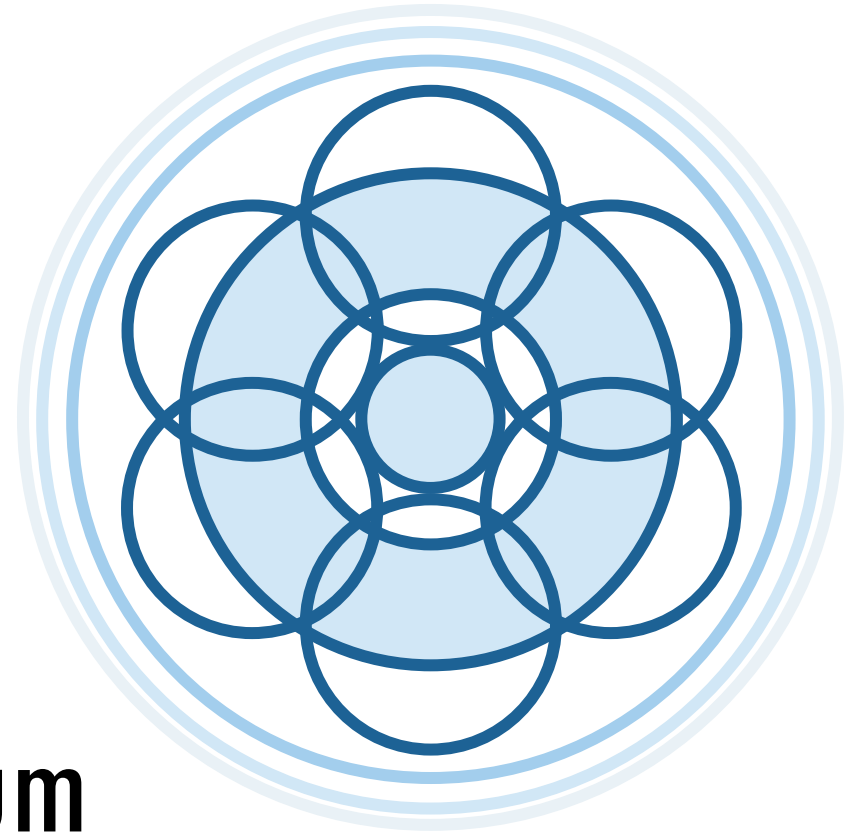


CATALYSIS SANDBOX EXAMPLES

Level II

Larger-scale PNI



PNI Practicum

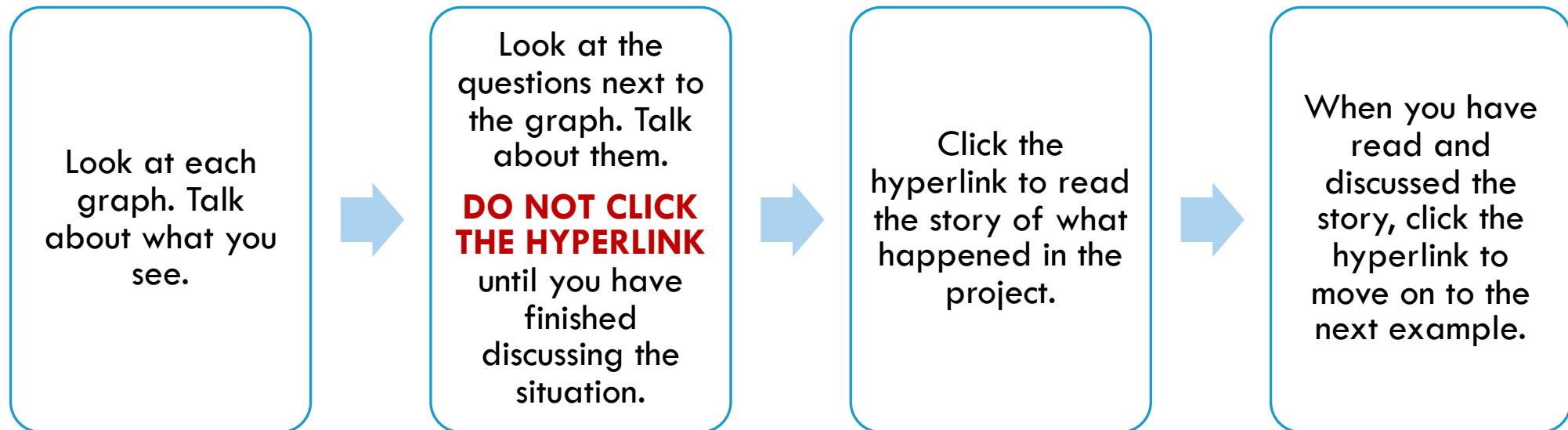
A project-based course in participatory narrative inquiry

cfkurtz.com/pnipracticum

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HOW TO USE THIS PRESENTATION

On these slides are some real examples of data integrity issues that came up in real PNI projects. To use these examples:



1. IS THIS A PATTERN OR A PROBLEM?

In this project, more than half of the stories took place in the previous six months.

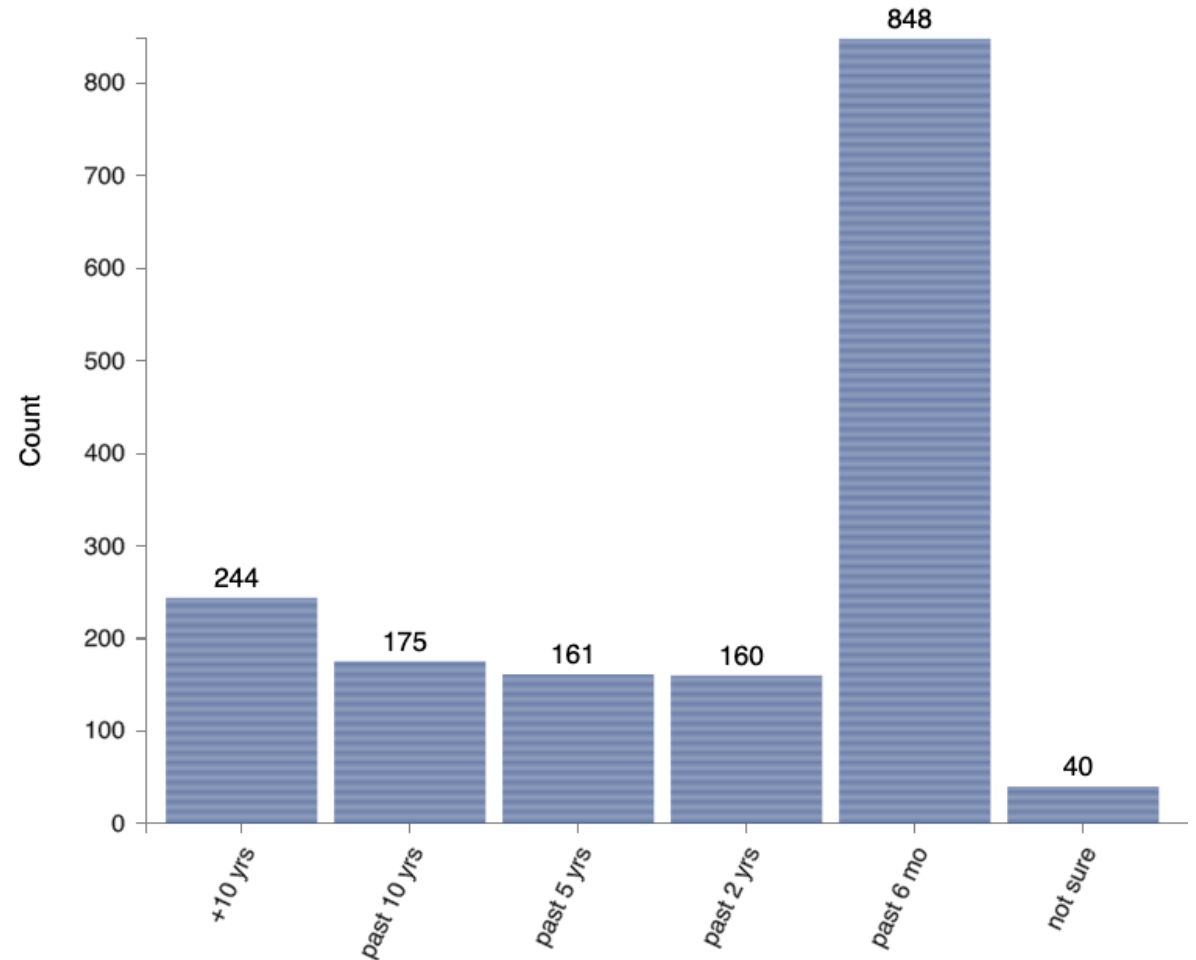
Where are some questions you could ask about this situation? What could you do to find out what you are looking at here?

When you are ready, click this link.

[See what happened](#)

(If these hyperlinks do not work, page forward to the end of the presentation, where you can find all of the result pages.)

WHEN HAPPENED



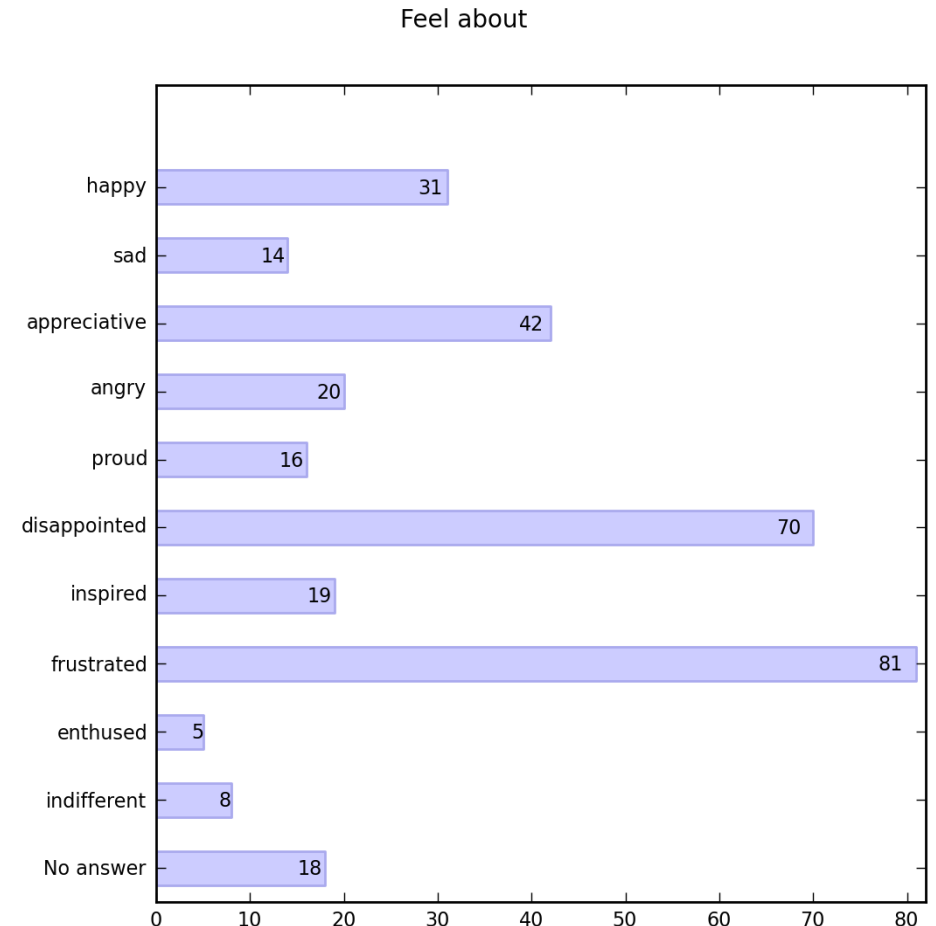
2. ARE THESE ANSWERS SPREAD TOO THINLY?

In this project, the “How do you feel” question resulted in some very low answer counts (some statistical tests won’t run on subsets below 20 stories, and in any case, counts below 30 stories produce weak results).

How can you preserve the intent of the participants without excluding any of their answers? Is it even possible?

When you are ready, click this link.

[See what happened](#)



3. IS OUR COLLECTION UNBALANCED?

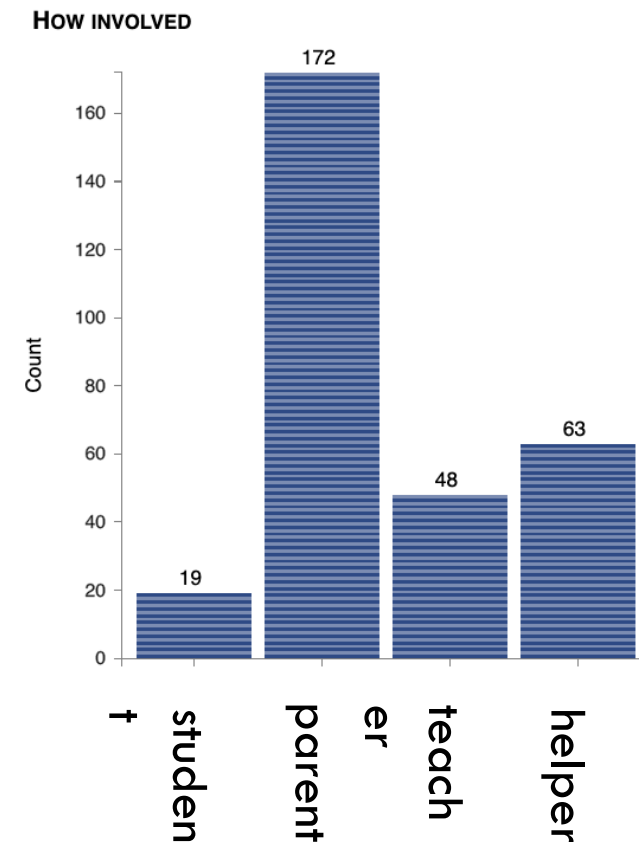
In this project, the student answer count (19) was too low to generate any patterns; sixty percent of the remainder of the stories were told by parents; and the stories from teachers and helpers could probably not be lumped together usefully. The data set is imbalanced with respect to who told the stories.

Is this story collection adequate? Should more stories be collected? Or can the catalysis and sensemaking phases of the project go ahead with the current collection of stories?

When you are ready, click this link.

[See what happened](#)

How were you involved in the story?



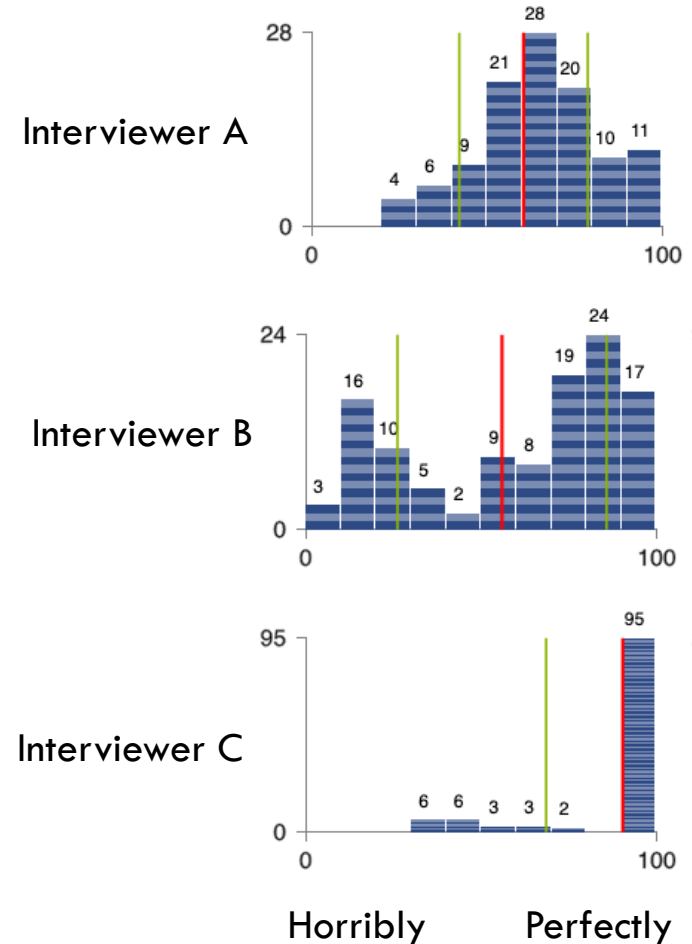
4. DID OUR INTERVIEWERS BIAS OUR STORIES?

In this project, participants told a much greater proportion of happy-ending stories to one particular interviewer. What sorts of explorations do you think would help to resolve this issue?

When you are ready, click this link.

[See what happened](#)

How well did the story end?



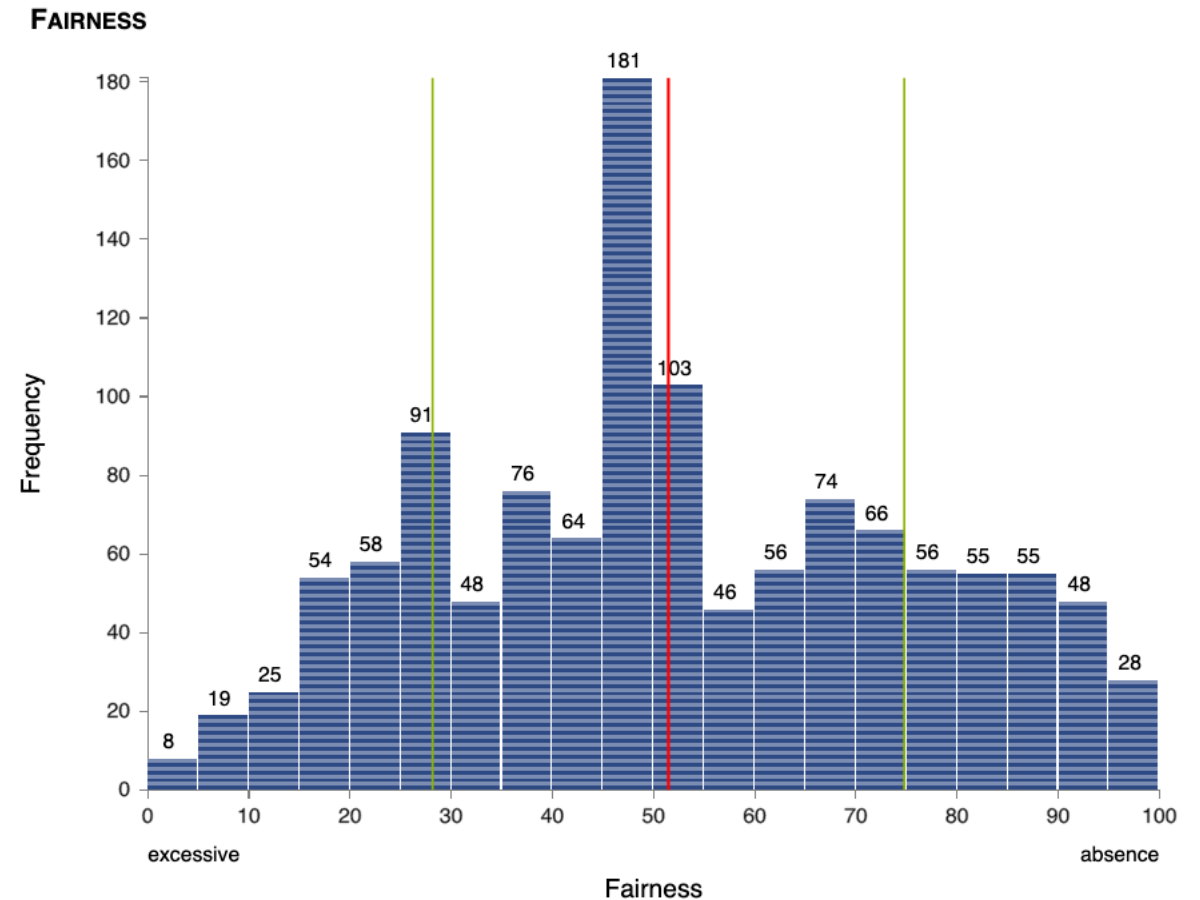
5. DID PARTICIPANTS AVOID THIS QUESTION?

In this project, there was a strong peak of answers at the exact midpoint of the scale for the question “Was the situation in this story unfair?”

What would you do to resolve the issue? What avenues would you want to pursue?

When you are ready, click this link.

[See what happened](#)



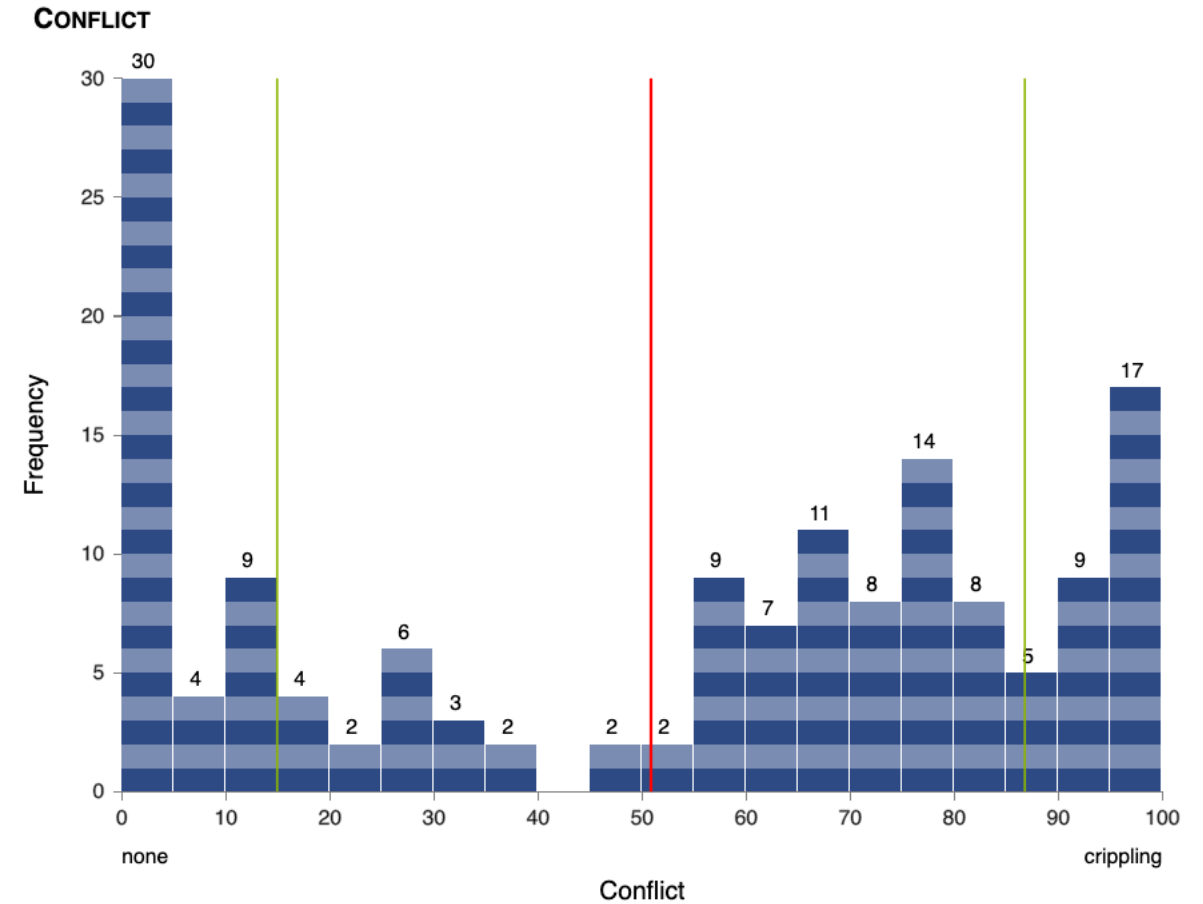
6. WHERE DID THESE TWIN PEAKS COME FROM?

In this project, the amount of conflict in stories formed a bimodal (two-peaked) distribution.

What do you think makes the most sense to do in this case?

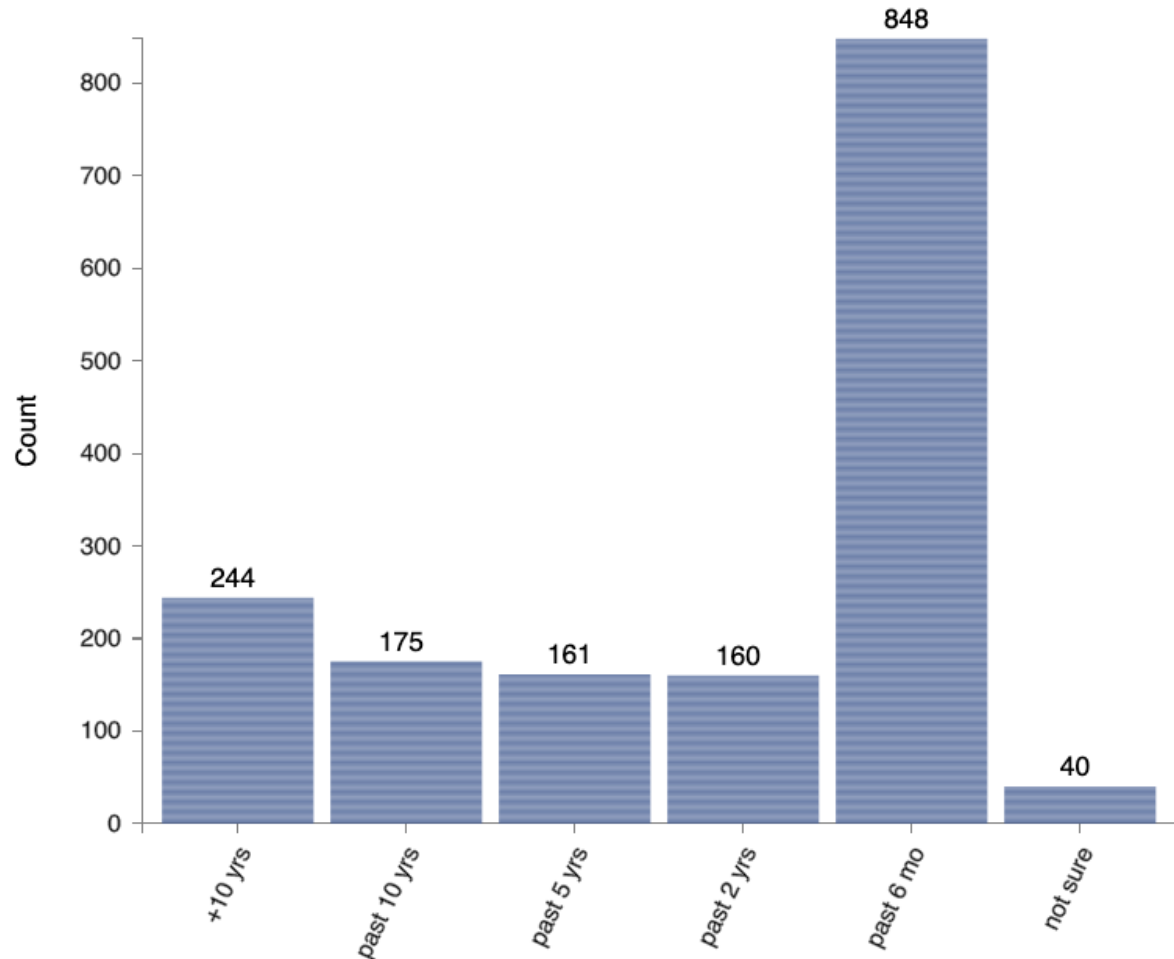
When you are ready, click this link.

[See what happened](#)



1. IS THIS A PATTERN OR A PROBLEM? - RESULT

WHEN HAPPENED

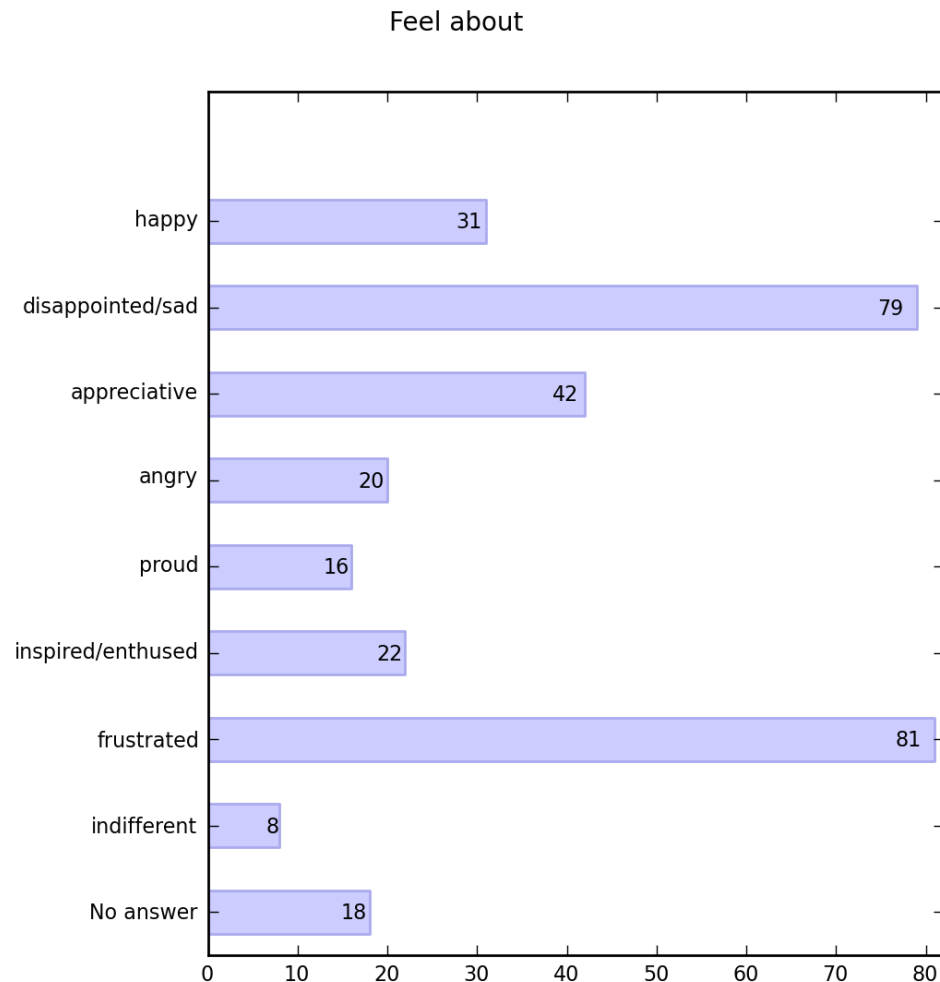


In this project:

- Two of the four eliciting questions asked people to look back over the previous week. So the large number of recent stories was largely the result of **the way our questions were framed**.
- Looking for changes over time was **not one of the goals of the project**, so we did not feel a need to balance the large number of recent stories with more stories about less-recent events.
- We found surprisingly **few and slight differences** between stories about events in the different time periods. If we had found large differences, we might have felt it necessary to consider the more and less recent stories both together and separately. But as it was, there was little need to examine the pattern further.

[Go to example 2](#)

2. ARE THESE ANSWERS SPREAD TOO THINLY? - RESULT



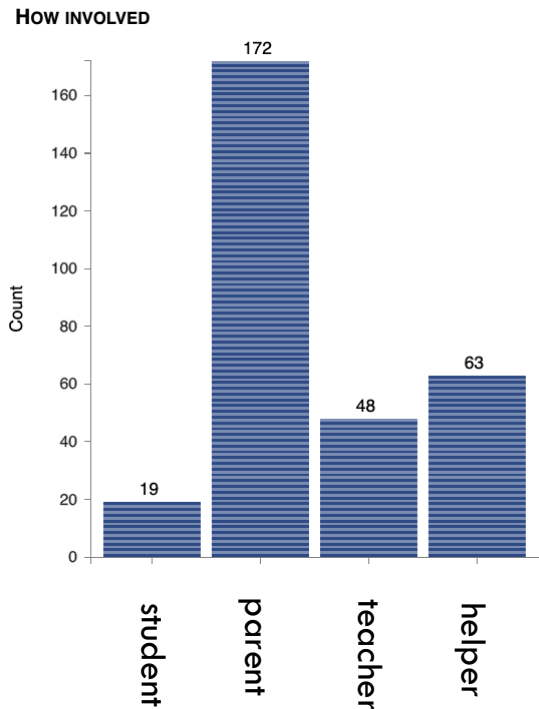
In this project:

- We lumped 14 sad and 70 disappointed answers together to produce 79 disappointed/sad answers. (The combined number is not 84 because 5 people chose both sad and disappointed.)
- We lumped 5 enthused answers with 19 inspired answers to produce 22 inspired/enthused answers. This is still a very small subset, so we told our participants to consider all patterns based on it as only weakly suggestive.
- We had to put aside the patterns based on the 16 proud and 8 indifferent answers. Those counts were too small to use and too distinct to lump.
- So the answer to the question “How can you preserve the intent of the participants without excluding any of their answers?” is **“Sometimes you can’t.”**

[Go to example 3](#)

3. IS OUR COLLECTION UNBALANCED? - RESULT

How were you involved in the story?



In this project:

- We would have liked to balance the parent-told stories by gathering more student-told stories. However, given the constraints of the project, this was not possible.
- As a test, **we sliced the data** (generated graphs and ran tests on subsets as though they were separate data sets) to see if we could see any large differences when only the parent-told or student-told stories were considered. We found no large differences (that might, say, introduce a confounding factor into the overall patterns). So we decided to include all of the stories in our pattern exploration. We also decided to keep the teacher and helper stories in separate categories, even though they were comparatively small in number.
- In our sensemaking sessions, we explained to our participants that the project should be understood as **highlighting the experiences of parents** more than any other group. We told them that anything the story collection might have to say to them about the experiences of other groups should be taken as less representative – for teachers and helpers, somewhat less so; for students, not at all.

[Go to example 4](#)

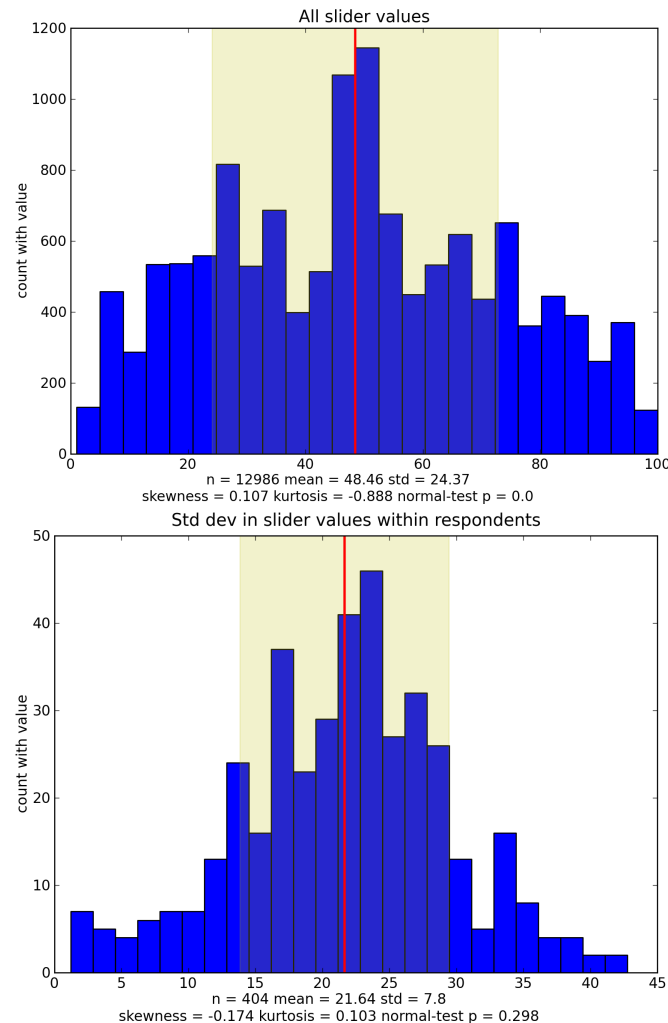
4. DID OUR INTERVIEWERS BIAS OUR STORIES? - RESULT

In this project:

- We would have liked to ask Interviewer C to gather more stories, but that option was not possible.
- We looked through more patterns that connected to the people who collected the stories. Several **other differences emerged**.
- We knew that the locations visited by Interviewer C were located near each other. We considered it possible that the difference was not in the interviewers but in the localities. That is, it could be that the people who told the happier-ending stories shared a **distinct cultural perspective**.
- We decided to separate the data by interviewer and generate separate patterns for each subset (luckily they were large enough to do this). Essentially, we **split the project** into several related projects.
- In our use of the materials in sensemaking, we focused mainly on patterns within each interviewer's set of locations. We asked our participants to consider any conclusions about the entire collection area as weak in comparison to those within each interviewer area.

[Go to example 5](#)

5. DID PARTICIPANTS AVOID THIS QUESTION? - RESULT

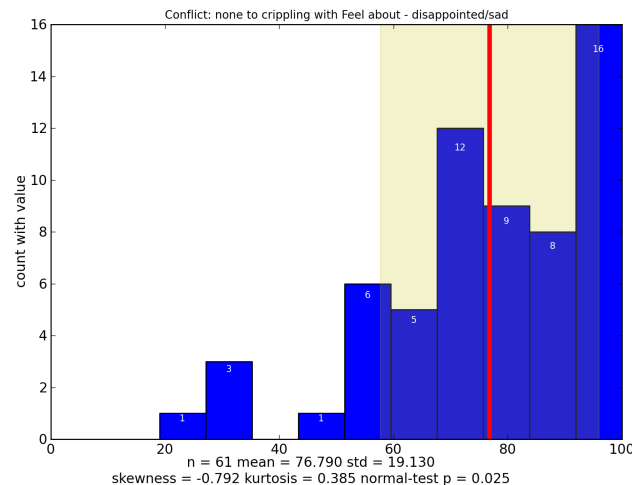
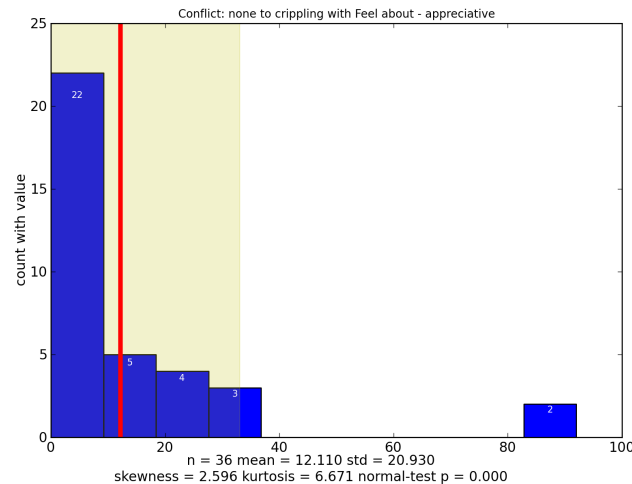


In this project:

- We graphed all of the scale values collected in the project (top left). Overall the central peak was not as striking. We also graphed the standard deviation of each respondent's scale values (bottom left). These showed a good range of variation. So it seemed that the centrality issue pertained mainly to **this one question**.
- We guessed that the central peak in the Fairness question might have been caused by **the way the stories were collected**. Participants were shown stock images of people in their profession and asked to pretend they were giving advice to a younger person entering the profession. This may have led respondents to **conform** to perceived expectations about their professional identities and **defend** their status as members of their profession. And this might have led them to "keep a lid on" views of fairness that they might otherwise have explored more fully.
- Given this trend, we cautioned our sensemaking participants that the Fairness question should be considered as less representative and authentic than the other questions.

[Go to example 6](#)

6. WHERE DID THESE TWIN PEAKS COME FROM? - RESULT



In this project:

- The mystery of the twin peaks on the conflict question **disappeared** as soon as we saw it against the “how do you feel about this story” question (top left: appreciative and cooperative; top right: disappointed and conflictual). This showed us that the two peaks were not an anomalous or conflated response; they were a meaningful distinction.
- Bimodal results on a scale question that compares two opposing extremes can be quite meaningful, as long as the peaks are connected to something. If you were to see such peaks without any obvious connections, it would be a good idea to **look for an explanation** for the bimodality. The peaks could be two perceptions of what you meant by the question, two perspectives on what the “right” answer should be, two groups of people whose identities led them to perceive the question differently, two contexts of story collection, two styles of interviewing or facilitation, and so on.