How to Teach Students to Conduct an Oral History Interview with their Favorite Children’s Author
Teacher Name: Melissa Romeo

2nd Grade

October 2009 Teacher’s Oral History Workshop
California University Teaching with Primary Sources
Instructors: N. Roberts/D. Lonich
Investigative Question: “What skills are important to become a good author?”

I. PA Teaching Standards
Technology Education
3.6.4 B. Identify electronic communication methods that exist in the community (e.g., digital cameras, telephone, internet, television, fiber optics.)

Types of Writing
1.4.3 B. Write informational pieces (e.g., descriptions, letters, reports, and instructions) use illustrations when relevant.

Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening
1.4.8 B. Use primary and secondary sources.

The above standards can be accessed via the State Board of Education website.

II. Inquiry-Based Learning Model

This activity uses the following five-step Inquiry-Based Learning Model (IBLM):

Ask, Investigate, Create, Discuss, and Reflect. Each step is briefly explained below, and then referenced where it occurs in the procedure (i.e.: Descriptive walk-through).

Ask - Students will ask themselves what type of questions they want to know about the author, and what questions are important to ask during the interview.

Investigate - The students will research information about their chosen author to get background information on them.

Create - The students will come up with a creative inventory of questions to ask the author during the interview (i.e. writing skills, creative ideas, genres, writing styles.)

Discuss - The students will discuss with other students how the interview went. (e.g. “What would they do differently,” or “What did they like most of all?”)

Reflect - The students will reflect on how well the interview went by writing a detailed report. They will also be reflecting on the assignment in a small group activity with their classmates.

III. Descriptive Walk-Through of My Activity

The goal of this lesson is to teach 2nd grade students how to conduct an oral history interview with their favorite children’s author. This assignment is designed for
diverse reading levels. Examples follow:

- Beginner reader: “If You Give a Moose a Muffin” by Laura Joffe Numeroff
- Average reader: “Curious George Goes to the Beach” by H.A. Rey
- Advanced reader: “Junie B. Jones is Captain Field Day” by Barbara Park

In a previous lesson, the students will have learned important writing skills, styles, and genres. I want my students to focus on important writing skills that it takes to become a good author. The students will get to select their favorite author to interview, and use one of the author’s books to assess writing style. They will also analyze information from the interview.

First, I will introduce the topic of oral interviews to the students and ask them why it would be important to conduct an oral interview. We would then have a short discussion on their ideas. The students will also be asked what steps they would use for conducting an interview. This is part of what constitutes the ask section of the IBLM.

Next, I would spend time with the class discussing the steps needed to be taken in order to conduct an oral interview. I would walk through each step and explain in detail what needs to be done in order to complete that step. The steps that I will explain are as follows:

A. **Select Topic** - the topic of this activity is for the student’s to learn how to conduct an oral interview with a children’s author and focus on what important skills are needed to becoming a good author.

B. **Choose an Interviewee** - the students will need to choose a children’s author, and one of the author’s books.

C. **Background Research** - (This is part of the Investigate section of the IBLM). 1. topical, geographical, chronological, 2. biographical (how to create a biographical data inventory form; how to search: internet, archives, public records.)

D. **Angle** - focus on what important writing skills are needed and used by the author.

E. **Questioning** - (This reflects the Create section of the IBLM). I will explain to students
that they need a sense of direction on what kind of questions to ask (1. collecting basic data, 2. making a personal connection, 3. covering conceptual questions and questions dealing with personal background, interests, hobbies, and skills.) Some examples of questions are: “Where do you come up with your ideas for a story?”, “What kind of writing style do you use?”, “What genre are most of your books?”, “Would you list four writing skills that you feel are most important when writing?”, “Do your interests or hobbies help give you ideas for your books?”

F. Setting and Technology-Decide where and when the interview will take place and make sure the setting is in a comfortable location for the interviewee. For recording purposes, the students will have to decide what technology/interview format to use during their interview. Some suggestions are: tape recorder, e-mail, video camera, digital camera, or phone.

G. Conduct the interview-(This is the Ask section of the IBLM.) The students will use their data form and questions to help guide their oral history interview.

H. Analysis/Editing-the students will edit graphical errors and summarize the important information from the interview.

I. Application-students will take the information from this interview and apply the information to create a two paged, double-spaced report.

J. Evaluation-focus on what they learned during the interview. They will be told what their assessment is and will be given a rubric to help guide them.

I will give then give and explain the assignment to the students. The students will receive an outline of how to conduct an oral interview. They will use this outline as a guide. The first step will be to choose and contact the selected author and see if they are willing to be interviewed. Then, they will have to ask themselves what kinds of questions they want to know about their favorite author (e.g. personal, writing, interests, hobbies). The students will need to investigate and research background information about their author, by using the internet.

Next, I will explain to the students and show them an example of a data inventory questionnaire. This collects the following data: Date of Birth, Name, Occupation, “When did you know you wanted to become an author?”, “Were you always a strong
writer?”, “List what you feel are important skills to use when writing.” The students will need to create a data inventory questionnaire of at least ten questions.

The students will then have to contact the author and decide how and where they want to conduct the interview. They will then choose the type of technology to use. Once all is in place, students will be ready to conduct the interview. (This is part of the Ask section of the IBLM) After the interview, the students will need to look over their notes and questions and be able to summarize their interview and then edit it.

Finally, the students will be able to have a small group discussion and reflect and discuss what went well and what they would do differently. (This is part of the Discuss/Reflect Section of the inquiry model)

As an assessment, the students will be given a rubric to use as a guide in helping them write a two page report. The report will need to include facts from the questions given and answered in the interview. I have created a rubric.

**IV. My Assessment Tool**

As an assessment tool, the students will write a report with the information they got from researching. A rubric will be created for students of what needs to be included in their report. The paper will be two pages, double-spaced. It is worth a total of 25 points.

The rubric follows on the next page:
# Rubric

1. Explain why you chose this author. (Minimum of 5 sentences) 5 points

2. Explain why you chose this author’s book. 2 points

3. The student must include two of their favorite illustrations from the book. 2 points

4. List 3 important writing skills needed to become a good author. 3 points

5. Include two interesting personal facts the gave during the interview. 2 points

6. Explain the genre of the book. 2 points

7. Title Page-Include: Title, Written and Illustrated By, Author Interviewee’s name. 4 points

8. Describe what was most meaningful to you and what you got out of the interview and how could you apply it in your life. (Minimum of 3 sentences) 3 points

9. Explain the type of technology that you used in your interview. 2 points

Total: 25 points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-20</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-15</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-10</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-5</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-0</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>