

# **INNOVATIVE TEACHING ACTIVITY**

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

### **Overview and Instructor Notes**

#### **I. Introduction**

This assignment provides students with an opportunity to conduct oral histories with national, state and local leaders in Maternal and Child Health (MCH). Oral history is a specific methodology and approach that focuses on retrieving in-depth personal historic accounts for long term preservation. It is often used as a tool to preserve meaningful and relevant stories, skills and practices.

#### **II. Purpose**

The purpose of this innovative teaching activity is to teach, archive and celebrate the field of MCH through the use of oral histories among MCH leaders from a variety of organizations, agencies and foci areas across the lifespan (i.e., prenatal care; childhood; adolescence; women's health).

Understanding the technique and value of using oral histories will encourage continuation of the practice in the next generation of MCH teachers and researchers. In addition, by collecting stories on the achievements and challenges of MCH predecessors, students gain contextual knowledge that will better prepare them to advance in their careers.

#### **III. Learning Objectives**

Upon completion of this project, students will:

- Gain skills to conduct a modified (limited) oral history with a local or regional MCH leader
- Learn valuable knowledge about the personal memories and experiences of an important member of the MCH community.
- Be provided with contextual examples that promote a thorough understanding of MCH main themes.
- Contribute to a repository of MCH stories that will help create more informed MCH research, policy and practice decisions in the future

#### **IV. Materials and Resources**

Included in this assignment toolkit are the following:

- **PowerPoint Presentation** (with instructor notes)
  - Includes a brief history of MCH; an introduction of oral history as a methodology; and an overview of the assignment
- **Assignment Instructions & Grading Rubric**
  - Includes two versions (short and expanded) to accommodate a variety of lengths of the assignment
- **Two Complete Oral Histories & Sample Clips Identified by Theme**

## V. Procedure

### **Instructor Responsibilities:**

- Provide clear instructions for conducting the oral history
- Review and approve both the topic, the individual to be interviewed, and the location
- Stress the importance to students of conducting the interview in a safe and convenient location

### **Students Responsibilities:**

- Identify someone in the MCH field and contact them to request an interview
- Conduct preliminary research on the interviewee (e.g., review resume/CV; reports that the person has authored; other background information) and related health topics/issues
- Create interview questions to be used during the oral history
- Conduct an oral history with their interviewee and create an audio or video recording of the interview.

Note: Interviews may vary in length, but traditional oral histories last between 1.5 to 2 hours. This is at the discretion of the instructor.

Optional: If a more in-depth assignment is desired, students may be asked to transcribe their interviews and/or provide a one page self-reflection on the assignment.

## VI. Assessment

Two possible grading rubrics have been included in this assignment toolkit. The basic version is used for a smaller course requirement and assesses only the essential components of the oral history. The expanded option is used when the oral history project is a major component of the course and includes assessment of items such as transcripts and sound quality.

## VII. Instructor Reflection

It is suggested that instructors reflect on this assignment after its administration and grading for continual course improvement. Some reflection questions instructors may want to consider are the following:

- What worked well in this assignment? What didn't? Why do you think this?
- What might you want to change if you use the activity again in the future and/or in other courses?
- Are there new or emerging MCH issues that could be addressed in the next iteration of this assignment to keep this activity relevant?
- Compare your reflections with what students' wrote in their self-reflection papers (if applicable).