Rachel N. Baum
Jewish 101: Jewish Culture in America
Jewish 261: Representing the Holocaust in Words and Images
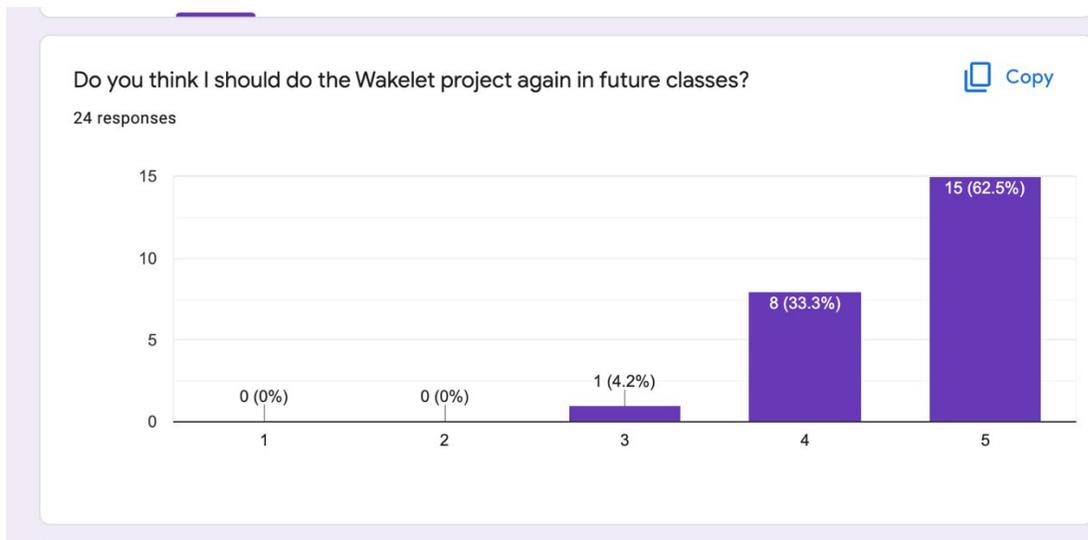
Increasing Student Engagement with Wakelet Curation

Digital Humanities tools: Wakelet (curated collection creator). Padlet would be an appropriate alternative (Wakelet had some tech challenges the semester I used it, so I can't recommend it although they may be fixed).

Description: Students worked in groups to create a collection of materials (websites, articles, videos, etc) about a relevant topic of their choosing and reflected in writing on their collection. Students then engaged with the modules created by their classmates and analyzed them as collections. In this way, students were both teachers and learners. In creating the collections, students had to evaluate the authority of sources as well as how their choices contributed to the class's knowledge.

Reflection: I was initially attracted to this assignment because the Wakelet collections can be shared via embed code, enabling the material to be displayed in Canvas. This didn't work as well as anticipated, in part due to some back-end challenges faced by Wakelet. Despite the challenges, the assignment met my learning goals in engaging students with the subject, fostering student curiosity, sharing classroom authority as teachers and learners, and increasing student proficiency in analyzing sources.
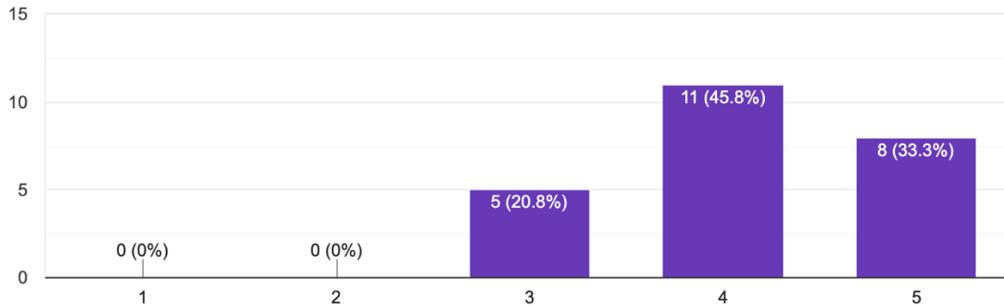
Students found the assignment useful and engaging, as shown in these survey results

How much did looking at the Wakelets from your classmates add to your learning in this class?

24 responses

This student's comment was representative of the classes' feedback: "What I did like about creating my Wakelet was being able to do my own research and go on my own exploration. Not only was it enjoyable to be able to look at the content I found the most interesting and informative on my topic, but it also made me more curious and interested in further researching those who were involved and those who opposed on my own. I think this Wakelet Project encourages and pushes both research skills and being able to distinguish what's the most important information to share."

Next time I do this assignment I will integrate the Wakelet project into the rest of the course more thoroughly. This would be a good assignment to work on with an embedded librarian, as students could learn about sources and curation from the beginning of the semester and the Wakelet project could be the culmination of a semester-long engagement with these issues.