Unit Two: Oral History

Content Area: **Social Studies**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 2**
Length: **10 weeks**
Status: **Published**

Summary

The “My Story, Our Story” course allows students to explore their personal and collective history through genealogy databases and the development of an oral history collection. In the first part of the “My Story, Our Story” course, students learn about their own history by using genealogy databases to trace their ancestry (or that of a peer or faculty member) and present their findings in a comprehensive portfolio that can be shared with their immediate and extended family. During the second part of the course, students serve as novice historians to collect the narratives of different Cranfordians via interviews using podcasting equipment. The oral histories the students collect will be added to a digital database so they can be preserved for generations to come. The course culminates with an exhibition where the class collectively shares their findings with interviewees and other key stakeholders.

This unit is part of the larger aforementioned course sequence and specifically focuses on oral histories, where students will garner an understanding of the practice and practical applications of oral history. By the end of this unit, students will be able to apply their understanding of the best practices of collecting and disseminating oral histories via a final practicum. As a part of this practicum, students will be asked to conduct interviews with family members, peers, and/or other members of the Cranford community for the purposes of supplementing their research into a predetermined topic in social/local history. Students will also learn to conduct these interviews with efficacy and fidelity and contextualize them through additional research. Through this process, students will be able to reflect on the ways in which individual stories serve to humanize history, serving as case studies of individual experiences during different periods of history, while also asking them to confront the fallacy of the “single story”. Finally, students will take their recorded interviews and catalog them, developing a database of Cranford oral histories. The skills and content of this unit as a whole will encourage students to think critically about the power of oral history and genealogy as tools for archiving both their own family history and the local history of their community.

Revision Date: August 2023

Standards

LA.RH.9-10.1 - [Progress Indicator] - Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence, to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

LA.RH.9-10.2 - [Progress Indicator] - Determine the theme, central ideas, key information and/or perspective(s) presented in a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

LA.RH.9-10.3 - [Progress Indicator] - Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; draw connections between the events, to determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

LA.RH.9-10.4 - [Progress Indicator] - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history and the social sciences; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.

LA.RH.9-10.6 - [Progress Indicator] - Compare the point of view of two or more authors in regards to how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

LA.RH.9-10.8 - [Progress Indicator] - Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

LA.RH.9-10.9 - [Progress Indicator] - Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic, or of various perspectives, in several primary and secondary sources; analyze how they relate in terms of themes and significant historical concepts.

LA.RST.9-10.2 - [Progress Indicator] - Determine the central ideas, themes, or conclusions of a text; trace the text’s explanation or depiction of a complex process, phenomenon, or concept; provide an accurate summary of the text.

LA.WHST.9-10.1.A - Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

LA.WHST.9-10.1.B - Develop claim(s) and counterclaims using sound reasoning, supplying data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form and in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level and concerns.

LA.WHST.9-10.1.C - Use transitions (e.g., words, phrases, clauses) to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

LA.WHST.9-10.1.D - Establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose (e.g., formal and objective for academic writing) while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

LA.WHST.9-10.1.E - Provide a concluding paragraph or section that supports the argument presented.

LA.WHST.9-10.2.A - Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

LA.WHST.9-10.2.B - Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

LA.WHST.9-10.2.C - Use varied transitions and sentence structures to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

LA.WHST.9-10.2.D - Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic and convey a style appropriate to the discipline and context as well as to the expertise of likely readers.

LA.WHST.9-10.2.E - Establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose (e.g., formal and objective for academic writing) while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

LA.WHST.9-10.2.F - Provide a concluding paragraph or section that supports the argument presented.

LA.WHST.9-10.4 - [Progress Indicator] - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

LA.WHST.9-10.5 - [Progress Indicator] - Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

LA.WHST.9-10.6 - [Progress Indicator] - Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, share, and update writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

LA.WHST.9-10.7 - [Progress Indicator] - Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

LA.WHST.9-10.8 - [Progress Indicator] - Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

LA.WHST.9-10.9 - [Progress Indicator] - Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

LA.WHST.9-10.10 - [Progress Indicator] - Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

NJSLSA.W1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

NJSLSA.W2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

NJSLSA.W4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.W5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

NJSLSA.W6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

NJSLSA.W7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

NJSLSA.W8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

NJSLSA.W9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

NJSLSA.W10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences

SEL.PK-12.3.1 - [Sub-Competency] - Recognize and identify the thoughts, feelings and perspectives of others

SEL.PK-12.3.2 - [Sub-Competency] - Demonstrate and awareness of the differences among individuals, groups and others' cultural backgrounds

SEL.PK-12.3.3 - [Sub-Competency] - Demonstrate an understanding of the need for mutual respect when viewpoints differ

This unit also reflects the goals of the Department of Education and the Amistad Commission including the infusion of the history of Africans and African-Americans into the curriculum in order to provide an accurate, complete, and inclusive history regarding the importance of of African-Americans to the growth and development of American society in a global context.

This unit includes instructional materials that highlight the history and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in accordance with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Social Studies.

This unit further reflects the goals of the Holocaust Education mandate where students are able to identify and analyze applicable theories concerning human nature and behavior; understand that genocide is a consequence of prejudice and discrimination; understand that issues of moral dilemma and conscience have a profound impact on life; and understand the personal responsibility that each citizen bears to fight racism and hatred whenever and wherever it happens.

In accordance with New Jersey's Chapter 32 Diversity and Inclusion Law, this unit includes instructional materials that highlight and promote diversity, including: economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with gender and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, and religious tolerance.

This unit is aligned to the English Language Development (ELD) standards for kindergarten through grade 12 since multilingual learners develop content and language concurrently, with academic content in a classroom where the language of instruction is English. As a result, language learning and language as a means for learning academic content are interchangeable. The following ELD standards are relevant for this unit and course of study:

- Standard 1: Language for Social and Instructional Purposes: English language learners communicate for social and instructional purposes within the school setting.
- Standard 5: Language for Social Studies: English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Social Studies.

The standards in this unit reflect a developmental progression across grade levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including the humanities, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness, and global citizenship.

Essential Questions and Enduring Understandings

Essential Questions:

- To what extent can oral histories support our understanding of specific historical events and experiences?
- In what ways can oral history confirm or complicate preconceived notions about the experiences of certain groups during different periods of history?

Enduring Understandings:

- The American experience is often intersectional and rooted in the diverse experiences of various cultural and ethnic groups as well as individuals. The histories of these individuals and groups provide a more comprehensive understanding of American History.
- Oral history is an important tool for humanizing history and challenging, and recognizing the fallacy of, the "single story".

Objectives

Students will know:

- Terms, concepts and individuals (including, but not limited to): *Oral History, Time Logs, Social Justice Framework, Repository, Public Domain, Metadata, Informed Consent, Deed of Gift, West African, Indigenous, and Japanese Oral Traditions, Six Elements of Oral History by Alessandro Portelli (orality, narrative, subjectivity, credibility, objectivity, and authorship), Transcription, Three-Step Oral History Analysis.*

- Efficacious oral history collection and interpretation requires that reasonably exhaustive supplemental research has been conducted and that the oral history taken has been skillfully correlated and interpreted and any conclusions made by the interviewer have been soundly reasoned and coherently written.

- Oral histories are fallible and may contain errors and misinformation requiring a need for corroboration from other sources, and yet individual experiences should be acknowledged as valuable and meaningful.

- There are ethical responsibilities placed upon the oral historian to conduct and present their findings with fidelity and not to misrepresent, or fabricate information from, the individuals they interview.

- Interviewees must give their informed consent when being asked to provide an oral history.

- Oral history can be an important tool for humanizing history and challenging, and recognizing the fallacy of, the "single story".

- The American experience is often intersectional and rooted in the diverse experiences of various cultural and ethnic groups as well as individuals. The histories of these individuals and groups provide a more comprehensive understanding of American History.

- The oral tradition is far-reaching and diverse and has been used for centuries by many different nations and cultural groups.

- Being able to hear people tell their own stories provides an authentic, engaging, and personalized method for collecting community history for future generations.

- Local histories can often serve as microcosmic examinations of broader historical themes.

Students will be skilled at:

- Developing interview questions, including follow-up questions for the purposes of collecting oral histories.

- Interpreting, analyzing, and contextualizing oral histories.

- Assessing the role an oral history plays in informing a larger narrative around a significant event or

time period

- Comparing and contrasting different, and potentially contradictory, sources of information
- Developing, cataloging and categorizing, and consolidating various oral histories
- Examining, analyzing, and interpreting primary and secondary source documents to determine application by oral historians.
- Working independently and collaboratively to present gathered information.
- Contextualizing events and sources within a broader historical timeline to describe the circumstances surrounding the topic.
- Interpreting multiple perspectives to compare and contrast varying viewpoints of a specific topic for relative similarities and differences.
- Creating a claim to respond to a prompt.
- Writing with evidence to support an original claim.
- Establishing cause and effect relationships between events and time periods. This includes both short and long term factors to be explained in connection to the topic.
- Consolidating research into a comprehensive and digestible format for purposes of dissemination
- Orally presenting research findings both in small and large group format

Learning Plan

This unit plan includes but is not limited to:

Oral History Around the World Stations Activity: Students will move to various stations, with each station representing a different example of oral history from around the world and from different points in history. As students travel to each station, they will utilize the "Three-Step Oral History Analysis" graphic organizer.

Classmate Interviews: With a partner, students will find a shared experience (eg. school during covid, transitioning from middle to high school, living in Cranford, etc.) that they can take turns to interview each other about and then compare and contrast their responses.

Contextualization Activity: Students will be given a specific oral history to listen to and will then be tasked with connecting that individual's story to specific periods/events of history and contextualizing the oral history with supplemental research about that time period/event.

The Historiography of Oral History Socratic Seminar: Student will read an article on the historiography of oral history and then engage in a Socratic seminar

Venn Diagram Activity: Students will work in groups to create Venn diagrams comparing Social History, Oral History, and Storytelling. Students will then find and present an example of each.

Oral History Project:

- **Phase One, Part One:** Students will choose a topic and a person to interview. This can be a family member or the family member of a friend (with that friend's written consent). Students will then begin developing interview questions.
- **Phase One, Part Two:** Students will research the time period or event at the center of their interview. This research should help inform some of the interview questions that they come up with.
- **Phase One, Phase Two, Phase Three, Part Three:** Students will be assigned to a "check-in" group. Towards the end of each phase, check-in groups will meet to go over what they are discovering and learning as well as any challenges they are facing. This is an opportunity for students to provide and receive constructive criticism. They will also have brief assigned check-ins with the teacher so that they can keep track of the students' progress.
- **Phase Two, Parts One and Two:** Students will conduct their interview and then begin to analyze them utilizing the "Interview Analysis Guide".
- **Phase Three, Part One:** Students will begin work on editing their interview recordings and picking out key segments for presentation and discussion.
- **Phase Three, Part Two:** Students will begin work on their Google Slides presentation, making sure to look at the exemplar provided on google classroom and following the presentation guide carefully (particularly with regards to consolidating their interview excerpts).
- **Phase Four, Part One:** Students will create a "Speak Sheet" to utilize during their project presentations.
- **Phase Four, Part Two:** Students will present their projects to their peers. As their peers present, they will be filling out a "presentations" graphic organizer

Final Practicum:

- **Phase One, Part One:** Via democratic process, the class as a whole will decide upon a topic for their practicum. This topic should relate to a specific event or experience for which students will be able to collect several oral histories from community members. Examples of topics may include people's differing experiences during COVID lockdown, Life in Cranford, changes in student life over the years, etc.

- **Phase One, Part Two:** Students will research the time period or event at the center of their interview. This research should help inform some of the interview questions that they come up with. Students will then begin preparing for their interviews. Each student should interview at least three individuals, each from a different demographic group. As part of their interview preparation, students should write up a statement of purpose/proposal, gain signed agreements from each of their interviewees and prepare interview questions to be reviewed and signed off on from the teacher prior to the scheduled interview dates.

- **Phase One, Phase Two, Phase Three, Part Three:** Students will be assigned to a "check-in" group. Towards the end of each phase, check-in groups will meet to go over what they are discovering and learning as well as any challenges they are facing. This is an opportunity for them to seek advice from, and give advice to, their peers. They will also have brief assigned check-ins with the teacher so that they can keep track of the students' progress.

- **Phase Two, Parts One and Two:** Students will conduct their interviews and then begin to analyze them utilizing the "Interview Analysis Guide". At this point, Students may also conduct any genealogical research that they feel might be relevant for the purposes of contextualizing their interviews.

- **Phase Three, Part One:** Students will begin work on editing their interview recordings and picking out key segments for presentation and discussion.

- **Phase Three, Part Two:** Students will begin work on their Google Slides presentation, making sure to look at the exemplar provided on google classroom and following the presentation guide carefully (particularly with regards to consolidating their interview excerpts). Students will also be consolidating their research into a physical portfolio to be presented at the end of the course (exemplar provided).

- **Phase Four, Part One:** Students will work collaboratively as a class to catalog their collected interviews to create an "oral history database". Students will create a "Speak Sheet" to utilize during their individual practicum presentations as well as.

- **Phase Four, Part Two:** Students will present their projects to their peers. As their peers present, they will be filling out a "presentations" graphic organizer

Exhibition: In the style of a traditional science fair, students will set up stations at which they will discuss their oral histories with visiting family members and members of the school community.

Written Reflection: Students will complete a formal written reflection in which they are asked to reflect on the process of collecting oral history and what they took away from the experience.

Final Discussion: In small groups, students will discuss the following questions-

1. What were some of the challenges you faced while working on this project?

2. What was a significant moment for you in the course of your interview? (Ah-Ha moment, shockers, disappointments, etc.)

3. To what extent were you able to secure all of the information that you intended to from your interviewees? What additional information do you wish you had been able to secure?

4. To what extent has your research deepened your understanding of the time period or event at the center of your interviews?

Note: Other strategies to address the learning objectives may include, but are not limited to, direct instruction, primary and secondary source analysis (including annotations, critique, questioning and close reading strategies), self and peer review, think-pair-share activities, creating visual representations, debates, film analysis, Socratic seminars, small group discussions, simulations, mapping activities, jigsaw activities, gallery walks, web quests, and/or inquiry or problem based learning projects.

Assessment

When taking a Social Studies course, students demonstrate differentiated proficiency according to their ability to answer the essential questions through formative and summative assessments. Many of the performance tasks below can be implemented as formative and/or summative assessments. As teachers strive for students to demonstrate proficiency, they will need to create additional or alternative assessments based on demonstration or absence of skill.

Formative Assessments:

- Do Nows/ Exit Slips
- Class Activities
- Oral History Around the World Stations Activity
- Classmate Interviews
- Contextualization Activity
- The Historiography of Oral History Socratic Seminar
- Venn Diagram Activity

Summative Assessments:

- Oral History Project (project, presentation, and reflection)
- Practicum (project, presentation, and reflection)

Benchmark Assessments:

- Small group Check-ins (Students will be assigned to “check-in” groups. Towards the end of each phase

of the summative projects, check-in groups will meet to go over what they are discovering and learning as well as any challenges they are facing. This is an opportunity for them to seek advice from, and give advice to, their peers. They will also have brief assigned check-ins with the teacher for which they need to come prepared with a completed “check-in slip”.

Alternative Assessments:

- Interview Report: Students will be provided with interview transcripts. After completing a provided graphic organizer, the student will contextualize the transcripts by doing additional research on the time period in which the interviewees lived and the event/experience they are speaking about. The student will be responsible for writing a short essay in which they disseminate their research and reflect on what they found.
- Museum Display: Students can work in groups to create museum displays on a social history topic. Displays should illustrate significant changes in the lives of everyday Americans identified by the group's research and provide evidence in support of those changes (such as excerpts from class interviews and the American Life Histories collection, artifacts, and information from other sources).https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/oral-history-and-social-history/

Materials

The design of this course allows for the integration of a variety of instructional, supplemental, and intervention materials that support student learners at all levels in the school and home environments. Associated web content and media sources are infused into the unit as applicable and available In addition to the materials below, the following link connects to district approved textbooks and resources utilized in this course: Core Book List

The following are approved resources that teachers can include to further unit related objectives:

“The Power of Sharing History Through Story-Telling! | Dan Nanamkin | TEDxSpokane” Video - The power of sharing history through story-telling! | Dan Nanamkin | TEDxSpokane

Library of Congress “Oral History and Social History” Lesson Plan - Oral History and Social History | Classroom Materials at the Library of Congress

Oral History Association “Resources” - Resources | Oral History Association

Library of Congress “Analyzing Oral Histories” Teacher’s Guide - Analyzing Oral History

C-SPAN Classroom “Oral Histories - A How-To” Lesson Plan - Oral Histories - A How-To | C-SPAN Classroom

C-SPAN Classroom “Oral Histories” Graphic Organizer - Oral Histories - A How-To

Smithsonian Institute Archives “How to Do Oral History” Guide - How to Do Oral History | Smithsonian Institution Archives

Oral History Association “ Oral History in the Digital Age” Guide - Oral History in the Digital Age

The Smithsonian Center forFolklife and Cultural Heritage “Interviewing Guide” - The Smithsonian Folklife and Oral History Interviewing Guide

Vermont Folklife Center “Fieldwork Guides” - Fieldwork Guides — Vermont Folklife

Abrams, Lynn. Oral History Theory, second edition. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Boyd, Douglas A. Oral history and digital humanities: voice, access, and engagement. Springer, 2014.

Fridlington, Robert, and Lawrence Fuhro. Cranford. Arcadia, 1995.

Fridlington, Robert, and Lawrence Fuhro. Cranford. II, Arcadia, 1995.

Frisch, Michael. A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.

Gluck, Sherna Berger, and Daphne Patai, eds. Women's words: The feminist practice of oral history. Routledge, 2016.

Murphy, Kevin P., Jennifer L. Pierce, and Jason Ruiz. "What Makes Queer Oral History Different." The Oral History Review 43, no. 1 (2016): 1-24.

Neuenschwander, John A. A guide to oral history and the law. Oxford University Press, USA, 2014.

Perks, Robert and Alistair Thomson, The Oral History Reader, third edition. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Ritchie, Donald A. Doing oral history. Oxford University Press, 2014.

Strazdon, Maureen E. Celebrating Cranford. Arcadia Publishing, 2021.

Thompson, Paul. The voice of the past: Oral history. Oxford university press, 2017.

Any additional resources that are not included in this list will be presented to and reviewed by the supervisor before being included in lesson plans. This ensures resources are reviewed and vetted for relevance and appropriateness prior to implementation.

Suggested Strategies for Modification

This link includes content specific accommodations and modifications for all populations:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Pp6EJOCsFz5o4-opzsXpQDQoa6aClW-

bkRGPDRHXVrk/edit?usp=sharing

These additional strategies are helpful when learning Social Studies content and skills:

- Highlighter for close reading and annotation strategies
- Bolded terms in directions
- Reading texts aloud for students to assist in comprehension and analysis
- Providing opportunities for text-to-speech for written responses.
- Use visual presentations of all materials and instructions.
- Include graphic organizers for writing.