



Unit Planner: Oral History Project Economics

Tuesday, November 6, 2018, 12:31PM

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Last Updated: [Friday, February 10, 2017](#) by
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Oral History Project

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Big Ideas / Enduring Understandings

Economics is not just the absorption of "big ideas," but also the understanding that each person contributes to the sociological and economic history on a micro level.

Studs Terkel is a journalistic figure who provides us with an excellent model of how to tell and value the stories of the "everyman" in our economic history.

Conducting oral history allows us to frame, develop, and customize questions that highlight the unique experience of an individual's experience in his/her working life.

Oral history is the procedural collection of living people's testimony about his/her own experiences, told in his/her own voice.

Oral historians attempt to verify their findings, analyze them, and place them in an accurate historical context.

Essential Questions

How does conducting oral history help organize the memories of an individual's life into an ordered narrative? How does oral history "listen" to these stories?

How does the experience of one person's life as a working person reflect the larger historical and economic moments in society?

How do we become historians and create a permanent record by conducting oral history using one selected subject?

Common Core Standards and Indicators

NYS: CCLS:English Language Arts 6-12

NYS: Grades 11-12

Reading: Informational Text

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

1a. Develop factual, interpretive, and evaluative questions for further exploration of the topic(s).

Speaking & Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

1d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

2. Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

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NYS: CCLS: Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects 6-12

NYS: Grades 11-12

Capacities of the Literate Individual

Students Who are College and Career Ready in Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, & Language

They respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline.

They use technology and digital media strategically and capably.

New York State P-12 Learning Standards (New York State Education Department, used with permission)

Content

National Public Radio profile of Studs Terkel's method and legacy

Excerpts from *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do*

Charlie Leduff's profile of Flint, Michigan policeman from the *New York Times Magazine*

All in the Family, Season 2, Episode 14: "The Elevator Story"

Skills / Strategies

Reading excerpts of Studs Terkel's oral history compilations to understand method, process, and structure of his narratives

Framing content-rich, illuminating questions leading to deeper, more thoughtful responses from interview subject

Listening to and capturing unique voices through interviewing skills and practices

Mapping one of Terkel's interviewees in a "4D" profile

Conducting oral history using Terkel techniques

Transcribing interview onto Word/Google Docs document

Molding and parsing down transcription to an Terkel-esque formatted original oral history narrative

Key Terms / Vocabulary

oral history

personal narrative

transcription/transcribe

working life

Learning Plan & Activities

Please include Theatre Modalities when appropriate

Students work in pairs to create a "4D" profile of one of Terkel's interviewees: mind map, timeline, floorplan of

Assessments

[Depth of Knowledge \(DOK\) Levels](#)

Oral History Narrative

Summative: DOK 4 Extended Thinking: Written:

the person's work or home space, sample questions, and sketch/drawing inference of what the person might have looked like.

Students read excerpts of Terkel's interviews to understand how to format their own final versions of their oral histories.

Students practice developing and framing questions for conducting their own interviews.

Students conduct their own interviews outside of class time, utilizing appropriate technology to complete the project. Following the interview, students go through the process of transcribing, editing, and formatting their final oral history narrative according to Terkel-esque standards.

Narrative

Students develop questions for, conduct, transcribe, edit, and format an original oral history narrative in the method, process, and style of journalist Studs Terkel.

"4D" Profile of Terkel Interviewee Narrative

Project: Visual Arts

Students, in pairs or groups of three, read and analyze one of Terkel's oral history subjects through a mind map, detailed drawing of the domicile/work floor plan or timeline of subject's life, sketch/drawing of the individual, and the development of ten questions that he may have asked in order to elicit responses of substance and depth.

Resources

Texts Used (fiction, non-fiction, on-line, media, etc...)

Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do

Text Features

- Layout
- Meaning / Purpose
- Text Structure

Texts Used (fiction, non-fiction, on-line, media, etc...)

Episode of the 1970s situation comedy program, *All in the Family*

Focus

- Whole class
- Research

