

INNOVATIVE TEACHING ACTIVITY

Developing a Repository of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health (MCH): Past, Present, and Future Voices

Assignment Description & Grading Rubric

I. Overview of Assignment

For this assignment, you will conduct an oral history interview with a leader in the field of maternal and child health (MCH). This individual could be a community member, director of a non-profit organization, researcher, or any other person as approved by the instructor. This assignment will provide you with the opportunity to elicit and observe some of the major class themes placed in real-life contexts through the use of oral histories.

Overview of Oral History

Oral histories are often used as a tool to preserve meaningful and relevant stories, skills and practices of a specific trade or topic. An oral history is when one interviews a person in order to get an inside perspective into what it was like to live in a particular time or as a particular member of society. The main goal of any oral history is long-term preservation of knowledge and wisdom that may otherwise be lost. Often lasting between 1.5 and 2 hours, oral history differs from other types of interviews in both scope and intent. It is important that sufficient time be allotted to fully capture an in-depth, rich account of the interviewee's personal experiences.

II. Suggested Practices in Oral History

a. Selecting the Interview

- Research MCH leaders and identify a potential list of interviewees who best fit your topic of choice.
- After getting instructor approval, contact the selected interviewee and request an interview. Be sure to explain the purpose of the project and the commitment you are asking of them.
- Arrange a time to conduct the interview. It is important to plan enough time to accurately gather all the stories the interviewee has to share. Traditionally, an oral history lasts between 1.5 to 2 hours or longer (multiple visits over weeks/months). However, for this assignment, try not to go beyond 2 hours.
- Schedule the interview while being respectful of the interviewee's time and other obligations. Try not to hold interviews in situations where an interviewee may be distracted or feel rushed. Be aware of potential distractions and noises when choosing a location. Arrange for the interview to be conducted one-on-one if possible. Choose a quiet, convenient and safe place that is approved by your instructor.

b. Planning the Interview

- Conduct research on relevant topics, time periods, or life of the individual being interviewed (whichever is the central focus of the interview). It is important to understand the historical context of the interviewee's story.
- Based on your research findings and project goals, create a list of informed questions to help guide the interview. This list will serve as a road map that will help guide the interview. Be aware that interviews often go off topic, but the list will help you get back on track. However, be sure that the interview guide is also flexible so that you can capture candid stories as they evolve during the interview.
- Obtain and test all recording equipment that will be used. Try to use the most up to date recording technology, if available, to help with the long-term preservation of the oral history. Check that all recording equipment is functioning properly with minimal required maintenance or noise.

**Note that a semi-structured oral history guide has been attached as a sample.*

c. Conducting the Interview

- Be respectful of your interviewee throughout the oral history process. You should be on time for your scheduled meeting with all of your equipment prepared in advance.
- Review and collect the interviewee's signature on the release form. In this document you should include an overview of the goals of the project, procedures of the interviewing process, interviewee's rights, and potential uses of the oral history. The narrator must give written permission to record or distribute their words.
- Begin your interview with a general introduction that includes your name, the interviewee's name, the day, year, and location of the interview, and the proposed subject of the interview.
- Start the interview with broad questions, and ask follow-up ones when more detailed information is needed. Begin with simple questions, saving sensitive or confrontational questions for later in the interview.
- Most of your questions should be open-ended and follow-up questions (i.e., probing) are appropriate to get more information. When needed, ask the interviewer for examples to clarify certain points. Interviews often go off-topic, so it is important to be flexible. It is important that you give your interviewee plenty of time to think and answer. If at any point the interviewee refuses to discuss a subject, move on to the next question. The interviewee may also choose to remain anonymous or restrict who may access the interview, which you also must respect.
- Additional tips to keep in mind while conducting an interview:
 - Add statements to help trigger a narrator's memory or restating their comments to ensure you understand.
 - Do not interrupt the interviewee when they are speaking and write down follow-up questions to be asked later.
 - Try to cover the topics in chronological order, and ask only one question at a time. Avoid loaded questions that may steer an interviewee towards a certain answer.

- It is important to maintain eye contact with your interviewee as much as possible and provide silent encouragement such as nods when appropriate.
- Don't be afraid of silence. It allows the interviewee to gather their thoughts.
- As mentioned above, **be sure to be flexible enough during the interview to capture rich, candid stories that evolve. Often unanticipated stories and remarks that the interviewee shares are the most rewarding!**
- Finish the interview on a light note, and express appreciation to the interviewee for his/her time.
- If possible, follow-up with the interviewee upon completion of your oral history to allow them to review and have a copy of the final product and to thank them for their contribution.

[OPTIONAL SECTION – NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR: OMIT THIS SECTION IF NECESSARY]

- *After the interview has been conducted you will transcribe the recording of the interview. Please be as true to the actual interview as possible, this will likely require listening multiple times. If certain words are unintelligible after several attempts, blanks may be used as place holders.*

III. ASSIGNMENT DELIVERABLES

- Submit a recording of your oral history to your instructor for grading.
- Submit a summary of the background research that compiled in preparation for the oral history.

[OPTIONAL SECTION – NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR: OMIT THIS SECTION IF NECESSARY]

- *In addition to the recorded oral history, submit the transcribed interview for grading.*
- *In addition to the recorded oral history, submit a one-page reflection paper discussing the aspects of the assignment you liked and did not like and what you learned from the experience.*

IV. GRADING RUBRIC

Your grade will be assigned based on meeting the following criteria. A possible 40 points can be obtained.

i. Basic Version

Category	8 points	6-7 points	4-5 points	1-2 points
Questioning – Knowledge	Questioning demonstrated a strong grasp of the topic and excellent background research.	Questioning demonstrated a fair grasp of the topic and good background research.	Questioning demonstrated some grasp of the topic and weak background research.	Poor questioning due to poor background research and a weak understanding of the content investigated.
Questioning - Effectiveness	Questions were effective and sufficiently open-ended to draw out the interviewee.	Questions were somewhat effective and sufficiently open-ended to draw out the interviewee.	Questions were not effective and failed to draw out the interviewee.	Questions were not effective. Most were close ended.
Questioning – Logical and Orderly	The questions followed an orderly progression (chronological) and built upon each other.	The questions followed a somewhat orderly progression and built upon each other.	The questions jumped around and were not in an orderly progression.	The questions followed no orderly progression and were unrelated to each other.
Resources/ Documentation in Preparing Questions	Background research shows the use of a variety of sources of information which have been cited in a bibliography.	Background research shows the use of several sources of information which have been cited in a bibliography.	Background research shows very little variety in the sources of information which have been cited in a bibliography.	Not enough background research was used in the preparation of the oral history.
Preparation	The student had notes about all the events and facts s/he wished to include in his video before beginning. Notes were submitted.	The student had notes about all the events and facts s/he wished to include in his video before beginning. Notes were submitted.	The student had notes about most (~75%) of the events and facts s/he wished to include in his video before beginning. Notes were submitted.	The student had not prepared adequate notes before beginning or notes were not submitted.

Adapted from:

<http://wavesofhistory.sblc.wikispaces.net/file/view/Oral%20History%20Rubric.pdf/307136498/Oral%20History%20Rubric.pdf>

ii. Advanced Version

Category	8 points	6 points	4 points	1 point
Questioning – Knowledge	Questioning demonstrated a strong grasp of the topic and excellent research into it.	Questioning demonstrated a fair grasp of the topic and good research into it.	Questioning demonstrated some grasp of the topic and weak research.	Poor questioning due to poor research and a weak understanding of the content investigated.
Questioning - Effectiveness	Questions were effective and sufficiently open-ended to draw out the interviewee.	Questions were somewhat effective and sufficiently open-ended to draw out the interviewee.	Questions were not effective and failed to draw out the interviewee.	Questions were not effective. Most were close ended.
Questioning – Logical and Orderly	The questions followed and orderly progression (chronological) and built upon each other.	The questions followed a somewhat orderly progression and built upon each other.	The questions jumped around and were not in an orderly progression.	The questions followed no orderly progression and were unrelated to each other.
Resources/ Documentation in Preparing Questions	Background research shows the use of a variety of sources of information which have been cited in a bibliography.	Background research shows the use of several sources of information which have been cited in a bibliography.	Background research shows very little variety in the sources of information which have been cited in a bibliography.	Not enough background research was used in the preparation of the oral history.
Audio/Video Taping Effectiveness	The audio/video was well done and clear.	The audio/video was well done for most of its length with a few weak places.	The audio/video was poorly done and hardly acceptable.	The audio/video was so poorly done and of little value.
Accurate Transcription	The transcription was a word for word account as required.	A few errors were noted in the transcription.	Many errors were noted in the transcription.	The transcription contained too many errors and is unacceptable.
Self-Reflection	Self-reflection is one-page in length and gives a meaningful and thoughtful critique of the assignment and lessons learned	Self-reflection is one-page in length and gives a meaningful and thoughtful critique of the assignment or lessons learned, but not both	Self-reflection is one-page in length, but reflections lack insight or depth. Critique could be more meaningful and thoughtful.	Self-reflection is significantly lacking in length and level of insight or depth.

Adapted from:

<http://wavesofhistory.sblc.wikispaces.net/file/view/Oral%20History%20Rubric.pdf/307136498/Oral%20History%20Rubric.pdf>

<http://education.owu.edu/pdfs/departmentForms/RUBRICForSelfReflectionPaperFieldExperienceStudentTeaching.pdf>

V. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Abrams, L. (2010). *Oral history theory*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Alexander, G.R. (2004). *Maternal and Child Health (MCH)*. *Encyclopedia of Health Care Management*. CA: Sage Publications.
- Baylor University Institute for Oral History. (2012). *Introduction to oral history* [PDF document]. Retrieved from <http://www.baylor.edu/oralhistory>
- Caldwell, R.B.. (2009). *Principles and Best Practices*. In Oral History Association. Retrieved from <http://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices/>
- Hunt , M. (2003). *The Smithsonian Folklife and Oral History Interviewing Guide* [PDF document]. Retrieved from <http://www.folklife.si.edu/resources/pdf/interviewingguide.pdf>
- Maternal Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration, US Department of Health and Human Services. (2012). *MCH Timeline*. Retrieved from <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/about/timeline/>
- Minnesota Historical Society. (2001). *Oral history project guidelines* [PDF document]. Retrieved from <http://www.mnhs.org/collections/oralhistory/ohguidelines.pdf>
- Moyer. J. (1999). *Step-by-step guide to oral history*. Retrieved from http://dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html
- Petersen, D.J. (2009). *MCH Leadership and Policy in the 21st Century* [PowerPoint slides]. Available upon request.
- The Writing Center at UNC Chapel Hill. (2010-2012). Available at <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/files/2012/09/Oral-History-The-Writing-Center.pdf>.
- Vamos C.A., Daley E.M., Perrin K., Mahan C., & Buhi E.R. (2011). *Approaching four decades of politics in family planning: A compilation of Title X's legislative history*. *American Journal of Public Health*, 101, 2027-2037