

Written History Contrasted with Oral History

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Overview

The idea for my unit came from the textbook, *Doing Oral History* by Donald Ritchie that was assigned for the class. I wondered how much of what we read in history books is really true. Also, I have read that history has been tainted by the writers and the methods that have been used to gather the information. Therefore, the idea is for my students to research an event in history and then to interview someone, preferably a family member, who has lived through the event and compare his or her experience with the recorded history. Unit Five, in the Pittsburgh Public School tenth grade curriculum has the students study speeches given by Nelson Mandela, Bill Clinton, and Sojourner Truth. When I taught this unit this year, I also had the students listen to and read Barack Obama's and John F. Kennedy's inaugural addresses. In order for the students to understand the relevance of the speeches, they need to understand the history and time periods in which the speeches were given. This ties in with this oral history project because students should experience a deeper understanding of the speeches by learning the history of the country. By having the students research an event in history and then obtain a first hand

account of the event, the students will gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the significance of the event. Initially, the idea was for students to conduct two interviews. There would be one interview to gather background information and to get comfortable with the interviewing process. The second interview would be to gather information on an event in history and compare the interviewee's experience with written accounts reported in newspapers and secondary sources. However, after planning this unit I realized there would only be time for one interview. Students would be able to conduct mock interviews with their classmates to practice.

Rationale

Prior to taking this class, I did not know what an oral history was. As we started discussing more oral history, it dawned on me that the oral history I have in my family determines how I live my life. It shapes how we all live our lives. My grandmother lived to be 94 with three sisters living to be 93, 97 and 100. Due to this, I plan on being on the planet for nearly a century and need to plan accordingly. In contrast, I noticed many of my students do not value their lives or understand the potential their lives could have. Part of this lack of respect for themselves I attribute to lost oral histories in their families. Voices of family members who have abandoned their family responsibilities or who have passed away are unable to speak of the value of life to today's student. Due to this, the students consider their own existence lacking in value. In the second text for our class, the authors write, "Oral History also emphasizes the value of biography. When a student is interviewing a grandparent, the interviewee is telling his or her life story. Suddenly, what could be a dull recitation of name, dates, and places takes on life because the student realizes this is the story of his or her grandparent as a young person growing into adulthood, dealing with conflicts in circumstances different from, but somewhat similar to, those of the youth of today" (Lanman and Wendling 165). This quote illustrates that students do not fully grasp their own family history and therefore, they look to other ways to define themselves. Another reason that family histories are lost is because students may have family members with histories to tell but because they are never asked, their stories are left untold. Finally, stories may be lost because family members do not think to ask questions until after a relative has passed.

These may seem like small things but our oral history defines who each of us is. Putting my five-year-old nephew to sleep one night, I began telling him the heroic things family members have done. He implored me for more stories. Four out of five of my

siblings have been lifeguards in our lives. I, myself, am still a certified lifeguard and manage pools throughout the year. I have been a lifeguard for thirteen years and have performed many rescues in those years. In fact, I am embarrassed when one father reminds his son every time he sees me that I saved his life. I do not see myself as a hero but as someone just doing her job. However, a few of my saves have been quite memorable. One example would be when I had to save a mother and two twelve-year-olds all at one time. The astounding aspect of that save was that my brother had just walked into the facility just as I went in for the rescue. He ran down the ramp, jumped the railing, threw his wallet and phone aside, and plunged in, fully dressed, to assist me. I had not seen him come in and during the save I was wondering whose large white arm that was because I knew my three of victims were African-American. It was the first day of work for my brother at my pool so the rest of the staff had no idea who he was. This demonstrated to me and to my staff what family members are willing to do for each other on both sides of the situation. On one side, a mother was willing to die trying to save her daughter and her niece. On the other side, my brother was willing to assist me at a moment's notice.

Even some of the adventures my nephew and I have lived through have involved heroic actions. He once disturbed a yellow jacket nest that was embedded in the ground. I looked up to see him swarmed by yellow jackets. In one second, I thought there were too many and in the same second I knew I had to go get him out of that situation. I ran up the steps and grabbed him. I then started running down the street with him. He had yellow jackets in the curls of his hair. We both managed to escape with just one sting each. A neighbor heard me screaming and asked if we were all right. He sprayed the nest, gave us ice and opened the front door. Even though my nephew was only three at the time, he still remembers that scary situation and the man that helped us. The point of these stories is to show my nephew how to act in certain situations.

The goal of using this method is for students to be invested in their own education and therefore make an investment in themselves. Ritchie writes, "Half the students considered immigration and black history using oral history, the other half studied these subjects using regular teaching methods. Tests given at the beginning and end of the four week curriculum revealed that the oral history students at all levels of ability showed greater instructional gains than students taught by traditional methods"(Ritchie 200). I want my students to have this kind of learning experience. Because I work at an alternative school, nontraditional methods seem ideal for my students. I work in a community which has a rich history, much of which has been unfortunately destroyed by crime and violence. The skeletons of the once majestic houses, now abandoned, plague

each street. My hope is that once students research the communities they live in, they will be less likely to add to the demise of their communities and become part of their restoration. I am hoping these oral histories will be a glimpse of a neighborhood worth saving.

As I began researching events in Pittsburgh, it occurred to me that my students could perhaps research events in their communities; however, it was difficult to find events themselves. I was leaning towards events in the African American community since the majority of my students are African American. I came across a passage in the book *The Point of Pittsburgh*, which showed me why I was having such a difficult time. “One of the most extraordinary Pittsburgh war stories was lived by the black reporter for the Pittsburgh Courier, Frank Bolden. Bolden graduated from Pitt in 1934; but when he tried to get into medical school, he was told ‘we’d like to admit you if you were white.’ He tried to get a job teaching in the Pittsburgh schools, but there were no black teachers” (McCollester 330). I was struck by this quote because I had taught with a teacher with the last name Bolden who was African American and wondered if she was related.

Reading the quote above also made me reflect on Dr. Helen S. Faison and if she had ever been interviewed for an oral history. Dr. Faison, who is in her eighties, is the Director of the Pittsburgh Teachers Institute. She was one of the first African-American teachers in the Pittsburgh Public School district. Dr. Faison was also the first female principal in the district and served as the district’s first African-American superintendent. (Nuttall 1) To many in education, Dr. Helen S. Faison is a local hero and an inspiration. If an oral history for her has not been completed, I would be interested in interviewing her. At the idea of interviewing Helen Faison, it dawned on me all the research I would need to do. It would not just be one interview of her but possibly a hundred interviews with former colleagues, family members and former students. It also made the research more real to me because I would not want to waste time asking questions that I could have easily read online.

Thinking about interviewing Dr. Faison also made me realize how important making a recording is because you can hear so much of her personality and wit when she speaks. After her demise, that history will die along with her. I felt this sense of loss after my grandmother died. I wanted my grandmother to make a recording with *Storycore* when they were in Pittsburgh. We never made a recording and I regret not having recorded her voice. My nephew has a vague memory of her. Since she died, two more great grandchildren have been born which she would have adored and who would have adored her.

Another idea behind this rationale is from the text *Doing Oral History*, “They also showed an appreciation for learning from fellow students rather than from their teachers” (Ritchie 201). All students like to think or feel they are intelligent. I have also noticed students will spend more time and energy studying something that interests them than an assigned topic. It also helps students to learn a process better when they teach it to someone else. In addition, by doing the research, students will see the layers of research that occurs. When I was researching Dr. Faison out of my own curiosity, there were awards she had received that I didn’t fully understand the significance of until I did further research. The idea is for students to see how some research will lead to additional research and a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Overall, the rationale for this project is that completing an oral history project could open countless doors for my students. It could give them insight into the history of their city, of their community, into their family and into themselves, which might be the most valuable lesson that they can learn. I find that like most of us, they are most interested in themselves. My students will be motivated to complete the assignment because they are essentially researching themselves.

Objectives

Students will be able to research a period in Pittsburgh’s history in order to compare what they read to someone’s account of what they lived through.

The idea is to illustrate to the students how these events affected people and their families on a personal level. It changes the event from just something the student is reading about to something that someone they know experienced. It also demonstrates the value of research. Students should have the perception that although events that are occurring now may not seem significant, in twenty or thirty years from now, these events will make up a personal history that they experienced. At that time, they will be able to look back now as an adult and see those experiences through new eyes. Many of us do not reflect back unless we are asked to do so, which is another reason to conduct oral histories.

This research also gives students an opportunity to learn more about the city they live in and the people who made the city what it is today. Researching the riots after the

assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. can explain what the Hill District was like prior to that time and what occurred afterwards.

Another lesson I try to ingrain into my students is that they must read, and must read from several different sources. They also must also question what they read. My fear is that because many of my students do not read or stay abreast of current political policies, they are creating the possibility for another Holocaust occurring.

Students will be able to practice their interviewing with a classmate.

The idea is for students to practice and make mistakes prior to doing the real interview by practicing with a classmate. Although it will not be a perfect practice, students can practice their thinking and asking follow up questions. Students should also practice smooth transitions.

Students will be able to view a model of an interview to observe the dos and don'ts of interviewing.

The demonstrating for the students is to show that the idea is not to just rush through the questions but to allow wait time for the interviewee to elaborate on his or her answers. Depending on the interviewee or the question, the person may need time to reflect on their answer. If the interviewee feels rushed through the interview, he or she will be less likely to give in depth answers. Students should plan on spending an hour to an hour and a half with their interviewee. Being a respectful guest will be modeled for students.

Students will be able to listen to an oral history as an example.

Unless students hear an example of an oral history, they may not understand what an oral history is. It will also benefit students to hear how the interview should flow and how to ease into more sensitive questions. Students should listen for pauses and allow interviewees a chance to think and elaborate on the events that they are explaining.

Students will be able to use a recording device in order to make a record of the interview.

Many of my students will know how to use certain recording devices; however, many students do not know how to place a tape in a tape recorder. Students may also not consider things like background noise or other household noises. By students making a recording of the interview, it adds value to the project because students can feel a part of history by being the person who recorded it. Saving the recordings in the school library will allow students to retrieve their interviews at a later date.

Students will be able to transcribe their interviews and reflect on the transcript.

The point of having the students transcribe the interview is for them to listen specifically to every word in the interview. Students may hear bits of material they may have missed during the interview due to nervousness or because they were thinking about the next questions they were going to ask.

Students will be able to present their findings in a culminating project with pictures and a presentation.

The idea behind the presentation is for students to share what they learned with their classmates. Hopefully, students will be excited by what they learned and will enjoy gathering pictures to create their presentation board. It will increase the knowledge of everyone in the class because they will be experiencing information, through several senses. Students will be able to see photographs of the event and hear the event through the eyes of someone who witnessed the event. It makes the history much more intriguing and memorable rather than reading a history book.

Students will be able to reflect on what they learned from both resources.

Students will be required to gather information from several sources and to reflect on how the information differs. For example, the different informational sources may contain slightly different accounts of the same event. If this occurs, students need a

strategy to determine which is correct. Also, students will reflect on what they learned from their interview compared to what they read from their sources. Students will ask themselves which source was most believable and which they felt were most reliable.

Strategies

Given that I teach at an alternative school, my class size tends to be smaller and the make up of the students frequently changes. The small class size allows me to know my students individually and much more intimately than in a regular school. Currently the majority of our school population is credit recovery, meaning that these are students who need to make up credits in order to graduate. Our school has 250-265 student capacity, which creates a waiting list for students to attend. This creates a positive attitude because students who do not conform to the school regulations are returned to their home school or to another alternative educational center.

The advantage of having a small class is that it is difficult for students to avoid being called on but the problem with having a small group is that it is easy for mutiny to occur. The teacher must control the atmosphere in the room to keep students productive and on task. Also, absenteeism is a problem. If two students are absent, I am missing half of my class. It makes progression difficult because I am constantly having students who need to be caught up. Therefore, one of my strategies is to constantly engage students and call on students frequently. At the beginning of the school year, the class sets classroom norms. One of the norms is for all students to read out loud. This is difficult at first to establish but once it is set as a norm, students seem to be accepting. This also makes it easy to continue to occur when new students enter because it is already established as a norm.

Another strategy that I use is to transition students from one activity to another activity quickly. I do not rush students when they are writing but I do move them between activities swiftly because I want the students to realize how important it is to use time wisely. Also, when students are busy they are less likely to get bored or disengaged. One other reason to move quickly throughout the short period of time that I have is that our curriculum pacing is aggressive so in order to stay on pace, I cannot waste time. This is important because students come and go throughout the year. If a student is returned to his or her home school, I want him or her to have covered the material they would have

covered in their home school. The reverse is also true. Students entering our school should be able to pick up where they left off in their education.

Another strategy I use is close proximity. This only works because I know my students so well. I know when to use encouragement and when to give them space. I know when to apologize to a student for jumping to an erroneous conclusion and when a student is being dishonest. This “with-it-ness” adds to my credibility as a teacher. I find if the students are off task for even a few moments, the lesson can go astray. Also I want the students to be completely absorbed in what we are reading and writing.

One advantage to working with this concept of oral history is that they appeal to multiple senses and places the student in a position where they have direct interaction with their learning. Because students are more involved in their own learning, they retain more information. Another strategy is to allow the students to hear an oral history before doing one themselves. This will set expectations and give students a better understanding of what they are doing. It also will serve as a model. It would also give ideas for their own oral histories. Also, by using professional examples of oral histories, this will increase the quality of the projects that the students produce.

A final strategy I would use would be to have the students read the article “The Young, the Old, and Something: Six Graders Learn from Alzheimer Elderly” from the text *Preparing the Next Generation of Oral Historians: An Anthology of Oral History*, (Lanman and Wendling). The idea would be to have students read this article to make the point that if six graders can do a similar assignment with success, my ninth and tenth grade students should be able to do it as well.

Classroom Activities

Lesson One — Students will be able to explain what an oral history is and discuss what might fall into the category of oral history. Also, students will define words that we will be using throughout the process.

Procedure: Students are to log on to www.doingoralhistory.org. Then, click on the menu that reads on line workshops, and then click on “Linking Curriculum and Community Through Oral History.” Students are then to work through the power point with a handout. (See Appendix 1) Students are then to meet in a group and discuss what they

read and what stood out to them. Also, students will be given the assignment sheet to complete for this unit. (See Appendix 2) Finally, students are to write a twelve-line journal on who might have an interesting oral history that they would like to consider interviewing.

Lesson Two — Students will be able to listen to an example of an oral history.

Procedure: Students are to listen to the interview to gain knowledge on the subject of oral histories. Students will be asked to write a list of questions they may want to ask a classmate during an interview. Each student is to write ten questions. Questions will be written on poster paper and shared with classmates.

Lesson Three — Students will be able to listen again to the same interview; this time listening to the questions that were asked and the intonations in the voices.

Procedure: Students will be asked what the differences are between open ended questions and closed ended questions. For this second listening, students are to focus on the questions being asked during the interview.

Lesson Four — Students will be able to research an event in history using several sources.

Procedure: Students will use several sources to research the same event. Students are to think about major events that a family member may have lived through that were either major events in history or major events in Pittsburgh. A major event would be defined as something written about in newspapers or books. Students may consider World War II, Vietnam, the Korean War, Desert Storm or the Gulf War. Students may want to ask their family members if they are willing to talk about their war experiences before completing their research. For some war veterans, discussing their experiences are too painful to relive. Students may also consider researching the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. or John F. Kennedy as possible events. Students could consider the riots that occurred after Dr. King's assassination or the mood of the country after JFK was killed. Students

may want to research the closing of the Steel Mills in the Pittsburgh Area or the Steelers winning the *Superbowl* in 1974 and their future championships.

Homework: Students should identify a person in their community they would like to interview. If they have no one, students should look for someone to interview in the school.

Lesson Five — Students will be able to model a well-done interview with the teacher.

Procedure: A student will model a good interview with a teacher. Student will demonstrate wait time, active listening, and asking follow up questions. After viewing the model, students should practice with a classmate. Students are to ask between five to ten questions. The idea is for students to take their time and work on their wait time, active listening and asking follow up questions.

Lesson Six — Student will be able to read a transcript of three different interviews with African Americans and their experiences during World War II.

Procedure: While reading the article, there are opportunities to discuss certain situations that may occur during an interview. For example, if an interviewee uses a racial slur or says something derogatory, how should the student handle the situation? The article demonstrates how three people of the same race can live through the same situation and have totally different experiences. Also, the theme of heroic acts arises in the article. Students are to ask one question of their family member if there are any acts of heroism in their family. After reading the article and the discussion, students should gain an understanding for the value of oral histories due to each person's unique experiences.

Lesson Seven — Students will be able to compose questions to ask during their interview.

Procedure: Once students have thought of whom they would like to interview, determined their age and what events that that person may have lived through, they

should begin to craft questions to ask during the interview. Students should incorporate both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Students should prepare between forty and fifty questions and several of their questions on the research that did for this interview. They should also plan an order for their questions but should not feel confined to strictly follow the order. Questions gathered through previous lessons may be used. Any work not completed in class should be completed for homework.

Lesson Eight — Students will write a letter stating the purpose of the interview and the goal of the project they are trying to complete.

Procedure: In the letter, students should include their full name, address, a phone number where the student can be reached and a date and time of the interview. Students should state that the interview will be recorded in order for the student to complete the project accurately and a copy of the interview if the interviewee so desires.

Homework: Students are to go conduct their interviews. Students should receive Appendix 3, 4 and 5. Students will have at least a week to conduct their interview. Lessons from unit five will be taught during that week.

Lesson Nine — Students will transcribe interviews for further comprehension and write a journal reflecting on what they heard while transcribing.

Procedure: Students are to transcribe interviews and type the transcription. Transcriptions will be kept on file in the school library. When completed, students are to write a journal reflecting on what surprised them as they listened to the interview. Students are also to reflect on what a person would miss from just reading the transcript opposed to listening to the interview.

Homework: Students are to write a thank-you note to the person they interviewed as a sign of appreciation. Students are to bring the letters along with the address and zip code the following day for the teacher to mail.

Lesson Ten — Students will be able to discuss their interviews as a group.

Procedure: As a group, students will discuss what their experience was like, what surprised them, what stood out to them and what they learned. Students will listen to their classmates throughout the discussion. After the discussion, the teacher will review the presentation requirements for the students and will be shown an example. A rubric for their presentation will be shared with them. The presentation will take the place of the Culminating Project for Unit Five.

Lesson Eleven — Students should review rubric for grading presentation as they prepare their display board and presentation.

Procedure: Students will review the rubric before beginning their presentation. Also, they should prepare note cards to assist them. Students will be graded in eye contact, accuracy of information, an explanation of what they learned and voice projection.

Lesson Twelve — Students will be able to formally present their presentations including playing two to five minutes of the interview for their classmates to hear.

Procedure: Students are to have a display board with pictures of the person or of the event they researched. Also on the display should be a copy of the articles they read to prepare for this interview, a copy of the transcript and a bibliography.

Annotated Bibliography/ Resources

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Web. 29 June 2009

<<http://carnegielibrary.org/research/pittsburgh/history/ww2/ww211.html>>

This website was useful to show student how to deal with certain situations. It also demonstrated how three people could live through the same event and have different experiences. This could be helpful to teachers who are looking for oral histories done here in Pittsburgh.

Lanman, Barry and Laura Wendling. Preparing the Next Generation of Oral Historians: An Anthology of Oral History. Altamira Pr. May 2006

This was one of the assigned texts for the class. It had several interesting studies. It is useful to teachers because there are several examples of projects other teachers have completed and ideas that could be turned into projects.

McCollester, Charles. The Point of Pittsburgh. Battle of Homestead Foundation: Pittsburgh, PA, 2008

The book provides interesting reading because it gives accounts and quotes about people involved in the events. It contains a great deal of information and is well documented. For a teacher to use this book they would need to pull out specific paragraphs that address the topic they are researching. There are many interesting stories that would stick in a student's memory.

Nuttall, Rebecca. "Faison leaves fingerprints across city schools." *New Pittsburgh Courier Online*. Web. 19 March 2009.

<<http://newpittsburghcourieronline.com/articlelive/articles/43972/1/Faison-leaves-fingerprints-across-city-schools/Page1.html>>

This website seemed to have the most complete information in regards to Dr. Helen Faison's work for the Pittsburgh Public School district.

Ritchie, Donald A. Doing Oral History A Practical Guide. 2nd ed. Oxford University Press: New York, 2003

This was very supportive when writing my lessons. It reminded me of all the important information I wanted to convey to my students. There was a list of possibilities for projects that otherwise teachers may not consider. Also, the book covered any questions or situations a teacher may encounter when trying to complete an oral history.

Tennessee Tech University. 29 Nov. 1994 *Tips on Doing Oral History Interviews* Web. 10 June 2009

<<http://www.tntech.edu/history/oralhist.txt>>

I harvested a list of tips from this website because I thought each tip would be useful to my students before conducting their interviews. Teachers may find this useful as a helpful guide that is already created; however, it may be higher expectations than are needed.

Witman, Glenn and Saint Andrew's Students. 2008. *American Century Project* Maryland Digital Cultural Heritage Web. 10 May 2009

<<http://doingoralhistory.org>>

This website was helpful and appropriate for students to use as an introduction to oral histories. Teachers would find this helpful as an introduction to oral history and also would incorporate technology into their lesson plans.

Appendices-Standards

1.1.11A Locate various texts, media and traditional resources for assigned and independent projects before reading.

1.1.11.B Analyze the structure of informational materials explaining how authors used these to achieve their purposes.

1.1.11D Identify, describes, evaluate and synthesize the essential ideas in text. Assess those reading strategies that were most effective in learning from variety of texts.

1.1.11F Understand the meaning of and apply key vocabulary across the various subject areas.

1.1.11G Demonstrate, after reading, understanding and interpretation of both fiction and nonfiction text, including public documents.

1.2.11.A Read and understand essential content of informational text and documents in all academic areas.

1.2.11.B Use and understand a variety of media and evaluate the quality of material produced.

1.2.11.C Produce work in at least on literary genre that follows the conventions of the genre.

1.4.11D Maintain a written record of activities, course work, experience, honors, and interests.

1.5.11A Write with a sharp, distinct focus

1.5.11.B Write using well-developed content appropriate for the topic.

1.5.11.C Write with controlled and/or subtle organization.

1.5.11.E Revise writing to improve style, word choice, sentence variety and subtlety of meaning after rethinking how questions of purpose, audience and genre have been addressed.

1.5.11.F Edit writing using the conventions of language.

1.5.11.G Present and/or defend written work from publication when appropriate.

Name:
English 1
Ms. McMahon
Date:

Appendix 1

Handout to complete while view PowerPoint presentation online

First, you will need to log into the site www.doingoralhistory.org. Then, answer the following on a separate sheet of paper using complete sentences. You may need to write several sentences for each question in order to fully explain yourself.

1. How is oral history defined in the slide presentation? Use quotation marks if quoting directly from the text.

2. What do you think that means? Write a definition for oral history in your own words and give an example.
3. On slide six, there is a list of ten skills and values that are proposed to be taught to students. What three values would you agree should be taught and why?
4. Are there any skills or values that you think shouldn't be taught?
5. Do you agree with the quote on slide 10 that states, "You don't have to be famous for your life to have history." Why or why not?
6. What do you think the presenter means when her writes, "Empowers students with their own learning (and confusion.)" Relate this back to the idea of oral histories.
7. What do you think the presenter means by the term "intergenerational bridges"?
8. What do you think an oral history coffee shop is?
9. What does the following quote make you realize about yourself? "Without the student oral historian far too many stories would be lost; it would be like a library burning down." (Donald Ritchie)

Name:
English 1
Ms. McMahon
Date:

Appendix 2

Assignment Sheet

Students are to complete an Oral History project that coincides with the Culminating Project for Unit Five.

Students are to complete one of the following, accompanied with an oral presentation for their interview.

First, decide a person you would like to interview for an oral history project. This

person should be someone advanced in years. You will have to research an event that this person has lived through and compare their experience with what you read online, in newspapers, or in history books.

Make contact with this person via telephone to explain the project to see if the person is willing to participate. If they are, you are to politely ask the person what year they were born and ask for their address. This will help you decide what to research.

Depending on the year the person was born, will determine what you should research. If a person is born in 1950, they won't have an opinion on the politics of the time because they were a baby. Therefore, look at historical events between ten to twenty years after the person was born to research.

From your research, compile a list of between forty and fifty questions to use during the interview. Some questions should be closed-ended questions and some questions should be open-ended. This may be more questions than are needed but students should be prepared for the interview. Ten questions should specifically be about historical events their person lived through. One or two questions should inquire if there have been any heroic acts performed by family members.

Students should send a card with the date and time of the interview.

Students should conduct the interview with a recording device.

Student will transcribe the interview and present a presentation to their classmates playing an excerpt from their interview. Students are also to write a thank you card to the interviewee for their participation in this oral history project. Interviews will be stored in the schools library.

Name:
English 1
Ms. McMahon
Date:

Appendix 3

Checklist for students to conduct a successful interview

1. Test all equipment before arriving for the interview. If batteries are being used, you should take a spare pair.
2. Be sure to be on time.

3. Call the interviewee and confirm the time you plan to meet the day prior to the interview.
4. If you are unfamiliar with the address or area that the interview will take place, ask for directions from the interviewee or have access to directions prior to arriving.
5. Be polite. Remember to treat the interviewee as you would want someone to treat a loved one of yours.
6. Avoid smoking, chewing tobacco, swearing, dressing inappropriately, or using slang during the interview.
7. Be sure to thank the person for allowing the interview to take place.

Name:
English 1
Ms. McMahon
Date:

Appendix 4

Responsibility to Interviewees:

1. Interviewees should be informed of the purposes and procedures of oral history in general and of the aims and anticipated uses of the particular projects to which they are making their contributions.
2. Interviewees should be informed of the mutual rights in the oral history process, such as editing, access restrictions, copyrights prior use royalties, and the expected disposition and dissemination of all forms of the record, including the potential for electronic distribution.
3. Interviewees should be informed that they will be asked to sign a legal release. Interviews should remain confidential until interviewees have given permission for their use.
4. Interviewers should guard against making promises to interviewees that the interviewers may not be able to fulfill, such as guarantees of publication and control over the use of interviews after they have been made public. In all future uses, however, good faith efforts should be made to honor the spirit of the interviewee's agreement.
5. Interviews should be conducted in accord with any prior agreements made with the interviewee, and such agreements should be documented for the record.
6. Interviews should work to achieve a balance between the objectives of the project and the perspectives of the interviewees. They should be sensitive to the diversity of social and cultural experiences and to the implications of race, gender, class, ethnicity, age, religion, and sexual orientation. They should address issues that reflect their concerns. Interviewers should fully explore all appropriate areas of inquiry with the interviewee and not be satisfied with superficial responses.
7. Interviewers should guard against possible exploitation of interviewees and be sensitive to the ways in which their interviews might be used. Interviewers must respect the rights of interviewees to refuse to discuss certain subjects, to restrict access to the interview, or, under guidelines extreme circumstances, even to choose anonymity. Interviewers should clearly explain these options to all interviewees.

8. Interviewers should use the best recording equipment within their means to accurately reproduce the interviewee's voice and, if appropriate, other sounders as well as visual images.
9. Given the rapid development of new technologies, interviewees should be informed of the wide range of potential uses of their interviews.
10. Good faith efforts should be made to ensure that the uses of recordings and transcripts comply with both the letter and spirit of the interviewee's agreement.

Ritchie, Donald A. *Doing Oral History A Practical Guide*. 2nd ed. Oxford University Press: New York, 2003

Name:
English 1
Ms. McMahon
Date:

Appendix 5

Additional Tips for Interviewers

1. Ask questions that require more than a "yes" or "no" answer.
2. Ask one question at a time.
3. Ask brief questions.
4. Start with non-controversial questions; save the delicate ones, if there are any, until later in the interview.
5. Do not let brief periods of silence fluster you.
6. Do not worry if your questions are not beautifully phrased as you would like them to be for posterity.
7. Do not interrupt a good story because you have thought of a question, or because your narrator is straying from the planned outline.
8. Try to establish at important points in the interview where the narrator was or what his or her role was in the event. This will enable you to determine how much is eyewitness information and how much is based on reports of others.
9. Do not challenge accounts you think may be inaccurate.
10. Try to conduct the interview with only one narrator present.

www.tntech.edu/histroy/oralhist.txt

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Date:

Appendix 6

Responsibility to the Public and to the Profession:

1. Oral historians have a responsibility to maintain the highest professional standards in the conduct of their work and to uphold the standards of the various disciplines and professions with which they are affiliated.
2. In recognition of the importance of oral history to an understanding of the past and of the cost and effort involved, interviewers and interviewees should mutually strive to record candid information of lasting value and to make that information accessible.
3. Interviewees should be selected based on the relevance of their experiences to the subject at hand.
4. Interviewers should possess interviewing skills as well as professional competence and knowledge of the subject at hand.
5. Regardless of the specific interests of the project, interviewers should attempt to extend the inquiry beyond the specific focus of the project to create as complete a record as possible for the benefit of others.
6. Interviewers should strive to prompt informative dialog through challenging and perceptive inquiry. They should be grounded in the background of the persons being interviewed and, when possible, should carefully research appropriate documents and secondary sources related to subjects about which the interviewees can speak.
7. Interviewers should make every effort to record their interviews using the best recording equipment within their means to reproduce accurately the interviewee's voice and, if appropriate, image. They also should collect and record other historical documentation the interviewee may possess, including still photographs, print materials, and other sound and moving image recording, if appropriate.

8. Interviewers should provide complete documentation of their preparation and methods, including the circumstances of the interviews.
9. Interviewers and, when possible, interviewees should review and evaluate their interviews, including any summaries or transcriptions made from them.
10. With the permission of the interviewees, interviewers should arrange to deposit their interviews in an archival repository that is capable of both preserving the interviews and eventually making them available for general use. Interviewers should provide basic information about the interviews, including project goals, sponsorship, and funding. Preferably, interviewers should work with repositories before conducting the interviews to determine necessary legal Guidelines arrangements. If interviewers arrange to retain first use of the interview, it should be only for a reasonable time before public use.
11. Interviewers should be sensitive to the communities from which they have collected oral histories, taking care not to reinforce thoughtless stereotypes nor to bring undue notoriety to them. Interviewers should take every effort to make the interviews accessible to the communities.
12. Oral history interviews should be used and cited with the same care and standards applied to other historical sources. Users have a responsibility to retain the integrity of the interviewee's voice, neither misrepresenting the interviewee's words nor taking them out of context.
13. Sources of funding or sponsorship of oral history projects should be made public in all exhibits, media presentations, or publications that result from the projects.
14. Interviewers and oral history programs should conscientiously consider how they might share with interviewees and their communities the rewards and recognition that might result from their work.

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