THE VALUE OF HISTORY

In a national survey conducted in the early nineties, Americans expressed doubts when asked about the value of “history,” but spoke passionately about the value of understanding the past as a connection to family and a way of understanding contemporary issues and events. Skepticism about topics formally labelled “history” in the survey generally appeared rooted in negative classroom experiences at the K-12 level.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

National History Day draws thousands of middle and high school students together each year, providing them with an opportunity to study and create history in a variety of forms. With competitions that begin at the local and state level, students conduct original research and present their work in skits, documentaries, posters, and papers. Experts in the subject provide feedback to students, and offer them encouragement to further develop their skills and interest in history.

“NHD students are better writers, who write with a purpose and real voice, and marshal solid evidence.”

An independent study conducted in 2011 found lasting benefits for students who participated in History Day. Relative to their peers, participants did better in their history classes, but also demonstrated greater proficiency in other academic activities as well as higher levels of civic engagement.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

HUMANITIES INDICATORS
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