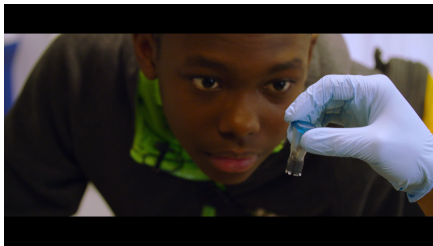


# Connecting research and storytelling to engage with audiences through documentary film: Insights from a scientist-filmmaker collaboration

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## Research-practice partnerships between filmmakers and social scientists can help:

- Produce effective and engaging documentaries on complex science + society issues
- Fill gaps in social science research on the impact of films, and how films can reach traditionally missed audiences



## HOW CAN WE TELL COMPLEX SCIENCE STORIES IN MORE COMPLETE AND ENGAGING WAYS?

Does the **use of multiple voices, rather than a single narrator, and the diversity of the scientists and others profiled** in the documentary shape audience perceptions of the film content, the scientists involved, and complex science issues and scientists more broadly?



### OVERVIEW

- **45% of Americans regularly get science news from documentaries** or other science video programs – second only to general news outlets
- **Americans report trusting science films** to get the facts right, much more so than general news outlets and second only to science centers and museums as most trusted

(Pew Research Center, 2017, *How Americans get science news*).

**But very little research examines the impact of film for telling science stories.** And existing science programming tends to reach more educated audiences who already identify more with science.



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- To investigate, we hired four actors of different races and genders to portray scientists and introduce the film clip of *Human Nature*, using different introductions that highlight the scientific discovery or cultural implications.
- We've fielded a national survey with a larger, more diverse audience to understand how perceived credibility of scientists, knowledge gains and narrative transportation is affected by race and/or gender.
- We successfully oversampled to equally include Black and white participants to address questions of data truancy and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), as most studies do not include enough responses from minority populations to meaningfully examine group differences.