to self-describe: _____
    ☐ Prefer not to say

11. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
    ☐ Did not complete high school
    ☐ High school diploma
    ☐ Some college
    ☐ Associate's degree
    ☐ Bachelor's degree
    ☐ Graduate degree

Sample Focus Group Protocols

|| UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCHERS

This focus group protocol was developed for groups of 4–5 undergraduate students who had worked on public humanities projects that had been funded by a specific grant. They were student researchers working directly with the faculty member who was the principal investigator on the project. These focus groups sought to understand how undergraduate participation in a public humanities-focused research project shaped their understanding of and relationships with their communities, as well as document skills they gained and change in their understanding of the applicability of the humanities (particularly the public humanities).

1. Introductions: Names, universities, what project you're part of and what your role is, how you became part of the project

2. How did working on this project change your perspective on the topic or community it was exploring?

3. Identify one skill or capacity that you gained and what part of the project facilitated your learning of that skill.

4. How would you describe the value and utility of humanities work like your project to someone that is skeptical of or unfamiliar with the field?

5. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience as part of the project team?

|| ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

This focus group protocol is intended for groups of community members who shared their oral history for a public humanities project or at an event. This would be administered within 1–2 months of the participants sharing their stories, allowing time for the experience to have shaped other parts of their lives. This focus group seeks to document how sharing your personal history can impact participants' connections with their communities and relationships with others, as well as motivate them to engage further with their heritages and the histories of others.

1. Why did you decide to share your oral history? Why was it important to you?

2. Has sharing your oral history changed your connection with your community? If so, in what ways?

3. Has sharing your story made you want to learn more about your heritage or the stories of previous generations? Why?

4. Did you feel comfortable sharing your oral history with the project team? Why or why not?

   a. *[Follow-up if they express discomfort]* What would have helped make the experience more comfortable for you?

5. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience sharing your oral history?

Sample Interview Protocols

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

This interview protocol is intended for an interview with an individual who represents a community organization that partnered with a higher ed-based public humanities project. Ideally, this person would have been personally involved in the work of the partnership. The interview seeks to understand how the community organization views its partnership and relationship with the higher ed institution, as well as how or if the partnership benefited the organization and the communities it serves.

1. Introductions: please describe your organization, your role within it, and the communities it serves.

2. Why did you decide to participate in *[project name]*?

3. Has your organization ever partnered with a higher education institution on a project before?

   a. *[Follow-up if yes]* What was the partnership? What was beneficial about the partnership, and what didn't work so well for you?

   b. *[Follow-up if no]* Have you been approached by an institution to partner with them in the past? Why did you choose not to participate?

4. What were your expectations for this particular partnership? Do you feel that they were met?

5. What do you think your organization gained by participating in *[project]*? What parts of the project were most beneficial to you?

    a. *[Follow-up]* Did you feel that your organization was respected as a member of the project team?

6. *[If interviewee was personally involved in the partnership]* Has participating in this project changed your personal relationship with *[community served by project/partnership]*?

7. What do you think the value is of community organizations partnering with a higher-ed based public humanities project like *[project name]*?

    a. Follow-up question that is specific to the organization's goals, its work with the project, etc.

8. How do you see the goals of *[project]* contributing to ongoing social justice work *[or other relevant issues]* in the region?

9. What would you suggest for *[project]* moving forward? Please feel free to share any thoughts you have about the project. These might be small things we could fix to ensure better partnerships, longer-term community work we could look into, partnerships we should consider, and so on.

10. Is there anything else you would like to share about your partnership with *[project]* and its impact on you or your organization?

‖ TEACHERS

This interview protocol is intended for interviews being conducted with K–12 teachers who have partnered with a higher ed-based public humanities project. These projects might involve curriculum development, field trips with students, increasing access to materials, and more. This interview seeks to understand what teachers have learned and how they will apply it in the future; changes in their relationships with their community; and how they think the project has impacted (or will impact) their students.

1. Introductions: please share what subject(s) you teach, your school, and the communities your school serves.

2. Why did you decide to participate in *[project]*?

3. What did you learn through this project that you plan to apply (or have applied) to your pedagogy more broadly?

4. *[If relevant]* Please share your thoughts on the value of being part of this project's intellectual community and how that experience might have shaped your professional and/or personal life.

5. Has participating in this project changed how you engage with your community? How so?

6. *[If relevant]* What do you think your students have gained, or will gain, from this project?

    a. *[Follow-up]* Why do you feel *[things shared in previous response]* are important for students?

7. Is there anything you wished had been done differently during *[project]*? What suggestions do you have for the project in the future?

8. Is there anything else you would like to share about your participation in *[project]* and its impact on you or your students?

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