

# A Note: Informed Consent, Release Forms, Thank-You Notes, and Other Tools of the Ethical, Artful Interview

from The Editors

Volume six of the *Journal of Folklore and Education* has been a special one for us to work on because interviews are at the heart of our work as folklorists and as educators. Through interviews we gain access to expertise that may not be in any written text, we prioritize the responsibility and value of creating relationships between people, and we offer a significant methodology for inquiry that also encourages taking multiple perspectives and empathy. The interview guides, learning frameworks, and case studies included in this volume all reference and use tools that show the work is being done ethically, with a keen eye toward ensuring that students, teachers, interview participants, and communities are protected throughout the process. We want to highlight some templates and sample language in one place so that our readers who are new to interviewing, as well as readers who want to revise their own process, might access this information easily. Please write us with additions or feedback on these linked pages that we intentionally update to reflect current best practices.

## **Informed Consent**

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Each person interviewed or included in documentation needs to be informed about the project, how their material will be used, and any risk that may arise from their participation before the interview. Generally, ethnography as a field research method employs oral rather than written consent.

## **Release Form**

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Asking permission to use a person's stories and images is not just good manners, it is ethically essential. ([www.locallearningnetwork.org/sample-release-form](http://www.locallearningnetwork.org/sample-release-form))

## **Thank-You Note**

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Interviews are gifts and should be acknowledged. Teachers are particularly encouraged to think about how the thank-you note offers an excellent opportunity for authentic assessment to occur. (Find a sample thank-you note from a student at [www.locallearningnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/Guests-in-Classroom.pdf](http://www.locallearningnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/Guests-in-Classroom.pdf).)

*If you teach in higher education, a Native American community, or museum (among other institutions), you may need to learn more about*

## **Institutional Review Boards (IRB)**

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An institution's IRB reviews research that includes human subjects to ensure that all activities proposed meet federal regulations and policies. Research conducted as part of a classroom assignment may not need IRB approval. Likewise, Oral History is excluded from IRB oversight, and most ethnography is seen as "exempt" or appropriate for "expedited" review. We encourage you to reach out to your IRB for more information.