Decade Discovery: The 1960s—An Oral History Class Activity

Teacher name: Kelly Tobal

ACTION PLAN FOR INTERVIEWING (API)
October 2009 Teachers Oral history Workshop
California University of Pennsylvania
Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources
Instructors: Nik Roberts, M.S., David Lonich, Ph.D.
§ I. STANDARDS AND REFERENCES

Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening
1.6.5. E Conduct Interviews
http://www.pde.state.pa.us/stateboard_ed/cwp/view.asp?Q=76716

History
8.1.6. B Explain and analyze historical sources
http://www.pde.state.pa.us/stateboard_ed/cwp/view.asp?Q=76716

§ II. INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING MODEL (IBLM)

This oral history class activity is guided by the following six-step IBLM:

A. Defining - Students will be taught introductory lessons on primary and secondary sources and the time period (i.e. the 1960s) being studied;

B. Locating - Students will locate an interview participant;

C. Selecting & Analyzing - Students will analyze primary and secondary sources from the 1960s for background research;

D. Organizing & Synthesizing - Students will create a timeline of the years their interviewee attended Jr. High School;

E. Creating & Presenting - Students will create open-ended questions and conduct their interview according to them; and,

F. Evaluating - Students will write a report that will be scored by the included rubric.

§ III. DESCRIPTIVE WALK-THROUGH OF MY ACTIVITY

This Action Plan for Interviewing (API) describes one particular activity I would use during my Decade Discovery Unit in my current curriculum. The standard social studies curriculum for sixth grade students attending my school district focuses on ancient civilizations. The main goal of my special unit on Decade Discovery is to make students aware of how important it is to preserve history—in particular, firsthand accounts. My API requires students
to interview a member of their family or community that attended Jr. High School between 1964 and 1969.

The 1960s were turbulent years with several events that shaped the country we know today. The Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement, the Kennedy Legacy, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and The Beatles are just a few of the topics I think students would find interesting. The interviewee will be asked to recall events that were taking place during their adolescent years and their personal memories of those events. As a result of the interview, students will have gained a better understanding of a particular time in U.S. History and hopefully make a personal connection with the interviewee.

Lessons prior to my API would introduce students to primary and secondary sources and the time period we will be discovering. This is the **Defining stage** of the activity. When students are ready to create their own primary source—in particular, an oral history—they will choose a participant they would like to interview. At this point of the unit I would send an informational letter home to parents informing them of the purpose of the project and the time frame in which the interview will occur. The future interviewee would need to be identified on the returned form, along with the dates that they attended Jr. High. This is the **locating stage** of the activity.

In order to properly conduct the interview, prior research of existing primary and secondary sources would be explored. Secondary sources (such as textbooks, encyclopedias, and classroom handouts) and primary sources (such as History Channel interviews and primary source photographs from the Library of Congress and other trusted sites) would be reviewed as a class. This is the **Selecting/Analyzing stage** of the activity. In preparation for creating
interview questions, students will organize highlights from our research sessions on a timeline. Their main focus would be organizing events from the years their particular interviewee attended Jr. High School. This is the Organizing stage of the activity. In addition to the timeline, students will decide on the biographical questions each interviewee should be asked at the beginning of the interview.

Now the students are ready to create four open-ended questions they would ask along with a set of general questions composed by myself. This along with conducting the interview is the Creating/Presenting stage of the activity. I would strongly advise students to conduct their interview in a quiet setting that is both comfortable for them and their participant. Although there are several ways to document interviews, my students’ personal recording device will be pencil and paper. After their questions have been approved by me, they will use computer lab time to make a formal copy of their questions and provide space for responses.

After conducting the interview, students will edit and organize their interview notes in order to prepare a report to share with their classmates. For the Evaluating stage of the activity students will write a five paragraph report of their interview. In the first paragraph the interviewee will be introduced along with their biographical information. In the second through fourth paragraphs questions and responses from the interview will be discussed. Paragraph five will be the students’ personal reflection of the interview, including examples of how the interviewee’s recollection of that time period is similar and different to other sources of the 1960s they researched prior to conducting the interview. These reports would be scored by a rubric and displayed in the classroom with their timelines.
§ IV. MY ASSESSMENT TOOL

Oral History Interview Rubric: Decade Discovery—The 1960s

Teacher Name: **Mrs. Tobal**

Student Name: __________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>4 Outstanding</th>
<th>3 Above Average</th>
<th>2 Satisfactory</th>
<th>1 Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Before the interview, the student prepared several in-depth AND factual questions to ask.</td>
<td>Before the interview, the student prepared a couple of in-depth questions and several factual questions to ask.</td>
<td>Before the interview, the student prepared several factual questions to ask.</td>
<td>The student did not prepare any questions before the interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formatting &amp; Editing</td>
<td>The student edited and organized the transcript in a way that made the information clear and interesting.</td>
<td>The student edited and organized the transcript in a way that made the information clear.</td>
<td>The student edited and organized the transcript but the information was not as clear or as interesting as it could have been.</td>
<td>The student did NOT edit or organize the transcript.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report Writing</td>
<td>The report is well organized and contains accurate facts taken from the interview.</td>
<td>The report is somewhat organized and contains accurate facts taken from the interview.</td>
<td>The report has very little organization and contains few accurate facts taken from the interview.</td>
<td>The report has no organization and facts are not accurately reported.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Gained</td>
<td>Student can accurately answer several questions about the person who was interviewed and can tell how this interview relates to the material being studied in class.</td>
<td>Student can accurately answer a few questions about the person who was interviewed and can tell how this interview relates to the material being studied in class.</td>
<td>Student can accurately answer a few questions about the person who was interviewed.</td>
<td>Student cannot accurately answer questions about the person who was interviewed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>