

# MEDIA LABS AND EMBODIED HUMANITIES

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## PURPOSE

This resource offers suggestions on how to incorporate an Embodied Humanities approach to help ground students in the material. (Trm (aniiiASS)@le dmankeigh(at)sa(h- (c) 5 tury liy t) @porus ratnd stua(Trs r)34. 1admaoo r

Incorporating embodied humanities activities into the classroom improves student well-being by:

### 1. Providing engaging learning opportunities

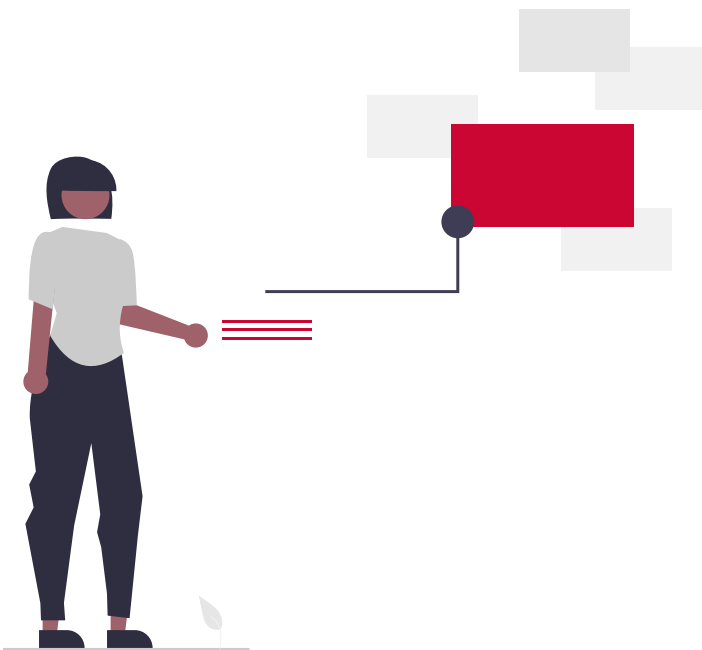
Embodied Humanities activities are engaging in any context; including hands-on activities into a remote learning platform in particular provides a welcome relief to learning by screen; singing in particular activates the parasympathetic nervous system which helps reduce stress, while writing with quill pens offers students opportunities to focus on the physicality of writing. Adapting and making recipes also engages students in creating food that can be consumed.

### 2. Building group cohesion

In an in-person situation, students work together on tasks. In a remote learning environment, labs can be done synchronously and everyone can share their results in real time. In addition, students can post their results and comment on each other's work.

### 3. Contributing to student engagement in the material

When students cook eighteenth-century recipes from manuscript cookbooks, for example, they start to connect more with the material and to imagine the past in concrete ways. They reflect upon the individuals who created the works, and they also have the opportunity to reflect on their own use of media in the present.



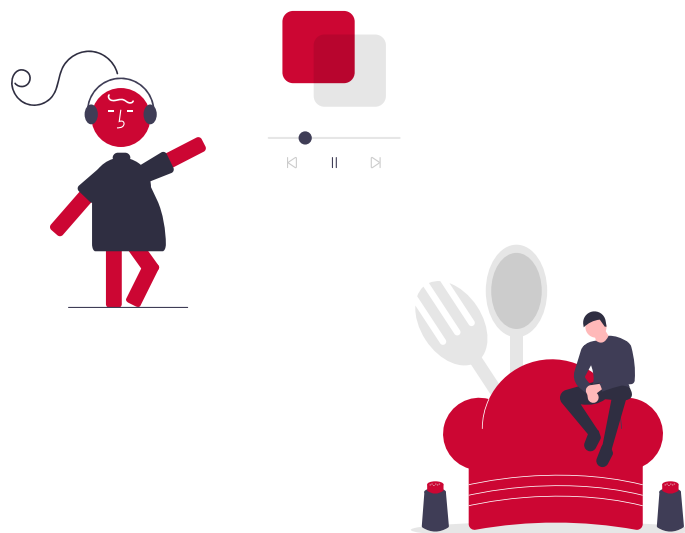
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## OVERVIEW

Embodied Humanities methodologies engage students by involving them in physical practices connected to the topic of study. Media labs were implemented into the course. The course was divided into three modules to represent oral, scribal/handwritten and print media of the eighteenth century. Each module included one or more media labs with activities including:

- Listening to ballad singers; singing; and creating their own ballads
- Making paper; making quill pens; writing and addressing letters using quill pens; deciphering handwritten letters
- Cooking from manuscript recipe books
- (For the in-person iteration) Observing and participating in the creation of a printed page made on the press in the Maker Space in the library



Students were required to reflect on what they learned about the written texts being studied, about the literature and culture of the eighteenth century, and about their relationship to media in the present day through both low-stakes and high-stakes assignments. An important component of the course was the creation of a portfolio of low-stakes assignments where students could present this portfolio in any way they chose: as letters, as a digital resource; as an oral ballad; or as a traditional essay document.

## CONTEXT

These activities were first used in an in-person 3rd-year course then adapted to online synchronous 4th-year and graduate classes, where the instructor examined how to teach eighteenth-century literature from a media studies perspective. These can be adapted to other teaching platforms and courses.