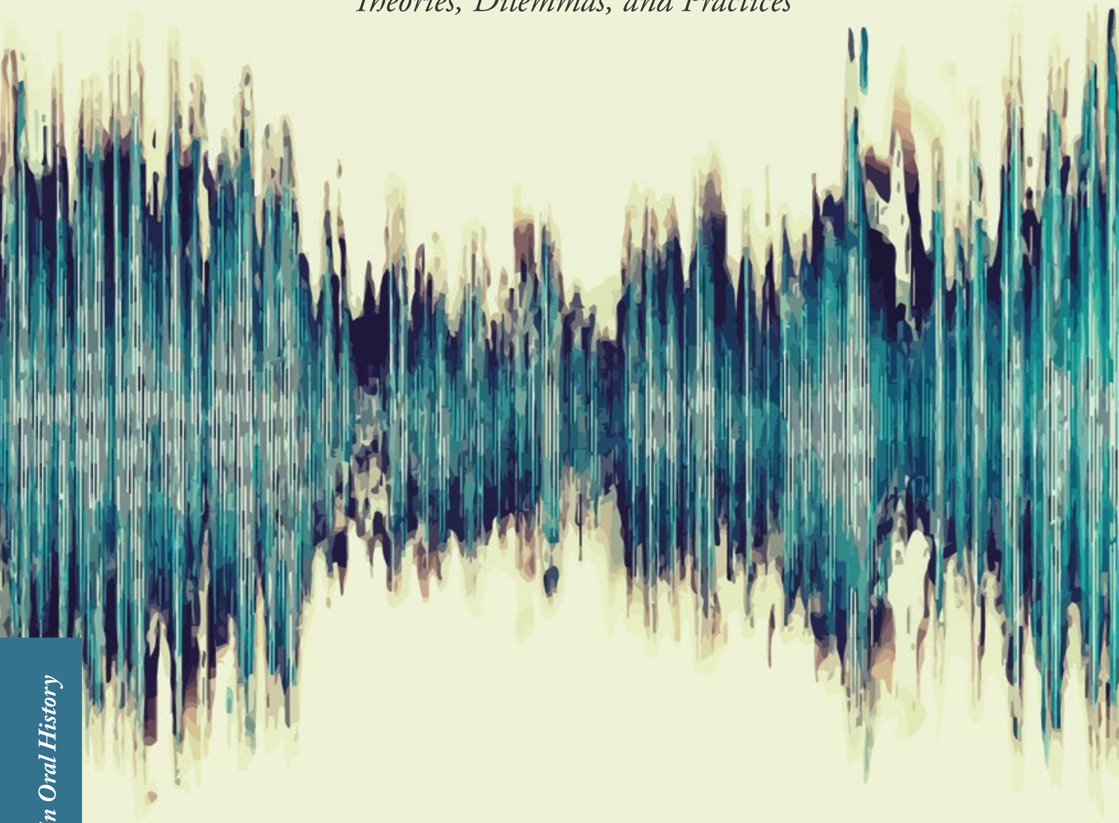
ORAL HISTORY AND EDUCATION

Theories, Dilemmas, and Practices



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& **NICHOLAS NG-A-FOOK**

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Kristina R. Llewellyn • Nicholas Ng-A-Fook
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Oral History and Education

Theories, Dilemmas, and Practices

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Our collaboration on this book resulted from a mutual belief in the power of story. This is a belief that has guided our research topics and processes throughout our academic lives. It is also a belief that has shaped our teaching practices. We know the critical importance of hearing, for example, the oral histories of women educators when considering the gendered structures of schools. Similarly, we know the profound awareness about racism that is raised for students who encounter the lived histories of Indian Residential School system survivors. Perhaps most importantly, we have come to more keenly understand the obligations of co-creating and/or witnessing oral history as a teacher and learner. It is with those obligations in mind—which we know weigh heavily on all educators engaged with communities in this type of work—that we wanted to open a dialogue about oral history in the twenty-first-century classroom. We wanted to reach out to international scholars and practitioners who like us were wrestling with the power and challenges of oral history in and for education. In that effort, we issued an international call in 2014 for individuals to participate in a workshop on *Oral History and Education*. We are extremely grateful to those dedicated and innovative individuals who responded to the call from around the world and presented their work in May 2015 at the University of Ottawa. We are also grateful to the workshop attendees—teachers, teacher educators, graduate students, and oral historians from across Ontario and the eastern United States—who offered their insights and constructive feedback on the different presentations. The chapters included in this collection originate from that workshop. To this end, we must also acknowledge that the workshop took place on unceded ancestral

Anishinaabeg territories of the Algonquin (Omaamiiwininii) First Nations people. We cannot thank the Kitigan Zibi Algonquin community enough for their ongoing teachings and support.

The professional learning that emerged from that workshop and concomitantly the publication of this collection was made possible by a Connections Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Generous institutional and financial support was also provided by Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE), International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies (IAACS), The History Education Network/Histoire et éducation en réseau (THEN/HiER), Oral History Centre of the University of Winnipeg, Making History: Narratives and Collective Memory in Education/Faire l'histoire: récits et mémoires collectives en éducation at the University of Ottawa; Renison University College at the University of Waterloo, Faculty of Arts and Vice-President University Research of the University of Waterloo, and Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa.

The Oral History Education Project workshop and our knowledge mobilization activities thereafter were only possible because of the tireless work of several research assistants. Thank you to Patricia Mangahis for assistance with the grant application, Gabrielle Dickson with designing materials, and to Kelsey Schmitz for social media coordination. We offer our greatest thanks to Hoa Truong-White who coordinated the planning, daily logistics of the conference, and ensuing proceedings, which were published in *Our Schools, Our Selves*. For this manuscript, we must thank Jesse Butler for his editorial assistance and close readings of earlier drafts. Likewise, we could not have completed the collection in a timely fashion without the organizational support and rigorous copyediting of Tylor Burrows. Needless to say, the curricular and pedagogical challenges different authors explore and innovations they share in this book would not be possible without their amazing commitment to our vision for the collection. Our sincerest thank you goes out to each of you for sharing your work, being flexible in response to our editorial decisions, and for your patience. To this end, the collection could not have been brought forth to its final completion without the editorial oversight of Kristin Purdy and her team at Palgrave Macmillan.

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I, Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, would like to thank Laurie Anne, Aidan, Ezra, and Jonah for pushing us all to remember and share stories that remind us of our vulnerabilities as human beings living with each other in an increasingly tumultuous world. My capacity to do such community-based work could not be possible without Petra Munro Hendry's initial provocations during her graduate course on oral history education that took place at McKinley High School within and in collaboration with the African American community of South Baton Rouge. Moreover, my work with oral history education continues to be inspired by the stories Edward Gray, my grandfather, shared around the dinner table of his trials and tribulations before and after World War II. Known to his grandchildren as Pa Gray, or Biggen, he had a deep and contagious passion for World History. I would also like to dedicate this collection to Arlene Fung-A-Fat, my great-auntie, who left us all last year. I was fortunate enough to interview her about our family history, which recounted our migration from China to British Guinea during the nineteenth century. Their stories continue to shed light on our extended family's lived experiences either here in Canada or abroad in relation to the different historical events we continue to teach and not teach in schools. Finally, I would like to thank Kristina Llewellyn who invited me to be part of this groundbreaking oral history education project during an intermission at the 2014 Canadian Society for the Study of Education conference, which took place at Brock University. Her knowledge of the field, generosity, and commitment toward creating educational spaces for restorative justice remains visionary.

Lastly, we would both like to sincerely thank all of the educators, survivors, and storytellers for sharing a part of your past lives in this collection. You all continue to inspire our commitment toward social justice education that we do as public servants working on behalf of the public good.

Contents

1 **Introduction: Oral History Education for Twenty-First-Century Schooling** 1
Kristina R. Llewellyn and Nicholas Ng-A-Fook

Part I Conceptual and Theoretical Approaches 15

2 **Oral History as Peace Pedagogy** 17
Kristina R. Llewellyn and Sharon Anne Cook

3 **Pedagogical Approaches to Oral History in Schools** 43
Nicoletta Christodoulou

4 **Doing Oral History Education Toward Reconciliation** 65
Nicholas Ng-A-Fook and Bryan Smith

5 **When Oral History Calls on You: Stories from Nunavut** 87
Heather E. McGregor and Catherine A. McGregor

6 **Feminist Pedagogies and Histories of Choice: Using Student-Led Oral Histories to Engage Reproductive Rights** 107
Frances Davey, Kris De Welde, and Nicola Foote

7 **STEM Histories: Complicating Dominant (Object-Oriented) Narratives** 129
Amanda Wray

Part II Methodological and Pedagogical Dilemmas 147

8 **"We Tell Stories": Oral History as a Pedagogical Encounter** 149
Brenda Trofanenko

9 **Where Macro and Micro Histories Meet: Position, Trumps, and Pitfalls of Family History as a Form of Oral History in Flemish Education** 167
Karel Van Nieuwenhuyse

10 **Ethical Complexities for History Teachers: Accredited Oral History Training in Australia** 187
Elaine Rabbitt

11 **Re-Visioning Self-Determination: Planning for Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Oral Histories with Indigenous Communities** 207
Christine Rogers Stanton, Brad Hall, and Lucia Ricciardelli

12 **Remembrance as a Digitally Mediated Practice of Pedagogy** 231
Avril Aitken

Part III Programs and Practices 251

13 Inspiring Pedagogy: Talking to Educators about Oral History in the Classroom 253
Julie Perrone

14 Collecting Family Oral Histories in an Elementary Classroom: Shaping Stories as They Shape Us 273
Barbara Brockmann

15 Developing Student Teachers' Historical Thinking: Oral History in Teacher Education 299
Amy von Heyking

16 Oral History Pedagogy in Situations of Conflict: Experiences from Colombia, 1996–2014 317
Guillermo Vodniza and Alexander Freund

17 Learning with and from Rwandan Survivor-Historians: Testimonial Oral History as Relationship Building in Schools 337
Lisa K. Taylor, Marie-Jolie Rwigema, Shelley Kyte, and Umwali Sollange

18 Learning with Digital Testimonies in Germany: Educational Material on Nazi Forced Labor and the Holocaust 361
Cord Pagenstecher and Dorothee Wein

Index 379

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LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 3.1 Approaches to teaching about conflict 48
Fig. 12.1 Near Fort McKenzie. Photo: Tamia Chescappio 241
Fig. 14.1 Categories of oral history 280
Fig. 14.2 Historical thinking 284
Fig. 14.3 Sample book cover 285
Ill. 18.1 Interview with Polish artist and Ravensbruck survivor Helena Bohle-Szacki in the online archive *Forced Labor 1939–1945*, www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de, za253 364
Ill. 18.2 Students' tasks on the interview with Margot Segall-Blank on the DVD *Witnesses of the Shoah: Escape* 369
Ill. 18.3 The interactive editor of the *Forced Labor 1939–1945* DVD 370

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Oral History Education for Twenty-First-Century Schooling

Kristina R. Llewellyn and Nicholas Ng-A-Fook

> *Oral history can be truly revolutionary pedagogy.*[1]
>
> *(William Ayers and Richard Ayers)*

We live in a time that is saturated by the digital documentation of our life histories. So, if "history is widely popular these days," as Margaret MacMillan has argued, then oral history is becoming more and more part of our daily social fixations.[2] In 2006, Max Brooks published *World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War*, which is a novel based on first-person accounts of political upheaval after a zombie plague, and inspired by Studs Terkel's *The Good War: An Oral History of World War Two.*[3] Brooks' *New York Times* bestseller was later produced as a blockbuster motion picture. In 2015, Svetlana Alexievich, an acclaimed Belarusian oral historian, won

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the Nobel Prize in Literature for *Secondhand Time: The Last of the Soviets*, for what reviewers praised as a lyrical oral history account of post-Soviet Russia.[4] This was the first time an oral history book was awarded the prize. For young people in particular, oral history has become part of a confessional culture,[5] developed through social media engagement. *Humans of New York*, started by Brandon Stanton in 2010 to catalogue photo life histories of all New York citizens, is arguably the most popular blog of all time.[6] *StoryCorps* has crossed the United States since 2003 to amass the single largest oral history collection. It is about to get bigger having won a one-million-dollar TED Prize to launch a smartphone app for worldwide expansion. It is up for debate, of course, to what extent a fetish with personal life histories and eyewitness accounts of the past is a benefit. The fact still remains that oral history has been woven "into the fabric of our culture" as people connect with the idea that "everyone's story matters."[7] This is in part because oral history is, as Paul Thompson reminds us, "a history built around people," where historical accounts of the past are brought into and back out of the community.[8]

Oral history has a range of meanings from "knowledge about the past that is relayed by word of mouth from one generation to the next," to "the practice of recording, archiving, and analyzing eyewitness testimony and life histories."[9] Oral historians seem to agree, however, that it is a "powerful tool to engage people in the discovery and making of history and in the critical assessment of how stories about the past are created."[10] Historical narratives, inclusive of peoples' everyday voices, serve a public pedagogical function that can be transformative for law, policy, media, and citizenship. Government commissions, the judicial system, and para-public institutions now seek oral histories in an effort to redress historical harms. Oral tradition and testimony were, for example, central to Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission on the Indian Residential Schooling system and for the Indigenous land claims case of Delgamuukw v. British Columbia. Oral history is part of a global social movement to democratize history and nation-states.

With this public pedagogical end in mind, oral history education is now part of a wider democratic movement. Oral history education enables teachers and students to do history with their communities, to introduce historical evidence from the underside, to shift the historical focus, to open new areas of inquiry, to challenge some of our assumptions and judgments of the past, and to bring recognition to substantial groups of people who have been largely ignored or purposefully silenced. Of course, oral history has long been a crucial pedagogy for different civilizations to teach their citizens about the past. Homer is often accredited with sharing some of the earliest Greek accounts of the Trojan War in the *Iliad*, and Odysseus's long journey home in the *Odyssey*.[11] Later, Frank Calvert and Heinrich Schliemann used surviving ancient place names put forth in these epic poems to discover Priam's treasure during their tumultuous partnership and archeological excavation of Hessarlik, which is now thought to be the site of Troy.[12] Such histories of the past were shared by traveling poets, who we might now call some of the first oral historian poetic pedagogues. Within Indigenous communities in Canada, the United States, and elsewhere, Elders have shared stories since time immemorial about the past that enable younger generations to access the necessary knowledge and skills to develop the required interrelation literacies for living well with each other and on the land.

Oral history has become a well-established educational praxis for sharing our community and family relations with the past. In North America, *the Foxfire Project* is often credited with being the first school-based oral history.[13] Beginning in 1966, students at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School in Georgia, United States, conducted life histories with Southern Appalachian Elders and published their interviews in the Foxfire magazine. Since that time, many other community–school partnerships have developed. In 1995, Louisiana State University professors and graduate students partnered with McKinley High School students to conduct oral histories of the school, which was established in 1926 as the first high school for African American students in Baton Rouge.[14] In subsequent years, this oral history project focused on African American businesses during the period of segregation, the history and role of African American churches, the Baton Rouge Bus Boycott, and the Civil Rights Movement.[15] More recently in Canada, the oral history project Coyote Flats won the 2015 Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Community Programming. This project focused on stories and memories about the history of the people who settled in Picture Butte, Southern Alberta, and included "Short Bite" interviews conducted by students of Picture Butte High School media classes.[16] In 2016, Laura Benadiba coordinated the first ever Oral History Congress for high school students in Buenos Aires.

Despite an early start, it is only in the last 10–15 years that oral tradition, testimony, and life histories have become an integral part of educational programming, from elementary schools to museums, across North

America. This trend is even more recent within European and Asian countries, as well as in Australia, New Zealand, and parts of South America. Acknowledging its pedagogical values, along with the rise of social history, schools are beginning to adopt explicit curricular objectives to bring eyewitness accounts of the past to life for students. In Canada, one of the strands of the revised 2015 Ontario history curriculum is the historical inquiry process which requires students to collect primary sources with specific reference to oral histories (albeit in a footnote).[17] Likewise, the province of Alberta asks its social studies educators and students to value oral tradition, stories, and community-based primary sources.[18] Thanks to the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling at Concordia University in Quebec, Canada, specific oral history curricular units have been developed for high school students to interview members of survivor communities (e.g. Tutsi, Haitian, and Holocaust).[19] Whether or not it is an explicit educational outcome, we know that educators are increasingly equipping their students with digital devices to record the lives of people in their communities. They are also increasingly drawing upon existing oral history sources, including from veterans and survivor groups, to better understand the legacy of political injustices.

This is in large part the result of a shifting emphasis away from history education as the memorization of facts (e.g. dates and people) and toward the application of historical thinking.[20] With this change in curricular focus for the twenty-first-century classroom, history teachers in most countries are now asked and seeking ways to create pedagogical spaces for co-creating knowledge about our collective experiences of the past. Educators are expected to teach students how to construct historical accounts and to draw upon eyewitness accounts of history to represent difficult knowledge about the past. Although oral history education is experiencing a surge for these reasons, history educators have few resources to help them consider if and how doing oral history education is a “best practice” for encountering the past lives of others. Furthermore, there has been limited interrogation of what the democratization of history through personal accounts means internationally for history education and for history educators. Some guides, based overwhelming on United States schooling, including the well-known anthology *Preparing the Next Generation of Oral Historians*, were published in the early 2000s.[21] These valuable publications came at a time when educators were starting to look for “how-to” manuals and exemplars of school projects. These publications do not address, however, critical theoretical and methodological questions that have arisen over the last decade with the growth of oral history in history education.

This collection seeks to interrogate the potential of doing oral history education within the contexts of twenty-first-century classrooms. Questions addressed by the authors include the following: What does it mean to "do" oral history in today's classroom or alternative education forums (e.g. NGOs or museums)? Does oral history challenge traditional pedagogy, and, if so, how? In what ways do oral history methods support social justice-oriented education? In what ways does oral history address historical thinking and historical consciousness? What are the affects and effects of a growing use of oral histories for education? This collection also questions if and how, as Barry Lanman and Laura Wendling state, "Oral history education … is proving to address educational mandates of our era in meaningful and profound ways."[22] Chapters address questions such as: How might curriculum developers approach the testimony of Indian Residential Schooling system survivors? What does it mean to represent memories of the Holocaust through digital pedagogies? How might oral history serve as peacebuilding pedagogy? What are the ethical demands of oral history educators when engaging community-based research? Without careful examination of these questions, the rich, democratizing potential of oral history for education remains pedagogically, politically, and socially restricting. Therefore, the chapters put forth in this book collectively seek to uncover this potential through a critical exploration of the relationship between oral history and education.

The contributing authors first came together as invited speakers for a workshop on *Oral History and Education* at the University of Ottawa. With the financial support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, we were able to bring together prominent researchers, historians, museum curators, and educators to foster, exchange, and generate new ideas about what it means to use oral history to engage the past with students. Over the course of two beautiful spring days, over 100 international attendees addressed the following themes: doing oral history as a justice-centered pedagogy; addressing historical harms through oral history education; questioning the limits and ethics of testimony and life history in education; storytelling with digitally mediated practices in schools; innovating oral history curriculum across the disciplines; and learning from history educators who have cultivated oral history as a pedagogy of inspiration. Workshop discussions about the state and practice of oral history for twenty-first-century teaching and learning are represented in the pages of this book. The collection provides educators, students, and researchers with a comprehensive examination of the conceptual approaches, methodological limitations, and pedagogical possibilities of oral history within formal and informal educational settings from around the world. By assembling international scholars in the field for the first time, this collection will stimulate new debates and in turn inspire new practices for doing oral history within the contexts of public schooling, higher education, and community-based learning. Drawing upon the expertise of practitioners and academics, our hope is that the collection becomes a catalyst for the development of curricular exemplars and progressive pedagogies for our classrooms.

The first part, *Conceptual and Theoretical Approaches*, seeks to understand how oral history education can support social justice work relevant to twenty-first-century classrooms. In response, the chapters in this part address oral history as a peacebuilding pedagogy, a pedagogy of discomfort for teaching conflict, a process for decolonizing schooling, a path toward a praxis of reconciliation, a foundation for feminist inter-generational alliance, and a new language for science-based teaching and learning. These contributions speak to the pedagogical potentiality of doing oral history education as praxis of social justice within diverse settings and from interdisciplinary perspectives.

We start this part with Kristina Llewellyn and Sharon Cook's consideration of oral history as peace pedagogy. The authors demonstrate the languishing state of peace education in Canada. Drawing on critical pedagogy, they explain the democratizing and consciousness-raising potential of oral history for peace education. Llewellyn and Cook provide exemplars of oral history education projects from an extensive survey of international education initiatives that focus on teaching about displacement, conflict, and reconciliation. These curricular exemplars illustrate how oral history can renew peacebuilding pedagogy in education, learning that is humanized, transformative, and affective. In Chap. 3, Nicoletta Christodoulou provides an in-depth examination of how oral history can create pedagogical spaces for engaging difficult histories. Through a study of two female teachers' projects in Cyprus secondary classrooms, Christodoulou assesses the pedagogy of discomfort invoked by doing oral histories on conflict. She argues that discomfort through personal stories of Cyprus' past helped to cultivate students' historical consciousness. The author notes, however, that such spaces and emotions of discomfort also limited the extent to which educators addressed certain events and moments. In response, Christodoulou provides a framework for how oral history projects—through their potential to stimulate emotions, reason, and agency—may be used in contexts similar to Cyprus in order for history education to assist younger generations in understanding political injustices.

It is the ability of oral histories to educate about the past to move toward just relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples that guides the authors of the next two chapters. Nicholas Ng-A-Fook and Bryan Smith's contribution in Chap. 4 focuses on how oral history education might enhance teacher candidates' capacities to address our ethical obligations to reread and rewrite the past as praxis of reconciliation. They completed a study that involved pre-service teachers conducting oral history interviews with Kitigan Zibi Algonquin Elders, who in turn were Indian Residential Schooling system survivors. From these interviews, pre-service teachers were called upon to understand the different ways in which the Indigenous relations with the past are taken up (or not) in the Ontario Canadian History and Social Studies curricula. In this chapter, the authors suggest that making digital oral histories can provide a critical historical thinking pedagogy for educators to remake and reconcile the multiple ways in which our Eurocentric public schooling system works to sanitize the current grand narratives that have come to constitute what some of us call Canadian history. In Chap. 5, Heather McGregor and Catherine McGregor share stories that have called them to oral histories as learners and educators because of the potential for stories to support Nunavut's (northernmost territory of Canada) decolonizing goals for schooling. Their selected stories of oral history and pedagogical experiences relate to ongoing processes of creating culturally responsive schools for Inuit communities, disrupting the Eurocentric approaches that otherwise characterize schools, re-examining colonizing histories, and the implications therein for non-Indigenous school staff. The authors use theoretical tools from Arthur W. Frank's *Letting Stories Breathe* to explore oral history curriculum as the nexus for relationships between storyteller and learner, and among place, identity, and history.

The last two chapters in this part elucidate the role of oral history for change-making and inter-generational dialogue through a feminist approach to education. In Chap. 6, Frances Davey, Kris De Welde, and Nicola Foote discuss their project *Histories of Choice*—a faculty-led, student-driven oral history of reproductive rights—to examine the importance of oral history for engaging feminist pedagogies and building alliances. The authors created a feminist service-learning course at Florida

Gulf Coast University to collect, preserve, and analyze oral histories to inform larger political debates about Roe v. Wade (the 1973 United States Supreme Court ruling legalizing abortion). They argue that by implementing feminist methodologies and embedding them in pedagogical approaches to course design, student participants in *Histories of Choice* developed a rich, visceral understanding of reproductive rights history and its relevance to future generations, radical praxes for social change. In the final chapter (Chap. 7) for this part, Amanda Wray illustrates the potential of oral history to transform masculinist approaches for socially constructing knowledge within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). She examines the ways that oral histories are or can be used to (re)orient students' ways of knowing away from disembodied, objective truths and toward an embrace of positionality, inquiry, and social context. Drawing upon STEM oral history archives in the United States, Wray demonstrates that oral history puts human experience front and center and thus offers the STEM classroom a more inclusive and advanced way of understanding disciplinary content.

In Part II, *Methodological and Pedagogical Dilemmas*, the authors call upon us to problematize the use of oral history for education. Some contributions question the extent to which oral histories can be meaningful for learning from elementary schools to museums. Others present the need for a more ethical and culturally responsive incorporation of testimony, oral tradition, and digital storytelling within curricula. Together these authors encourage educators to rethink unrestricted enthusiasm for first-person accounts of the past, while also providing a thoughtful extension of the differing curricular and pedagogical ways in which we might take up oral history education.

In Chap. 8, Brenda Trofanenko addresses the emotional implications of testimony as a pedagogical tool for social studies through museum-based education. She reminds us that the motives and contexts for sharing oral histories in education can undermine rather than strengthen knowledge attainment for students. Rooted in examples of museum programs in the United States, Trofanenko suggests that educators reorient their approach to oral history—away from a fixed notion of authentic "truth"—so that it is understood as a complex cultural practice that stands at the intersection of testimony and memory. In Chap. 9, Karel van Nieuwenhuyse questions whether and to what extent family-based oral history contributes to a substantive history education. Drawing upon history practices in Flemish secondary schools and from international studies, he calls our attention to the troubling disconnect between students' personal histories and macro histories; it is the latter that is given most attention in curriculum and textbooks. As Nieuwenhuyse makes clear in this chapter, educators can bridge the gulf between the micro and macro when they use family oral history to foster students' historical thinking skills.

The final three chapters in this part raise particular concerns and put forth protocols for engaging and sustaining culturally responsive and community-based oral history education. In Chap. 10, Elaine Rabbitt raises concerns that teachers do not have the ethics training required to appropriately conduct oral history between schools and their local communities. The author raises these issues drawing upon her own experience as a training coordinator in the north of Western Australia working with Indigenous communities. Rabbitt provides an outline of a nationally accredited oral history training course in Australia that seeks to ensure oral historians, including history teachers, are qualified to observe ethical protocols when working with Indigenous communities. Christine Rogers Stanton, Brad Hall, and Lucia Ricciardelli, in Chap. 11, advance our conversations regarding the methodological and pedagogical challenges for doing storywork with Indigenous communities. They outline three projects based in Montana, United States, and Blackfeet territory that in turn offer lessons for engaging participants as co-researchers, confronting Eurocentrism, balancing artistic vision with appropriate representation, and promoting responsible access to oral histories. The lessons they put forth offer implications for scholars, educators, and project leaders interested in facilitating, revitalizing, and sustaining culturally responsive storywork within schools and communities. Avril Aitken's contribution in Chap. 12 focuses on addressing culturally relevant representations of life stories through digital oral history projects. To do so, she draws upon an oral history and movie-making project that unfolded in one First Nations community, where grade eight students documented the return of Elders to Fort McKenzie, a long-abandoned trading post in Quebec, Canada. This chapter traces the project from interviews through to the creation of digital products, which were shared at a screening event for the community. The author considers the challenges and potential of digital practices to facilitate engagement with difficult knowledge that resists normative representatives of the past.

The third and final part, *Programs and Practices*, provides readers with international examples of innovative teaching practices and curriculum development for public schools and teacher education, as well as museum- and community-based programs. Contributors reflect on *why* educators, including themselves, are drawn to oral history for progressive learning. They also provide concrete suggestions for *how* teaching and learning may be informed by family oral histories, oral tradition, life histories, digital storytelling, and testimony. These chapters are inspiring accounts of oral history education in action.

In Chap. 13, Perrone opens this part by providing the results of a rare assessment of teachers' motivations, philosophies, and approaches to oral history. Based on interviews with teachers from across Canada, the author found that oral history teachers had a characteristic interest in student engagement and collaborative learning environments. Perrone also found that a common thread among teachers was a focus on students' acquisition of history skills. The author offers readers practical examples of oral history skills as they are taught within classrooms. One of the teachers who participated in Perrone's study, Barabara Brockmann, describes in Chap. 14 her award-winning curriculum unit *Collective Family Oral History*. Brockmann details her curricular rationale and project methodology—developed over more than 20 years in the classroom—with students in grades five to eight. She argues that doing family oral history is a best practice for encouraging historical thinking and language arts inquiry, as well as for fostering a rich sense of community, culture, and self. In Chap. 15, Amy von Heyking examines an oral history project that she integrated into a history of education course for teacher candidates. Like Brockmann, von Heyking argues that oral history interviews offer students opportunities to develop historical thinking skills. In particular, she explains how the assignment helped teacher candidates to understand change and continuity in the teaching profession, educational policies, children's experiences of schooling, and teaching methods. The author ends her chapter with a word of caution, similar to previous contributions, about the potential for idealized narratives from interviewees that avoid the moral complexities of school structures.

The last three chapters address von Heyking's concern with dealing explicitly with the ways in which teaching practices and programs can confront the moral complexities of violent pasts through oral history. In Chap. 16, Guillermo Vodniza and Alexander Freund describe the experiences of three teachers in Colombia who turned to traditional storytelling to help their students and communities deal with experiences of violence, displacement, poverty, and discrimination. The chapter details the teachers' experiential lessons that enabled students to document their communities' histories through oral traditions and art. Vodniza and Freund argue that these oral history projects facilitated teachers and students in imagining a future beyond warfare and narco-trafficking. Chapter 17 expands our knowledge of oral history teaching to address the history and legacy of genocide. Lisa K. Taylor, Marie-Jolie Rwigema, Shelley Kyte, and Umwali Sollange seek to understand the promise and challenge of bringing testimonies and documentary films about the 1994 Rwandan Genocide against the Tutsis into the secondary school curriculum. The chapter weaves the voices of four educators from a university–community–school research partnership that seeks to foreground Rwandan community knowledge in the Toronto District School Board (Ontario, Canada). They investigate what such a partnership means for the historian-survivor/co-creator, student as witness and listener, and teacher as pedagogical facilitator. The final contributors, in Chap. 18, Cord Pagenstecher and Dorothee Wein, discuss the educational possibilities of students' encounters with the video testimonies of Holocaust survivors. The authors reflect on a specific online educational program developed at Freie Universität Berlin in Germany that seeks to both mobilize and share interviews conducted with Holocaust survivors, former forced laborers, and other victims of Nazi persecution. The chapter addresses the approach, realization, and students' reception of virtual testimonies, particularly in relation to teaching and learning from a past haunted by genocidal violence within the perpetrators' country.

This book promises to provide an excellent introduction to some of the most thought-provoking work currently taking place within the field of oral history education. There should be little doubt after reading this book that oral history is a radical pedagogy.[23] All of the contributors speak, whether explicitly or implicitly, about oral history as a path in support of Paulo Freire's idea of conscientization, that is, education's capacity to expose cultural and historical myths that then enables people to take action against oppression.[24] This collection demonstrates that oral history, inclusive of oral tradition, digital storytelling, and testimony, offers a pedagogical method for students to actively record, preserve, and share our understandings of the past in a way that makes history more experiential, relational, and inclusive for teachers and learners. Furthermore, this collection demonstrates that oral history education may serve as a critical compass for interpreting the possibilities and limitations of our nation-state's social development (e.g. reconciliation education and public commemoration). As a radical pedagogy, each contributor argues that such work requires thoughtful attention to its challenges, from ethical considerations to the demands we place on teachers and communities, in formal and informal educational settings. We hear Thomas King who states with eloquence and caution: "Stories are wondrous things. And they are dangerous. … The truth about stories is that that's all we are."[25] *Oral History and Education* provides students, educators, teacher educators, community-based researchers, museum educators, historians, and curriculum developers with a place from which to begin a sustained dialogue about the complex role and diverse approaches for oral history within education.

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PART I

Conceptual and Theoretical Approaches

CHAPTER 2

Oral History as Peace Pedagogy

Kristina R. Llewellyn and Sharon Anne Cook

Introduction

Peace education in Canada appears to be languishing. After official support for peace curricula by several provincial Ministries of Education in the 1980s and 1990s, peace education has slipped below the radar with curriculum writers and with many teachers. Usually encompassed under the general rubric of global education, the strongest elements of peace education at the elementary and secondary levels of schooling are currently characterized by what has become termed as "personal peace" initiatives (e.g. conflict resolution) or representations of Canada as a "peacekeeping nation" in history classes.[1] Much more rarely broached in the classroom is peace education based on legacies of injustice and human rights violations. We know from the existing research that there are many reasons for this deficit, including educators' lack of knowledge or fear of controversial issues, as well as a dearth of curricular resources that are activist-oriented.[2] In response, we argue in this chapter that oral history can be enacted as a form of historical thinking that supports a peace pedagogy.

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The connection between oral history and human rights is clear from the work of public historians addressing generational trauma to oral histories of reconciliation.[3] Oral history is a collective methodology that engages community memories about historical harms. As Alessandro Portelli points out, "One of the things that makes oral history different is that while more conventional history is primarily interested in what happened—why was the massacre carried out, in what way, whose responsibility is it—oral history also asks another question: what does it mean?"[4] It is this very question—"*what does it mean?*"—that underlies the recent movement in Canadian schools toward historical thinking.[5] As *The Historical Thinking Project* outlines, student-citizens need to be able to assess "the legitimacy of claims that there was no Holocaust, that slavery wasn't so bad for African-Americans, [and] that aboriginal rights have a historical basis."[6] Oral history encourages students to consider the significance and deeper messages of historical events like these while also offering them the means to be critical consumers, rather than passive observers of historical analysis.

It is in this vein that oral history holds great potential for peace education, although few scholars have articulated these connections both theoretically and practically. To illustrate such connections, we draw upon secondary literature and international examples that demonstrate the explicit intersections between peace education and oral history. Peacebuilding attempts to address systemic injustice, including underlying causes, through (re)-building healthy relationships.[7] Kathy Bickmore argues that peacebuilding education, "in the relatively peaceful Global North and West, can and should bring conflict in from the margins as a learning opportunity in schools and classrooms—to develop diverse teachers' and students' capacity for frequent, skillful, and mutually respectful recognition, examination and inclusive dialogue about questions of social conflict and just social relations."[8] We demonstrate that oral history can support such learning. Oral history provides perspectives of those who have been marginalized over time—voices that are not always present in historical documents—which potentially shake our historical consciousness and redress harms. Furthermore, oral history methodology, in particular shared authority,[9] opens space for dialogic encounters that may disrupt injustice and build community. In demonstrating the interconnectedness of oral history with peace education, we draw upon a survey of education initiatives that address genocide, war, and/or activism to demonstrate oral history's pedagogical capacity to promote democratization and conscientization. Through these examples we illustrate how oral history can renew peacebuilding pedagogy in education, learning that is humanized, transformative, and affective.

This chapter begins by tracing the intimate connections, particularly for youth, between collective memory, historical consciousness, and peace education through narrative analysis and re-storying, or oral history. We next survey the current state of peace education in Canada. In arguing that Canadian peace education is currently limited, we provide a more robust definition of peace education that should guide oral history projects with this purpose in mind. We then highlight the theoretical intersections of oral history and peace education. Drawing on critical pedagogy, we focus on the democratizing and consciousness-raising potential of oral history for peace education. Our theoretical discussion is grounded by examples of international projects that can be characterized as peace education initiatives that use oral history or oral histories that focus on teaching about conflict and/or reconciliation.

Collective Memory, Historical Consciousness, and Peace Education

To understand oral history as a historical methodology that may further peace projects in the classroom, we must first explore the relationship between past conflicts and youth consciousness. Collective memory, according to French sociologist Maurice Halbswachs, refers to an identity group collaboratively defining their shared past.[10] Collective memory can address an event, image, language, or trend for a particular reading of history.[11] Youth play a specific role in the development of collective memory. Whether through history textbooks in Japan and Germany following World War II or more recent War of 1812 commemorations in Canada, it is clear what is at stake when we hold youth “accountable” for securing a nation’s future by either *never forgetting* or *strategically remembering* past conflicts. Vamik D. Volkan argues that groups psychologize or mythologize traumatic events as identity markers for the next generation.[12] From narratives of conflict, an imagined community emerges—a psychic security and an “ethnic tent”—that is codified to set the historical record.[13] Storying Canada as a peacekeeping nation is a prime example of a national mythology passed down through successive generations to cloak its citizens in a global moral authority.[14]

To this nationalizing end, schools play a key role, alongside family, media, faith, and other institutions, in organizing narratives and shaping group identity. The way students come to understand collective memories of the past—the development of their historical consciousness—is increasingly contemplated by educators.[15] This is because, as Theodore Schieder explains, historical consciousness "refers not only to a knowledge of the past but implies the use of that knowledge to understand the future."[16] The way that historical traditions, legends, and "truths" are taught and learned affects the political path of a country. Cheryl Duckworth, for example, reveals how since 9/11, cultural myths have been transmitted to students in ways that legitimize a militaristic security state in the United States.[17] Likewise, James Walker argues that teachings of the North Star Myth—blacks escaping slavery for freedom in the early nineteenth century—support imaginings of the "True North" free from America's white supremacy and free from the need for anti-imperialist policies.[18] Historical consciousness holds the capacity to fix and universalize the past. Narratives about the past in this vein are closed, leaving no room for dissent about what an identity group values and will act upon.[19] Hegemonic narration engrains generational trauma, renders structural violence invisible, and, at an extreme, invokes war. One only has to consider the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to think about how storying can serve to re-mark enemy lines and mobilize further suffering.

But teaching historical consciousness can also enable peace. As Peter Sexias argues, based on the work of Jörn Rüsen, historical consciousness can "turn toward the past to break from it" or acknowledge the legacy of the past to radically change the present.[20] Such an approach to remembering does not mean that attentiveness to victimization and suffering goes unnoticed. To the contrary, in keeping with calls from Roger Simon, we owe it to those who have been oppressed in the past to consider new forms of remembrance that can do justice in the present.[21] To do so requires that educators provide opportunities for students to encounter narratives that "take the world's complexities, ambivalences and paradoxes, ambiguities and dissonances into account."[22] Increasingly, peace educators are turning to narrative analysis as peace pedagogy. There are many case studies of teachers and curriculum designers using poetry, documentaries, and primary historical documents to empower students to deconstruct hegemonic narratives. Literature in this field, notably Zvi Bekerman and Michalinos Zembylas' *Teaching Contested Narratives* and Elizabeth A. Cole's *Teaching the Violent Past*, addresses how educators may engage students in seeing that violence “might best be understood as the disruption—and far too often, the outright destruction—of a people’s story.”[23] Peace education requires more than deconstruction of harmful storying; it also demands affording students’ pedagogical empowerment opportunities to construct new narratives or to re-story.

Oral history as a historical methodology offers students the ability to deconstruct *and* construct narratives about past conflicts that can serve a more peaceable future. While there is a wealth of literature that examines collective memory for peace education, there has been limited discussion by scholars about the role of oral history. Oral history has a contested range of meanings that extend from “knowledge about the past that is relayed by word of mouth from one generation to the next” to “the practice of recording, archiving, and analyzing eyewitness testimony and life histories.”[24] Nevertheless, what most oral historians agree upon is that it is a “powerful tool to engage people in the discovery and making of history and in the critical assessment of how stories about the past are created.”[25]

What are the theoretical intersections for oral history and peace education? How can oral history methods support peacebuilding in schools? What examples exist that may assist us in considering oral history projects for peace education? How might we envision a practical application of oral history in Canadian schools? We begin to answer these questions by examining the current state of peace education in Canada.

Peace Education in Canada: From Personal Peace to Peacebuilding

Peace education incorporates both certain principles and areas of knowledge, and a particular pedagogy for the delivery of these understandings. At the most general level, some see peace education as an “educational orientation” that provides the objectives and the “instructional framework for learning in schools”[26] or as curriculum and practices that privilege interconnectedness and multiple perspectives.[27] Peace education is grouped with other types of “progressive education,”[28] including global,[29] multicultural, and citizenship education,[30] which emphasize interdependence of global systems,[31] the need to respect differences, and the importance of dialogue in resolving conflict peaceably.[32] Peace education promotes concepts of nonviolence,[33] human rights,[34] social justice,[35] world-mindedness,[36] ecological balance,[37] disarmament and environmentalism,[38] and personal peace.[39] Johan Galtung distinguishes between negative peace (absence of physical violence and conflict) and positive peace (institutions and relationships to address structural and cultural violence).[40] To further positive peace, Ian M. Harris and Mary Lee Morrison argue that peace education should combat violence on three levels: peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding.[41]

Clearly, the range of definitions and topics incorporated into peace education in recent years is very broad. While this offers proponents a wealth of topics and issues through which to access and practice peace education, it also threatens to loosen the focus, with virtually anything being termed "peace" without justification or sufficient linkages. Recent studies with teachers interested in teaching peace have demonstrated that they are deterred from taking up peace education because of the definitional drift, their fears of being considered "unpatriotic," and their concerns over their lacking specific knowledge about international movements, as well as their perceived fear of the effects of violent narratives contained in peace education topics.[42] This is a demanding, even intimidating prescription for classroom processes. It assumes teachers who can tolerate and nurture students' work with conflicting narratives, some of which they might regard as harmful. It demands too that teachers are confident of their own position on narrativity and are mindful of the need to be persistent in their pedagogical choices, as well as determined to involve students actively in classroom analyses. Happily, our research showed that many teachers see the value of such strategies, however challenging they are to implement.[43]

Many scholars recognize that peace education requires a sophisticated, interactive pedagogy to be effective in classrooms. Harris suggests that to teach peace well, teachers need to establish a continuous process of questioning,[44] challenging, acting, and reflecting upon behaviors conducive to peace.[45] Teaching strategies common to peace education include collaborative and cooperative learning,[46] listening, problem-solving,[47] and reflective and critical thinking.[48] Peace pedagogy also includes values clarification and values analysis,[49] as well as an ethic of caring for others and for the environment.[50] Very importantly, peace education requires the practice of conflict management and resolution skills,[51] which means that students are expected to listen to and understand the opinions and stories of others, especially where these contrast with their own.[52] Beyond the interpersonal level, pedagogy of peacebuilding for democratic citizenship requires practice in discussing "conflictual global and local multicultural issues and viewpoints."[53] As Maria Hantzopoulos argues, implementation of critical peace education "should embrace dialogical, problem-posing, and participatory/praxis methods; multiple, varied and alternative viewpoints."[54]

As a free-standing subject, peace education in Canada seems to be in sharp decline. Certainly, in comparison with the situation even a decade ago, there is less evidence of peace education being presented as a discrete topic by teachers in Canadian classrooms.[55] In comparison with the past, there are fewer resources made available to teachers through teacher networks or under the sponsorship of such agencies as the Canadian International Development Agency, which in the late 1990s and early 2000s funded teacher-generated peace education in Canadian classrooms under the Global Education rubric. Here, peace is studied as a by-product, for example, of environmental sustainability or human rights.[56] This is not to say that no resources have been developed. But it is to argue that relatively few of these resources are finding their way to Canadian teachers.

One area where peace education seems to have made advances at both the elementary and secondary level of schooling is currently termed "personal peace" initiatives, as evidenced by the popularity of such programs as conflict resolution and "good" citizenship. As is true for all curricular expressions in the classroom, Ministry of Education support—or lack thereof—is important in shaping teachers' views about appropriate classroom studies. Taking the Canadian province of Ontario as a case in point, it is clear that Ministry of Education documents support personal peace by connecting interpersonal development (including self-management, peer relations, and social responsibility) with personal well-being. For example, *Choices into Action,* a document that overarches the curriculum through the compulsory Guidance course, singles out skills found in conflict resolution, peer helping, and mediation as helpful to both personal development and "encouraging positive behavior in others in a wide range of situations."[57] Far more rarely addressed in Ministry documents—and mainly taught in "specialty courses" at the Senior Division—are studies of human rights' violations, or international strife as rooted in economic inequities. In every course, addressing systemic causes of discord vies with other, mandated topics in a crowded curriculum. Hence, topics that relate peace to personal well-being are much more likely to receive treatment in Ontario classrooms than are complex studies of historical harms.

Given this context and these challenges, we propose a more robust approach to peace education than currently seems to apply in Canadian classrooms. Peace education should be rooted in *personal narratives*, where students are *actively*, *empathetically*, and *cooperatively* involved in *co-creating narrative accounts*, resulting in recognition of the *relational nature of positive peace, where structural violence is contested*. The critical analysis of these narratives should emphasize *historical thinking skills*, including, for example, assessments of historical significance and ethical abridgements. As Paulo Freire asserts, peace education must encourage resistance in learners against oppression, wherever it is found, demanding justice in personal and community life.[58] We assert that peace education should be brought in from the margins of global education and aligned with oral history education. While the potential for oral history to support this robust definition of peace education is vast, for the sake of this chapter we focus on a call for a pedagogy that emphasizes democratization and conscientization.

Oral History and Democratization

As discussed, peace education, rooted in positive peace, foregrounds injustice and the empowerment of those who are marginalized. Peace pedagogy requires methods that deeply engage students in complicating and opening up historical narratives in as democratic a way as possible. Oral history is part of a global movement to democratize the past. Today's *StoryCorps* and the blog *Humans of New York* are evidence of the popularity of first-person life histories. Alexander Freund questions, however, the extent to which a confessional culture opens access to the politicization of historical narratives.[59]

Within academia, oral history gained traction in the 1960s as an essential tool for social historians to "uncover" the voices of those whose lives were ignored or actively forgotten by historians, "in particular the working class, but also racial and ethnic minorities, women, and sexual and political minorities."[60] But many groups, including Indigenous and feminist, challenged naïve assumptions that oral historians may speak for them.[61] Since Michael Frisch coined the term "shared authority" in the 1990s, oral historians have been more attentive to an expansive notion of democratizing history.[62] Researchers are "sharing authority," as Steven High has rephrased it, to reflect the active making of collaborative relationships and collective decision-making for exploring life stories.[63]

Oral history projects, based on sharing authority, promote democratic relations for peace education; students are presented with more inclusive and contested historical narratives, and are encouraged to co-construct meaning through dialogue with community groups. It is the participatory and dialogical aspects of oral history education—an engagement with the lived experiences of others—that aligns with peace pedagogy. If oral history as pedagogy "encourages active and equal participation of all in the learning community, is experiential and inquiry-based, committed to cognitive dissonance, provocative yet respectful in exchange,"[64] then such narratives can agitate the silence of the oppressive status quo and build a more sustainable future. Oral history education holds the potential for what Iris Young conceives as communicative democracy, that is, political deliberation that accounts for difference not through disembodied reasoning, but by accounting for storytelling.[65]

Many oral history education initiatives illustrate this point, but it is particularly clear from those projects that address local migration and displacement histories. The Fox Point Oral History Project (FPOHP) is a case in point.[66] The FPOHP was launched in 2008 by the John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage at Brown University to document memories of a neighborhood in Providence, Rhode Island. Fox Point was settled as a working waterfront community during the Civil War era by immigrants predominantly from Ireland, the Azores, Portugal, and the Cape Verde Islands. Between the 1950s and 1970s, these groups were displaced when the area was razed for "revitalization" (e.g. office buildings and condos). The FPOHP brought together graduate students, community elders, and students, parents, and teachers at the only elementary school (Vartan Gregorian Elementary School) to collect, interpret, and present oral histories about the cultural heritage of the neighborhood. Over 80 oral histories served as a catalyst for community members to construct on online archive, school members to curate an exhibit, and the Parent Teacher Organization to develop an arts-based program, *I WAS THERE*.

Participants write that the project gave them "a clear lesson in shared authority."[67] For example, local historian and Fox Pointer, 73-year-old Lou Costa, rejected graduate students' academic taxonomy for an online exhibit.[68] The project had to take seriously the meaning-making of displaced Fox Pointers and the need for relationship-building across generations and sectors of the community. Project coordinators created virtual and in-person sessions to foster dialogue among stakeholders so that "stories of one generation could inspire stories from another and that the process of telling and listening could promote critical thought about the past."[69]

From interviewing to curating, fourth to sixth graders explored "use of voice" and "what it means to document."[70] Colin Grimsey, the principal of the school, noted that students were "not just learning about the history … they're participating in the endeavor of history."[71] As a participatory program, students engaged with second-order concepts of historical thinking, such as significance.[72] By connecting newcomer children with those who had been displaced by the processes of urban change, the project involved students in a public dialogue about past events that had a profound and lasting effect on their community. For example, students interviewed retired longshoremen, an oyster factory worker, as well as urban developers and scientists to construct their understandings of the past in relation to the future of Narragansett Bay. They collaborated to produce a play for the community that respected the diverse perspectives provided by interviewees. A parent commented that through the FPOHP students began "seeing themselves as a part of this social change, like to have a voice in what happens next on the waterfront."[73] The principal reflected that students acquired "first-hand connection to what has gone on before, developing [for] each [student] a 'sense' of place about Fox Point and their connection to it."[74] Such positive learning outcomes from participant observations do not address many critical questions about student conceptions of human rights in the community. And yet, this does not discount FPOHP as an example of oral history education that complicates collective memory of place in a way that may create a new sense of democratic community.[75]

Documenting conflicting oral histories within a community characterized by positive peace speaks to the pedagogy of peace. Here, the school itself acted as a community of learners, with the principal, teachers, and students all involved in empathetically and collaboratively collecting narratives and re-storying events. Moreover, the project required students to engage in a broad range of challenging skills: active listening, reflective and critical analysis, values clarification, conflict management, and respectful problem-posing. Students cooperatively gathered conflicting oral histories that figured prominently in the life of their community. Such an oral history project is peace education that is both personal and communal, where the systemic structures that shape peoples' opinions and actions were laid bare for students, potentially promoting new respectful relationships.

Life Stories of Montrealers Displaced by War, Genocide, and other Human Rights Violations, housed in the Centre for Oral and Digital Storytelling at Concordia University in Quebec, Canada, is more pointed in its mission to have students and teachers confront human rights issues.[76] From 2007 to 2012, a team of university and community-based researchers video-recorded approximately 500 life story interviews with members of survivor communities (e.g. Tutsi, Haitian, and Holocaust). The Education and Life Stories working group created bilingual curricular units under the title *We Are Here* for the Quebec Education Program at the secondary level for 14–16-year-olds. It had the following objectives: "to explore the pedagogic possibilities of oral history in the classrooms [and] … to offer students an understanding of the concepts and experience of human rights and of their violations."[77] The curriculum is predicated on students listening to digital stories of survivors collaboratively developed between editors and interviewees. From these stories, activities are designed to encourage students to reflect on narrative structure, interview ethics, identity politics, and more. For example, in a unit called "Dialogue Time," students listen to a documentary from interviews with women survivors of war and genocide. Following this, they are asked to "interview people from their own communities, and then create a collective timeline."[78]

Unlike the FPOHP, this school program is new. Consequently, its impact has yet to be assessed. Despite its infancy, the co-directors, Bronwen Low and Emmanuelle Sonntag, have articulated how the project promotes democratic relations. For students to address difficult knowledge, its curriculum is grounded by a pedagogy of listening. Drawing upon the work of Jean-Luc Nancy, such listening is based on a learning process that extends the ear toward the other.[79] It is not silent or passive. Instead, it seeks to build relations of deep listening between storyteller and listener. Deep listening fosters what Roger Simon and Claudia Eppert elsewhere call a "community of memory" in a classroom, where students and teachers listen to each other and to testimonies, not simply to learn facts about the past but also for how they can witness historical harms and what is required as an ethical response.[80] The unit "Dialogue Time," for example, requires students to reflect on how they listen deeply: "students write a one-page text or produce an artistic work about the experience of the interview as dialogue, considering: the dialogue with the past; the dialogue of the student with the self; the discovery of the other; and the implications of the interview on future relations with the person."[81] It is in the development of the interconnectedness of human experience that the project encourages learners not to think of human rights violations as a separate reality, but emphasizes the legacy of trauma and the place of memory in everyday life.

While it is critical to assess the effects of this curriculum in the coming years, the design of this oral history project demands peace pedagogy: here, the deep listening is pursuant to creating an empathetic partnership between the student and testimonies from the past. This pedagogy challenges traditional power relations inside and outside the classroom and creates spaces for engaged listening of difficult historical knowledge. The project also actively promotes peace education in a variety of important ways. First, the strategy of deep listening resulted in empathetic engagement by the participating students with testimonies that had been co-created between survivors and the editors and interviewees. Second, through working actively with these testimonies, and in coming to know the survivors through their narratives, students cannot avoid encountering the relational structure of the violence experienced by the survivors, and of the ethical invasions they endured. Third, students are required to respond to what they have experienced, connecting the personal to the communal as they explore the dimensions of positive peace.

Oral History and Conscientization

As these projects demonstrate, oral history engages students in a process of narrative transformation of the historical record that provides visions for a more peaceful future. It is in this capacity that oral history facilitates what Paulo Freire, one of the foundational theorists for peace education, termed conscientization. Conscientization is the development of a critical awareness rooted in learners' lived realities that inspires them to take action against oppression.[82] Freire, in the context of the horrors of the military junta in Brazil, argued for education to inspire resistance and demand justice. To do so, as he made clear, education must speak to urgent and felt problems in a community's life. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire illustrates how "marginalized peoples can internalize the historical narratives and cultural identity of the dominant group; … this prevents them from being able to name and thus have agency in the world."[83] The key role of education for liberation, according to Freire, is achieving critical consciousness, problem-based, affective learning that empowers citizens to make systemic change.

Oral history education provides a path for conscientization because its relational character demands that students "see the Other in full human moral complexity."[84] Duckworth, who writes about oral histories in the teaching of 9/11, draws our attention to the dangers of narratives created about "the Islamic World" that are "one-directional and contain no irony, in the sense that they do not allow for any examination of how the behavior of one's own identity group may have contributed to the conflict."[85] In contrast, oral history as a communicative process humanizes the past. Such an approach to historical memory "creates openings for different affective relations," what Zembylas calls critical emotional praxis for peace education.[86] Framed differently, oral history calls attention to the ethical dimensions of historical thinking. It asks of students and educators, as the *Historical Thinking Project* states, "what responsibilities do historical crimes and sacrifices impose upon us today?"[87] Oral histories, when rooted in meaningful issues from the past, help students face ethical issues today. And it is this humanistic, ethical dimension of oral history education that empowers students with community to envision a future of coexistence, a peacebuilding endeavor.[88]

This principle is most clearly illustrated with school-based projects that address reconciliation in post-conflict or transitional societies. Reville Nussey led one such oral history project at South Africa's University of Witwatersrand, School of Education in 2006.[89] Following a ministerial report about racism and sexism in higher education, Nussey created an oral history assignment for 66 student teachers (19 and 20 years old) as part of a mandatory Social Sciences methodology course that addressed life before and after 1994. The rationale for the assignment, he explains, was a concern that "if the students were not given an opportunity to reflect and shift in their thinking towards the 'other' … then they would take these unreflective attitudes into their classrooms. … In turn, this attitude of 'us and them' could affect future generations."[90] His curricular planning was rooted in John Paul Lederach's conception of reconciliation pedagogy or "the healing of personal and social fabrics."[91] The project consisted of students interviewing someone who lived during apartheid (which included black, white, and colored parents and community members); writing the interview as an oral history for Grade 6 students; dramatizing aspects of the oral histories as a group; and, lastly, writing a personal reflection about the task.

Nussey found that students grappled with emotional truths, what Jonathan Jansen has termed "bitter knowledge," from which emerged fragile moments of reconciliation.[92] For example, Nonzali's mother revealed for the first time that her cousin's scar was the result of police action during a 1976 protest against apartheid. As a group, the students emphasized the continuities of injustices of the past. Clare acknowledged that her father, a white man, benefited from apartheid -- “he had the schooling … he had all the resources available to him” -- while Michael said his black interviewee said that despite the fight against apartheid “there’s still a bunch of rich white guys who own everything.”[93] Such oral histories clearly demanded that students make ethical judgments about the past, a learning exercise that certainly was not easy. While working collaboratively to dramatize their oral histories, a black female student told Nussey that a white male student apologized to her “on behalf of white people.” Nussey comments, however, that the student later denied ever apologizing. This situation reflects, according to Bernard Schlink, each generation recreating its own identity while entangled in a web of guilt as the children and grandchildren of perpetrators, beneficiaries, and bystanders.[94] While some students reacted with fear and resistance to making meaning from oral histories of apartheid, for others it changed “relationships in a constructive manner towards peace.”[95] One student stated that “boundaries were broken … at first we didn’t even know the other existed.” Another student, more cautious, said “I don’t have to be your best friend; I just need to make peace.”[96] This example confirms Jansen’s finding that educators must engage students emotionally: “It is impossible to change students’ deep knowledge and emotions about the past by simply treating the subject as a cognitive or intellectual problem. … To shift this knowledge in the blood, or understandings of the heart, requires emotional engagement with the subject.”[97] By developing a willingness to listen, empathize, and cooperate, oral history education created openings for new relations among these students. At the same time, the oral history project added to students’ understanding of the societal structures that gave rise to and sustained oppression. This moved students far beyond simply emoting, and into a refined intellectual space that acknowledged the depth of injustice created by government policy.

The promise of oral history for reconciliation education does not, however, reside only with the confrontation of “dangerous memories.”[98] The promise also resides with the ability to “inspire students to greater civic engagement and political activism.”[99] Students’ historical empathy, guilt, and/or anger about past trauma must translate into an obligation to use history to uphold a sense of justice in the present. It is in this effort that oral history education may fulfill a Freirean notion of conscientization. And it was this objective—to connect the recent past with present conceptions of democracy and freedom—that guided *The Velvet Revolution* oral history project in the Czech Republic.[100]

The project was conceived by M. Gail Hickey, an academic from Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, and Lucie Bohmova, a history teacher in the Czech Republic in 2010. Together they designed a lesson in which Level Five to Nine students (10–15 years of age) formed cooperative groups within their classes to conduct oral histories about life before and after the Velvet Revolution, the 1989 bloodless transition from communism to democracy. Students were given access to oral history training (e.g. "focusing statements" and questioning techniques), secondary resources (e.g. books and media clips), and primary documents (e.g. archival materials and witnesses/activists' testimony).[101] Several groups of students focused on family members' and neighbors' memories of culture during the transitional period (1970s and 1980s) of government oppression (e.g. fashion and sports), while others drew upon the remembrances of guest speakers and school staff to examine the events of 1989 (e.g. demonstrations and resistance). The latter became the basis for The Living History Museum, an exhibit that took visitors from the entrance of the school to the end of a hallway as a chronological journey of "Czech citizens' movement toward democracy."[102] The exhibit was based on visual and statement displays of eyewitnesses' memories of events.

Hickey and Bohmova report that students became aware of the comparative freedom of Czech citizens in the present versus under Communist rule. Students discovered, for example, that "under the Communist regime admission to university depended upon whether or not one's families were members of the Communist Party … [and] that sporting events and membership on sporting teams were matters controlled by membership in the Communist Party."[103] While the study of historical change developed students' consciousness of their often taken-for-granted rights, Hickey and Bohmova argue that it was connecting political movements with the lived experiences of their families and community members that taught them that history is the product of human agency. The Velvet Revolution as an oral history education project breathed life into the facts of history; stories of the revolutionary period "humanize and contextualize" democratic concepts (e.g. freedom of expression; consent of the governed).[104] In so doing, Hickey and Bohmova conclude that "students learned that people like themselves make history."[105] While these educators are clear about the limitations of their oral history project, particularly for younger grades, they assert that students' civic interest was increased substantially. Citizenship education researchers have demonstrated that such an increase of youth interest in community affairs may well be correlated with an increase in youth civic engagement.[106] If we accept Hickey and Bohmova's findings, there is reason to be hopeful about the potential of oral history education to positively affect students' civic commitment. Students may be equipped with the historical knowledge of democratic change and change-makers in their community to strengthen their ability to forestall challenges to civil liberties and build a more peaceable future.

In addition to supporting civic engagement among the students with whom they worked, Hickey and Bohmova's study also demonstrated links with historical thinking skills where differing examples of primary evidence were gathered and utilized to understand their families' responses to political change. Personal decisions came to be understood as influenced by societal structures, many of which encouraged inequity and injustice in their families' lived experiences. The powerful narrative accounts, the choices made by their relatives and neighbors, and the lived experiences emanating from those choices allowed students to understand their community and its challenges as relational, an essential component of peace education.

Cautionary Tales

There are, of course, many additional examples of exciting oral history projects upon which we could draw: Voice of Witness' *Palestine Speaks: Narratives of Life Under Occupation* curriculum, Legacy of Hope Foundation's *Where are the Children?: Healing the Legacy of the Residential Schools*, and *The Cyprus Oral History and Living Memory Project* (COHP), among many others. In some cases, particularly with respect to COHP, we have studies that have implemented and assessed the use of this resource in schools. Nikoletta Christodoulou's chapter in this collection provides one such example. She demonstrates the success of oral history to create space to teach about conflict, yet describes a failure to convert this "pedagogy of discomfort" into more meaningful civic action that challenges ethnic violence. More often, however, we do not know if and how such resources are used in classrooms, nor do we have a full assessment of their effectiveness when they are used. For example, *Civic Voices: An International Democracy Memory Bank Project*, which was a three-year project begun in 2011 to work with teachers and students in eight countries across five continents, recorded oral histories with local activists who participated in iconic civil rights struggles. The results of this large-scale and important project have yet to be fully assessed and, as of this publication, public access to the project's online archive of oral histories is no longer active.[107] Admittedly, what we know about oral history for peace education is primarily based on isolated case studies as reflected upon by participating teachers and students.

Yet, these international examples certainly demonstrate the potential that exists for oral history: to personalize and also generalize questions of peace or inequality, including deficits of power; to contest structural violence in the past and present; to develop empathy and ethical judgment through the voiced experiences of one or more narratives; to encourage critical listening skills and dialogue that validate the primacy of relationships and positive peace; and to push inquiry forward toward action by comparing historical perspectives and humanizing democratic struggles. We argue that at the very least oral history as peace pedagogy must be attentive to learning outcomes for democratization, both participatory and dialogical, and conscientization through stressing the ethical and humanistic dimensions of inquiry. A peace pedagogy employs, as we have shown, empathy, inquiry, deep listening, ethical choices, and using multiple perspectives, among other important cognitive skills. Oral history has the capacity to do all of this while opening, disrupting, and creating sometimes dire and/or inspiring narratives of community and nation.

While it may not be difficult to find impressive examples of peace education delivered through an oral history lens, we fear that few if any of these examples are well known in Canadian schools. Additionally, these models often require too much classroom time for all but the most experienced teachers in oral history to find space in the curriculum. That said, many teachers, as we see from the examples cited, are accustomed to adapting high-quality curriculum resources to their particular needs, and these curriculum packages would present no exception. Nevertheless, Steven High reminds us that oral history does not magically support just any kind of analysis. Much effort is expended in collecting the interviews, far less in making use of them for purposes of peacemaking, or anything else.[108] One must therefore approach both oral history and peace education with clear intentions to actualize the potential in each area. Given our knowledge of introducing controversial issues into the classroom, there can be no doubt that for educators this is risky work.[109] As such, oral history for education requires training, particularly in the ethics of interviewing and sharing authority, so as to avoid further trauma and the disregarding of oral histories as simply personal anecdotes. Despite required caution, as Paul Thompson maintains, "It can be used to change the focus of history itself, and open up new areas of inquiry; it can break down barriers between teachers and students, between generations, between educational institutions and the world outside."[110] We hope this chapter articulates some of the potential of oral history as peace pedagogy and the reason why this risky work for educators is worth it.

Notes

1. Sharon Anne Cook, "Give Peace a Chance: The Diminution of Peace in Global Education in the United States, United Kingdom and Canada," *Canadian Journal of Education*, 31(4), 2008: 889–914; Jacqueline Kennelly and Kristina Llewellyn, "Educating for Active Compliance: Discursive Constructions in Citizenship Education," *Citizenship Studies* 15, no. 6–7 (2011): 897–914.
2. Sharon Anne Cook, "Reflections of a Peace Educator: The Power and the Challenges of Peace Education with Pre-Service Teachers," *Curriculum Inquiry* 44, no. 4 (2014): 489–507.
3. For example, see Erin Jesee and Annie Pohlman, eds., "Confronting Mass Atrocities," special issue of *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* 33 (2013). Available at http://www.oralhistoryforum.ca/index.php/ohf/issue/view/46.
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6. Peter Sexias and Jill Coyler, *The Historical Thinking Project*. Available at: http://historicalthinking.ca/historical-thinking-concepts.
7. Kathy Bickmore, "Peacebuilding (in) Education: Democratic Approaches to Conflict in Schools and Classrooms," special issue of *Curriculum Inquiry* 44, no. 4 (2014): 444.
8. Ibid., 445.
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CHAPTER 3

Pedagogical Approaches to Oral History in Schools

Nicoletta Christodoulou

Introduction

This chapter presents the work of two female Greek-Cypriot classical studies secondary education teachers who implemented oral history work in their public high school classrooms. Alexandra and Eleni,[1] who were certified to teach Greek language and literature, ancient Greek, mythology, and history, conducted work with their senior high school students in two urban public schools in Cyprus. They used existing oral histories as curriculum materials and they undertook small-scale oral history research projects.

Alexandra was a teacher with 16 years teaching experience at the time she undertook the project. She was born in 1974 in Cyprus while "Turkish bombers were bombing mercilessly and uncontrollably,"[2] and she and her family abandoned their village 22 days after it was invaded. Alexandra visited her family home when the borders opened. While looking for something to take back with her, she observed a note on the back of the door of the kitchen cupboard, *Alexandra, born July 22, 1974, Monday, 9 pm.*

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Alexandra recognized her mother's handwriting. She had always hoped that one day she would be able to narrate to her students her personal story relevant to the 1974 events. When I introduced her to oral history during a graduate course I taught, she decided to implement an oral history project for her Master's thesis.

Eleni was a teacher with six years teaching experience at the time she undertook her project. We came together within the framework of the student research contest *Students in Research (MERA)*.[3] During our first meeting we exchanged thoughts on what kind of research they could conduct. I introduced her class to oral history as an alternative way to commemorate the past at school. Although Eleni had heard of oral history, she had never used it before, nor had she known about its potential for curriculum development and student learning.[4]

Aiming to contribute to our understandings of the relationship between oral history and education, I examine Alexandra's and Eleni's oral history projects from the conceptualized stage through to their classroom application. I particularly examine the theories, practices, and dilemmas related to engaging oral history as a pedagogy of discomfort in teachers' and students' educational journeys. In this chapter I ask the following questions: (1) In what ways did the students who engaged with oral history move outside their comfort zones? and (2) What kinds of pedagogical spaces, interactions, and disruptions were created, potentially allowing, or not allowing, for such "moving" to happen? I begin by discussing the importance of oral history projects worldwide, and particularly in the context of Cyprus. Then I provide a framework for how oral history projects—through their potential to stimulate emotions, reason, and agency—may become spaces where pedagogy of discomfort, in relation to historical consciousness and teaching conflict, may be developed. These are major contributions of oral history to education and pedagogy. With pedagogy of discomfort having a central role, oral history education has the potential to cultivate historical consciousness and shape responses to conflict, as well as implications for social justice education.

Why Oral History?

Oral history is gaining ground around the world (e.g. Palestine, Israel, Cyprus, the UK, Northern Ireland, and other European Union (EU) countries, Canada, the USA, and South Africa) and, as such, oral history projects, websites, and digital resource materials are growing rapidly.

Oral historians and others collect personal stories on a diverse spectrum of human activities in an effort to understand the historical dimensions of people's activities, and their impact on them and on the world. The aim is to gain an understanding from people's perspectives (i.e. Voice of Witness, Europeana, Memoro[5]). The Cyprus Oral History Project (COHP) and its archived oral histories,[6] which inspired the work of the two teachers with their students, is such an example.[7] With the opening statement "Tell me your experience and memories of the events of 1960–1974," COHP focused on the bleeding and wounds of Cyprus as experienced by its people.

Cyprus is the smallest country in the EU and also the last divided country in Europe. It won independence from Great Britain in 1960, and has been embroiled in ethnic conflict, violence, and division almost from the start, including the troubles of 1963–1967 and the 1974 Turkish invasion and subsequent occupation.[8] The troubles of the last 50 years are not unrelated to Cyprus' strategic location at the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea, a place that has long attracted and continues to draw the great world powers. Today United Nations "peacekeepers" patrol the buffer zone between north and south, and Britain maintains a strong presence with tens of thousands of military personnel and two air bases occupying 10 percent of the land mass. There has not been a shot fired since 1999, and the border between the north and south was lifted in 2003.[9] Although tensions between the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot sides are low because of the partition, both sides remain pervaded by antagonistic biases, histories, and myths.

Cyprus is an island where trust and understanding between its two largest ethnic communities, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot—with the Greek Cypriot being the largest—are scarce, and, consequently, students have been taught history partially and conventionally.[10] Oral history[11] has a significant role to play and unique meaning in the context of history education in Cyprus. As a pedagogical tool, oral history can contribute important curriculum material. As a curricular activity, oral history can engage students in projects through which they produce historical sources.

Oral history is a method that has only recently been included in the official school curriculum of Cyprus.[12] In 2013–2014, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) issued a memo encouraging middle grades classical studies teachers to implement small oral history projects with their ninth grade students in literature and history/local history classes, with the general theme "I learned from grandpa / grandma."[13]

Prior to this, it was not a method that MOEC officially acknowledged or that was used by teachers.[14] Despite the existence of a multitude of oral history materials, few have made it into school classrooms and into the official curriculum. It is thus appropriate to inquire into how such materials can be used in schools, become part of the curriculum,[15] and contribute to students' education and growth. COHP and its archive inspired such curricular innovations and it was materialized through the collaboration with Alexandra, Eleni, and their students.

Alexandra and Eleni incorporated oral history material beyond the conventional curriculum. They used existing material from COHP and also developed new material aiming to teach about the conflict in Cyprus, refine students' historical consciousness, reboot their interest in history learning, and promote the concept of learning from other people's experiences. Three theoretical constructs, namely, pedagogy of discomfort, historical consciousness, and a typology of teaching about conflict, provide the framework to examine their use of oral history in the classroom. These intersecting constructs, which are examined in the next section, deal with and have the potential to stimulate emotions, reason, and agency.

Oral History, Emotions, Reason, and Agency

Pedagogy of discomfort is an educational approach that emphasizes the need for educators and students alike to move outside their "comfort zones."[16] The pedagogical assumption that guides this approach is that "discomforting emotions play a constitutive role in challenging dominant beliefs, social habits and normative practices that sustain social inequities and in creating possibilities for individual and social transformation."[17] A comfort zone is created by living for a prolonged time in a situation in which dominant beliefs and practices become the norm. In order to be able to see, feel, and understand what one cannot any longer—because he or she is in the same situation for a long time—one must get out of it so that privileges, beliefs, habits, and practices can be disrupted. Only then is there a possibility for pedagogical spaces and horizons to be expanded; otherwise the prolonged situation is maintained. While some scholars in education suggest that emotions can be used as a form of social control when exercising humiliation, fear, and shame to uphold the status quo, they can also be understood as sites of resistance and social redress.[18]

Traditionally, educators are expected to provide safe, supportive, and caring learning spaces for students. And yet some educational theorists suggest that if educators seek to disrupt oppression, they must call on students to step outside of their comfort zones to acknowledge and question how one's privilege implicates one in the oppression of others.[19] Pedagogy of discomfort has been considered a powerful pedagogical tool that prompts action, because teachers and students can utilize their discomfort to construct new emotional understandings into ways of living with others.[20] To this end, educators must work with their own discomforts to ensure they do not hinder pedagogical responses to injustice and conflict in the classroom.[21] One may wonder, then, how we can make the learner comfortable and uncomfortable at the same time. Accepting that discomfort is part of growth and learning to relax into the adventure of learning is vital.[22] A simultaneously comfortable and uncomfortable space can be facilitated, as the classroom becomes a pedagogical site. In such a site, spaces for dialogue are enabled, and students communicate and negotiate their multiple subjectivities and truths, equitably and respectfully.[23] Listening, then, is another significant element in the pursuit of learning and social justice.[24] As we consider the pedagogical effects of discomfort we must proceed with some caution. The effectiveness of discomfort as a pedagogical tool is threatened when "troubled knowledge"[25] enters the scene, as happens in the context of ethnic conflict and historical trauma in societies such as those of Cyprus, Israel, and Northern Ireland.[26]

The construct of historical consciousness and our response to conflict can be useful in understanding what kind of disruption, growth, and moving out of one's comfort zone may occur. Developing feelings of empathy, agency, and moral judgment is part of historical consciousness. Historical consciousness is defined as the remembered past[27] or how our understanding of the past shapes our sense of the present and the future.[28] Discomforting emotions may disrupt what we know and remember, or think that we know and remember, of the past. This disruption allows for new realizations and interpretations. In this way, pedagogy of discomfort is an effective way to cultivate historical consciousness. Changes in historical consciousness and response to conflict are indications of growth and movement. One way to understand historical consciousness is by looking at how it intersects with public memory, citizenship, and history education.[29] Cultivating historical consciousness using pedagogy of discomfort in contexts similar to that of Cyprus is vital to help democratize history and understand political injustices. As we shift priorities from content to action in history education we need to teach students skills that are integral for negotiating our multinational, pluralist society, placing emphasis on "second-order concepts."[30] Second-order concepts are elements that shape historical consciousness and they include *evidence*, *significance*, *continuity and change*, *progress and decline*, *empathy and perspective taking*, *moral judgment*, and *agency*. Second-order concepts create venues to examine and alter responses to conflict. In this way, the cultivation of historical consciousness creates venues to teach the conflict. Pedagogy of discomfort is a useful construct for teachers who encourage the development of second-order concepts in their teaching, and reflect on the possible responses to war and conflict their teaching approaches promote.

The typology of ten possible teaching approaches about war and conflict and responses to them[31] are presented in Fig. 3.1.[32] The typology forms a bended continuum and it is based on the direct and deliberate ways teachers and schools teach, or do not teach, about conflict, and which of these are likely to be negative or positive in terms of the likelihood of contributing to peace. Both negative and positive conflicts, the two poles, carry

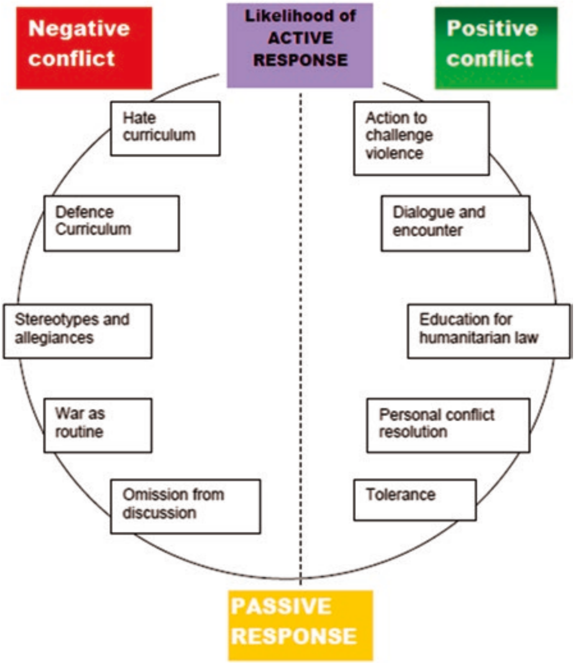
Negative conflict
Likelihood of ACTIVE RESPONSE
Positive conflict
Hate curriculum
Defence Curriculum
Stereotypes and allegiances
War as routine
Omission from discussion
Action to challenge violence
Dialogue and encounter
Education for humanitarian law
Personal conflict resolution
Tolerance
PASSIVE RESPONSE

Fig. 3.1 Approaches to teaching about conflict

the likelihood of action or active response as a result of the teaching and learning. There are always risks involved with both of them. The least risky conflict would be a passive response, located at the bottom of the curve.

The spaces and the possibilities that the common threads of these frameworks create in education and implications are enormous. Such spaces and possibilities include discussion about emotions, empathy, disruption of social injustices, the urgency to act upon an injustice, moral judgment, and doing something about a conflict. Teaching approaches that promote positive and active responses to conflict must be employed, if the aim is to move from tolerance to action to challenge violence. To do so, teachers must use oral histories that demonstrate diverse perspectives and lived experiences, conflicting stories and arguments. In doing so, the range of experiences, emotions, and interpretations of both the narrator of the story and the students engaged with it can surface. As they engage in intersubjective conversations that employ second-order concepts, they can deal with what they experienced, how, and why. Teachers must have open and honest conversations with students about the need to undertake such journeys and the risks involved, the discomfort they may experience, and the pedagogical spaces, understandings, and implications that may be formed.

Creation of such spaces and possibilities often requires curricular innovations on the part of teachers and students. In the next sections I present such classroom efforts and the way oral history was used to attract and excite students as they engaged deeply and authentically in reading and discussing oral histories and initiating new projects.

Using Oral History in Class: Case Studies

Eleni and her students explored the effectiveness of oral history as an alternative way to revive national anniversary events. Using qualitative and quantitative research methods, they undertook an action research case study at their school to investigate students' benefit from attending school celebrations of national anniversaries. The results indicated that such celebrations neither achieve the goal of developing students' historical knowledge, understanding, consciousness, or sensitivity, nor manage to maintain their interest while observing them.[33] Then they implemented a remediation action plan using oral history, and collected evidence about its effectiveness. The team focused on the freedom struggle of 1955–1959. They conducted 37 semi-structured interviews with individuals who narrated the events and their lived experiences. The students video- or audio-recorded the interviews, which they uploaded to the website they developed,[34] with the written consent of the narrators.

Alexandra explored the way students and teachers perceived and experienced the contemporary events of Cypriot history through their history classes and textbooks, and whether these contributed to the cultivation of their historical consciousness. Focusing on key events that took place during 1974, she compared and contrasted findings from empirical data she collected, and observations and conversations with students, about traditional history teaching with the pedagogical effectiveness of using oral history to cultivate students' historical consciousness. Within the context of their oral history work, Alexandra and her students engaged in a series of oral history activities, including gathering personal stories, testimonies, and photographs relevant to the 1974 period. They also read personal accounts from other people, and heard narrations from a captive soldier held by the Turks in 1974, and a retired teacher who in 1974 was a first-year teacher at a refugee camp.

The work produced and recorded by the students—discussions, reflections, and responses to interviews and questionnaires—became data that were analyzed for the purpose of this study. I also conducted semi-structured interviews with the teachers and students in order to examine how students encountered stories they had not heard before, and their responses to learning historical events using oral history.

I used ethnographic and case study methods to focus on the shared culture of the groups, and interpreted the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language.[35] Data analysis aimed at illuminating particular aspects of teachers' classroom work and pedagogical possibilities of oral history within the specific educational settings. The wording that participants used in their written and oral responses was particularly important. I analyzed the *what* and *how*[36] students and teachers emphasized. The happenings in the classrooms were also examined: I looked for elements that moved students outside their comfort zones, allowed for the creation of pedagogical spaces, and encouraged students' active responses and positive conflict. Students' and teachers' work and words became evidence of their positioning along the spectrum of possibilities from passivity to action. Davies'[37] bended continuum and Seixas'[38] second-order concepts analytic framework served as indications of transcending zones of comfort toward moments of discomfort. The pedagogical spaces, interactions, and disruptions that occurred are presented below.

Evidencing Pedagogy of Discomfort

Undertaking an oral history project was an eye-opening experience for the students. A student confessed that it was "something different than what we were doing for so many years in school. … We had the opportunity to hear the events from people who lived them, and share feelings with them." The students shared with Alexandra that "one can really learn many things through oral history; it is more immediate comparing to the conventional history." Students realized that history was still alive and they did not have to search far for it. One of Eleni's students acknowledged that it was "in our own homes and … we didn't know it. … Most of us interviewed our grandfathers and grandmothers who lived during, and often had a significant contribution to, the [1955–59] fight."

Almost half of the students who listened to the captive soldier's life story said that they were deeply moved. Students described their encounter with the former soldier/captive as a mind-blowing experience, which generated conflicting feelings. A student argued, "I was so moved. … The event touched deep my soul, as simultaneously I felt content, because it was the first time I watched such an event with live testimonies, and vivid audiovisual documentation for 1974." Another student said, "It was shocking for me, because it was the first time I confronted the real dimension of the historical events of my country. When reading about them in books you don't feel anything, but when you hear about them from people who lived them they remain indelibly carved in soul and mind." Simultaneously, it ignited anger and rage. According to a student, "through the narration I realized the hardships of war. … Deep down my soul I felt an intense anger and rage for all that the Turks instigated to our country." Another student said, "for the first time I felt intensely the feeling of hatred for the enemies of my country who violate the rights of its people," while another said, "I felt bitterness, anger, resentment and a huge *why* we, the new generation, live in an occupied country."

Some other emotions students experienced were desire, nostalgia, sadness, and disappointment. For example, students' comments included: "I felt a strong desire for all refugees to return to their homes and their property, a matter that didn't interest me so much previously;" "My feelings became more intense, awakening in me the desire to get back all that which belong to us;" "I felt sorry for the existing situation at my country and the desire to live at my grandparents' [occupied] home, which I got to know through their daily remembrances of it;" and "I felt nostalgia and longing to become acquainted with all these beautiful places that we got to see [and hear about] at the event.” Students also felt sadness and disappointment: “I felt sadness, because 39 years later, and our country is still divided;” “I felt disappointment … because in our own place neither can we move freely, nor can we stay in our homes and properties.” Such emotions were more transparent and intense in Alexandra’s classroom, as they dealt with the conflicting, and still painful and unresolved, issue of the Turkish invasion, whereas Eleni’s students dealt with the long past and resolved issue of British colonization.

Feeling shame and placing the responsibility and power to change things on themselves was also noteworthy in a few students’ comments. One student said, “I feel shame about how this place used to be, and how we degraded it. Simultaneously, I was confronted with the turmoil of the war and its consequences on the people of this tortured land, strongly feeling a sense of shame.” Another student realized that “as young people of this tortured country, we should not give up the effort to return to our occupied land.” While Alexandra, as well as Eleni, wanted “to just charge the students emotionally,” many other things started happening, too, including realizing the essence of history and history learning, as well as their agency. These realizations are what historical consciousness is, and they are elaborated below.

Cultivating Historical Consciousness

The students started making realizations, and their desire to act was growing. One realization was that history could be more interesting than they thought. Hearing the teacher’s autobiographical excerpt was momentous. Students said that listening to her testimony was more interesting than doing history in the traditional, teacher-centered way. One student said that although previously indifferent to history as a subject matter, learning historical events through testimonies became the best lesson for him. Alexandra described the renewed attitude of a student toward history class, saying, “he didn’t used to like history at all.” As the student confessed to her, “it was one of my worst subjects and I used to hate it, because I considered it to be so boring; I was so indifferent to it. But as of today, due to how we did the lesson, it was my best class ever.” Another student with particular political beliefs said, in Alexandra’s words, “ultimately it seems that oral history is that part of history which does not blind or divide people, but rather it shows them the real path of history.”

The students demonstrated great interest in oral history. As they strived to learn more about the particular historical events, they delved into reading and watching various materials, including newspaper articles, archived testimonies, and documentaries. Simultaneously, they argued that for the first time they had the opportunity to express their concerns on the matter of the invasion of Cyprus in one case, and the 1955–1959 freedom fight in the other. They said that there was immediacy, opportunity to get in touch with reality, and presentation of the events through testimonies. These elements set the ground for the development of historical consciousness. Simultaneously, in students' words, "learning became more active … essential," and authentic. A student acknowledged, "I came in touch with reality, I learned a lot, I became wiser, since I had never heard what I heard, perhaps because I am not a refugee, or even because the school textbooks and the curriculum want to keep us, the youth, 'blind' and away from reality." Four students said they gained "historical knowledge. … We had the opportunity to hear about things and situations we didn't know." Two students argued that they gained "experiences, many experiences. … It was an event that was piercing your bones and seeping into your soul," and another added, "I would take part again and again in such an event [and project]."

Students were able to envision new projects. Two students talked about organizing experiential workshops with and about "refugees, people who were soldiers in 1974, and people who have lost their loved ones during the invasion" and "with great involvement of young people." Four students thought about organizing events about and with "the enclave children of Rizokarpaso,[39] our hero-peers … [to] be observed by the entire student body of our school." These children and their families remained in the occupied Rizokarpaso in 1974, resisting being forced out by Turks. Another student considered events about "the Asia Minor refugees, because the conditions and the experiences they lived were the same as that of our own refugees in 1974 … [with] wide participation of ordinary people [in the community]." Asia Minor refugees were the Greek and Christian population forced out of Asia Minor in 1923, following the Greco-Turkish War of 1919–1922 and the mass destruction that followed.

The participation of the students in the projects gave them the space to form collaborations and develop important relationships. Eleni's students reported that, "through this research, we were given the opportunity to develop a real and genuine communication amongst us and with our teacher who was constantly by our side." As they said, it was "a communication not suffocated in the tight teacher-student relationship, and which wouldn't have flourished under other circumstances," adding that, "hadn't we undertaken this research, these relationships wouldn't have been the same."[40] The students used the following words to encapsulate their experience: "During our involvement with this research, we felt the magic a research process encompasses; a magic glorified in the following passage [an excerpt by Lidaki[41] the students found while reviewing the literature for the purposes of their project], which really echoes what we experienced in the past six months"[42]:

> The decision and the attempt to understand other people and try to talk about them, makes us already different, we ourselves have changed. … We met people who are possessed by a more or less different perception of the world and tried, breaking the surface, to hear words not uttered, to understand behind the words and facts, the substance and depth of things. … To succeed, we did not always require proof, but often signs and gestures, which in our everyday life we would have overtook, not even seen. … We, then, have learned to listen and feel.[43]

Alexandra, Eleni, and their students came across a multitude of stories. Experiencing discomforting emotions while encountering the stories disrupted the way they understood the past, and spaces to cultivate historical consciousness were created. In these spaces, they listened to and examined stories, discussed their *significance* drawing *evidence* from them, and identified *continuity and change*, *progress, and decline* in the lives of people. Experiencing stories from alternative viewpoints and forming opinions about what was good and bad, they engaged in *perspective taking* and *moral judgment*, respectively. Feeling nostalgia, sadness, hatred, disappointment, and the urgency to act, they enacted *empathy* and *agency*. However, while they worked on developing these second-order concepts, there were limitations, too. These limitations and difficulties that Alexandra, Eleni, and their students encountered are presented below.

Teaching the Conflict

Whereas second-order concepts and historical consciousness started being cultivated, facilitation of venues to teach the conflict was limited; in fact, directly addressing the conflict was avoided. Focus, time restrictions, and fear of what would evolve and how to handle unexpected situations—

which shows lack of broader support—were barriers to this end. Although Alexandra and Eleni started using oral history regularly, in the integrated curriculum and in various school events,[44] they mainly placed emphasis on inspiring emotions through the stories they encountered, rather than dealing with challenging situations. As Alexandra said: "I didn't think about [focusing on something else]. … We only dealt with [students'] own feelings and those of the people whose testimonies we heard or read. Had we had time we could have dealt with many other issues … I could have students get into the position of these people."

In limiting focus, they omitted Turkish Cypriots' stories, ideology, and politics. Alexandra acknowledged that the scope of stories read and gathered was narrowed down, because it was a bit risky to allow politics to get involved. She repeated many times that her aim was to give students the opportunity to see the events through the eyes and the experiences of the people who lived them, rather than increase fanaticism or divide them: "We talked about the events of 1963–1964, but not as extensively. We focused mostly on the events of 1974. There were students who wanted to refer specifically to Turkish Cypriots, indeed. But, I didn't want to take the risk … I didn't want to divide, basically, to develop a climate of discord and fanaticism [in the classroom]." In narrowing down the range of their exploration, observing mainly the Greek-Cypriot community's stories, teachers and students moved within a socially, politically, ideologically, and ethnically safe space.

Time restrictions and the overwhelming feelings associated with the experience of deep, personal, affective, and often painful testimonies did not leave much space for discussion or to deal with conflict. Alexandra argued that because the students "hadn't heard these stories, events and testimonies before, or at least they hadn't experienced them to this degree, they were not really in a position to disagree, but rather they were curious to listen, and … do … something new on this issue … every day."

Alexandra and Eleni took a risk by virtue of even delving into the events in question through people's stories, and stimulating students' emotions using oral histories. Their accomplishment in highly engaging students in the activities was unprecedented. However, students, without expanding the circle of what was familiar and the zone of what was known and comfortable, and thus morally acceptable, were not able to form judgments through careful weighing of evidence and testing of premises. Whereas Eleni did not get involved in such discussions, as her topic was not so controversial, Alexandra talked about the key role of the teacher. She said, "the teacher plays a key role. If I, myself, was psychologically prepared to face both ideologies [left and right], and if we were not at the school context and we had another kind of debate, we could do it … at its full range. … However, in this case … I did not want to provoke any situations. I chose not to risk it so much."

Generally, when teachers attempt to use approaches new to them, they may experience "considerable discomfort."[45] When dealing with new, traditionally untouched, and sometimes ineffable ideas, which may also be controversial, the discomfort teachers experience may be even more intense. Usually only few teachers are comfortable dealing with issues related to conflict[46] and, often, conflict is omitted from the curriculum "in order not to 'inflame' or cement attitudes."[47] Flexibility and openness are key traits for the teachers to take risks and change a situation, because "the more conceptually flexible teachers … [can manage] the process of discomfort more effectively."[48] Although remaining on the safe side, Alexandra and Eleni still managed to face some of their discomfort and go beyond their conventional teaching. Oral history created a comfort zone within an uncomfortable and risky space. This pedagogy of discomfort appears to be a key element in understanding the relationship between oral history and education.

When we consider education to be a place where growth happens, oral history has a big share in it; it forms spaces where, beginning from what is comfortable and familiar, students and teachers can reach terrains that are unfamiliar and uncomfortable. Oral history education is about helping people develop qualities, like second-order concepts, that promote historical consciousness. It is also about allowing them to reconceptualize, reconsider, and reimagine the past based on broadened perspectives and understanding. Oral history education creates spaces where teachers and students encounter people's stories and diverse lived experiences. In these spaces, fresh understandings and interpretations of the past become possible. Using evidence, seeing continuity, envisioning change, and allowing empathy, perspective taking, and moral judgment, what and how one thinks, knows of, and remembers from the past may be disrupted. Such disruptions can form agency, such as acting toward resolving conflict, and can contribute to social justice education.

If teachers and students want to develop historical consciousness in order to avoid repeating devastations that occurred in the past, then cultivating it based on pain and devastation experienced by one side only is not a solution. Rather, for a viable future based on sustainable trust and understanding, events and happenings must be acknowledged more broadly. To this end, diverse stories from a wide range of people, experiences, and perspectives must be put in the spotlight.

Oral history can be a venue of trust, mutual understanding, and eliminating antagonism between groups. However, this can be enabled only when positive and active responses to conflict are encouraged. Students' quotations depicted and delineated Turkish Cypriots as the enemy. Alexandra and Eleni showcased stories that were within their own and students' range of comfort. Yet, not using oral history accounts from the other side didn't really help create a discrimination between the enemy and those who suffered, and what happened in the lives of distinct persons. Such generalizations fail to acknowledge diversity, distinguish the happenings, and allow carefully formed moral judgments. Feelings of nostalgia, sadness, hatred, and disappointment that were evoked cultivated negative responses to conflict. Action proposed was aimed toward remembering and illuminating experiences of one side only. This, however, can be dangerous as teachers may be pushing students toward embracing negative responses to conflict, thus running counter to the goal of building mutual trust. The transformative results of oral history education can be sensed, as it becomes a venue of trust, mutual understanding, and eliminating antagonism between groups. Toward this end, oral history education must include diverse stories to allow positive actions, responses, and carefully formed moral judgments. Nonetheless, teachers need to have a broader support, in order to feel comfortable to use a broad range of stories, and enhance trust and mutual understanding.

Toward a Pedagogy of Discomfort

In the case of Alexandra, Eleni, and their students, pedagogy of discomfort related mostly to the stimulation of emotions; they avoided addressing controversial dimensions, and teaching the conflict was not a focus. Nonetheless, to help students become agents of change, with historical consciousness that leads to agency, and engage in action to challenge violence or injustice, pedagogy of discomfort must do more than merely inspire emotions.[49] The urgency to act that is entailed in both teaching the conflict and cultivating historical consciousness must be transformed into action in order to challenge violence.

Oral history can make students and teachers think differently. It is a dynamic way of teaching sensitive issues as it embodies grassroots language and supplements official history. It also raises discomfort, which prompts students and teachers to question a variety of cherished values and beliefs.[50] A culture of oral history that moves people along all phases, from passivity to action and from blaming to taking responsibility, is necessary. A gradual process, then, is important in teaching about conflict and injustices through oral history. This process may begin from appreciating and reading narratives, and progress to challenging what students know, or what they think they know, and how what they know can be enriched or contrasted with the personal stories they encounter. Students and teachers can also unsettle and settle questions,[51] and analyze what important historical events and moments can tell them.[52] In doing so, teachers may fully embrace the pedagogical, political, and social dimensions of oral history.

Taking the extra step to use pedagogy of discomfort is important in Cyprus, and in similar contexts, in order to democratize history and understand political injustices, as, simultaneously, the "collateral effects" of discomfort[53] while the cultural and political setting are considered. Oral history is currently more relevant than ever in Cyprus. The pro-solution Turkish Cypriot leader, the broader positive climate that has been effected, and the re-launching of the negotiations have created new dynamics for a peace. Oral history can be a venue of trust, mutual understanding, and eliminating antagonism between groups. While experiencing discomfort, students may begin to face reality, act, and break the broader discomfort that has been silenced for years. The more students realize that they too are part of this protracted situation, which is not only a matter of fate, and that any potential solution is doomed to fail without their participation, the more they may start to take action.

NOTES

1. The names of the two teachers are pseudonyms.
2. Panagiota Flori, "The Use of Oral History in School Curricula for the Development of Secondary Education Students' Historical Consciousness: A Case Study" (unpublished master's thesis, Nicosia, Cyprus: Frederick University, 2014), 114.
3. The research contest *Students in Research (MERA)* is an initiative of the Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation aiming to cultivate research culture among students, and it is within the broader effort of the European Commission to promote research culture in Europe.

4. Personal communication with Eleni, 17 February 2015.
5. These resources can be found at http://voiceofwitness.org, http://www.europeana.eu/portal/, and http://www.memoro.org, respectively.
6. Nikoletta Christodoulou,*Oral History and the Chronicle of the Cyprus Oral History and Living Memory Project* (Nicosia, Cyprus: Frederick Research Center & Research Promotion Foundation, 2012.), www.frederick.ac.cy/research/oralhistory; Nikoletta Christodoulou, "Living Memory: Oral History in the Republic of Cyprus" in *Challenging History: Oral History Work in Cyprus*, ed. Holger Briel (Nicosia, Cyprus: University of Nicosia Press, 2014), 137–152; Nicoletta Christodoulou, "Oral History and Living Memory in Cyprus: Performance and Curricular Considerations," *Transnational Curriculum Inquiry* 11, no. 1 (2014): 30–43, http://ojs.library.ubc.ca/index.php/tci.
7. The Cyprus Oral History Project was hosted by the Frederick Research Center at Frederick University and was funded by the Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation (PROSELKYSH/0609). COHP took place between 2010 and 2012, and it was the first of its kind in Cyprus. Its aim was to audio- or video-record the voices and words of Cypriots of all communities—Greek-Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Maronites, Armenians, and Latins—and their first-hand or vicarious experiences, to capture their memories and to understand their individual meanings and perspectives regarding the 1960–1974 events, thus shedding light on their lives. The project's website is www.frederick.ac.cy/research/oralhistory.
8. Nikoletta Christodoulou, "Curriculum Studies in Cyprus: Intellectual History and Present Circumstances," in *International Handbook of Curriculum Research*, ed. William Pinar (New York, NY: Routledge, 2914), 151–160.
9. Turkish Cypriots fled to the north to escape intra- and inter-communal conflicts during 1963–1967, whereas Greek Cypriots fled to the south to escape the invasion in 1974. The Republic of Cyprus effectively controls the south part, whereas Turkey has illegally occupied the north part since 1974.
10. Yannis Papadakis, "Narrative, Memory and History Education in Divided Cyprus: A Comparison of Schoolbooks on the 'History of Cyprus,'" *History & Memory* 20, no. 2 (2008): 128–148, http://

muse.jhu.edu/journals/history_and_memory/v020/20.2.papadakis.pdf.

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12. The reference here is for the public schools in the area under the effective control of the Republic of Cyprus.
13. Personal communication with Eleni, 17 February 2015; MOEC memo.
14. Flori, "Use of Oral History."
15. For this idea see William Ayers and Rick Ayers, "Foreword," in *The Power of the Story: The Voice of Witness Teacher's Guide to Oral History*, eds. Cliff Mayotte, William Ayers, and Rick Ayers (San Fransisco, CA: The McSweeney's Books, 2013).
16. Michalinos Zembylas and Claire McGlynn, "Discomforting Pedagogies: Emotional Tensions, Ethical Dilemmas and Transformative Possibilities," *British Educational Research Journal* 38, no. 1 (2012): 41–59; Megan Boler and Michalinos Zembylas, "Discomforting Truths: The Emotional Terrain of Understanding Differences," in *Pedagogies of Difference: Rethinking Education for Social Justice*, ed. Peter Pericles Tryfonas (New York: Routledge, 2003), 110–136; Michalinos Zembylas and Megan Boler, "On the Spirit of Patriotism: Challenges of a 'Pedagogy of Discomfort,'" *Teachers College Record Online* (2002), http://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentID=11007; Michalinos Zembylas, "Teachers' Emotional Experiences of Growing Diversity and Multiculturalism in Schools and the Prospects of an Ethic of Discomfort," *Teaching and Teachers: Theory and Practice* 16, no. 6 (2010): 703–716.
17. Zembylas and McGlynn, "Discomforting Pedagogies," 41.
18. Megan Boler, *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1999).
19. For this idea see Boler, *Feeling Power*; Kevin Kumashiro, "Toward a Theory of Anti-Oppressive Education," *Review of Educational Research* 70, no. 1 (2000): 25–53; Kevin Kumashiro, *Troubling Education: Queer Activism & Anti-Oppressive Pedagogy* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002); Kevin Kumashiro, "Uncertain Beginnings: Learning to Teach Paradoxically," *Theory into Practice*

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20. Boler and Zembylas, "Discomforting Truths."
21. Megan Boler, "Teaching for Hope: The Ethics of Shattering World Views," in *Teaching, Caring, Loving and Learning: Reclaiming Passion in Educational Practice*, eds. Daniel Patrick Liston and James W. Garrison (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 117–131.
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26. Zembylas and McGlynn, "Discomforting Pedagogies."
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30. Ibid.
31. Lynn Davies, "Teaching about Conflict through Citizenship Education," *International Journal of Citizenship and Teacher Education* 1, no. 2 (2005): 17–34, http://www.citized.info/ejournal/Vol%201%20Number%202/008.pdf.
32. Figure adopted from Davies ("Teaching about Conflict," 23) with permission from the author.
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37. Davies, "Teaching about Conflict."
38. Seixas, "What Is Historical Consciousness?"
39. Rizokarpaso is one of the largest towns on the Karpass Peninsula in the northeastern part of Cyprus. While nominally part of the Famagusta District of the Republic of Cyprus, it has been under

the *de facto* control of Northern Cyprus since the partition of the island in 1974.

40. Hadjimichael et al., “School Celebrations,” 20.
41. Anna Lidaki, *Qualitative Methods of Social Research* (Athens, Greece: Kastaniotis, 2001).
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43. Lidaki, *Qualitative Methods,* 232–233.
44. Personal communication with Eleni, 17 February 2015; personal communication with Alexandra, 7 April 2015.
45. Joyce et al., *Models of Teaching*, 367.
46. Marie Smyth, Mark Scott, Leigh Whittley, et al., *Youthquest 2000: A Report on Young People’s Views and Experiences of Life in Northern Ireland* (Belfast: Youthquest 2000, 2000); Michael Arlow, “Citizenship Education in a Divided Society: The Case of Northern Ireland,” in *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*, eds. Sobhi Tawil and Alexandra Harley (Geneva: UNESCO International Bureau of Education, 2004), 255–314.
47. Davies, “Teaching about Conflict,” 24.
48. Joyce et al., *Models of Teaching*, 368.
49. Zembylas and McGlynn, “Discomforting Pedagogies”; Michalinos Zembylas, *The Politics of Trauma in Education* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Michalinos Zembylas, “Trauma, Justice and the Politics of Emotion: The Violence of Sentimentality in Education,” *Discourse* 29, no. 1 (2008): 1–17; Michalinos Zembylas and Sharon M. Chubbuck, “Emotions and Social Inequalities: Mobilizing Emotions for Social Justice Education,” in *Advances in Teacher Emotion Research: The Impact on Teachers’ Lives*, eds. Paul A. Schutz and Michalinos Zembylas (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009): 343–363.
50. Boler, “Teaching for Hope,” 117–131.
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52. Anderson and Jack, “Learning to Listen”; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, *Practice of Qualitative Research*; Portelli, *Battle of Valla Giulia*; Portelli, *Harlan County*.
53. Zembylas and McGlynn, “Discomforting Pedagogies.”

CHAPTER 4

Doing Oral History Education Toward Reconciliation

Nicholas Ng-A-Fook and Bryan Smith

INTRODUCTION

There is a growing reconceptualization of how history "ought" to be taught in a disciplined fashion. For example, in Canada and in certain parts of the United States, history educators are calling for a shift from teaching the memorization of historical events toward knowing what it means, and how, to think historically. Responding to these shifting historical and contemporary disciplinary contexts, a number of scholars and history educators have argued and continue to argue that the role of history education is less about instilling knowledge of historical particulars—events, persons, and dates—and more about developing "historical consciousness" or "historical thinking" among young people.[1] In their recent collection, as Sandwell and Von Heyking make clear,

> Many educators are demonstrating that it is by actively engaging in "doing" history that students experience, and come to know, historical thinking: the

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> complicated, nuanced process of evaluating the meanings and significance of often-conflicting evidence (generated during the time in question as primary sources, and from more recent evaluations or histories) in the best way possible.[2]

Historical thinking, and its respective six big concepts (establishing historical significance, using primary evidence, identifying continuity and change, analyzing cause and consequence, taking historical perspectives, and understanding the ethical dimensions of historical interpretations), then, is regarded by many history educators and policymakers as a "best practice" for teaching, learning, and doing history. Although there are some sound criticisms for the (over) proceduralism of historical thinking, it remains the current international progressive call for teaching the State's history and social studies curricula.[3]

In Ontario, for example, the social studies and history curricula are committed toward the concepts of disciplinary thinking as its central framework for learning history, where oral history is referred to as a type of primary source.[4] Absent from the curricular push for disciplining history, however, is an engagement with oral history education. Moreover, solely focusing on disciplining the past can work to exclude the narratives of those who have stories to tell that are yet to be reflected in "official" textbook versions of Canadian history. How, then, can we move beyond conceptualizing oral history as just another source of interpretive evidence within a disciplinary approach to history? In response to such curricular questions, we suggest oral history education can provide a pedagogical site for teachers and students to challenge grand narratives that are still reproduced through the disciplinary techniques for doing history. In turn, it affords teachers and students opportunities to see beyond the historical "events" that history curricula often still privilege. To illustrate the possibilities of doing oral history education as a praxis for pushing the limits of historical thinking in education, in this chapter we examine how teacher candidates are, and are not, prepared to address the educational mandates put forth in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)'s *Calls To Action* when teaching Canadian history.

In 2009, as part of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement, the TRC launched a series of public events across Canada where survivors could testify to their experiences within the Indian Residential School (IRS) system. The Canadian government's historical records estimate that well over 150,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students attended these schools, which sought to "kill the Indian in the child."[5] Over the next six years, several survivors shared oral testimonies that described the intergenerational impacts of the physical, psychological, and sexual abuse they experienced at the different residential schools located across Canada. The commissioners called (and call) upon us to recognize:

> A Survivor is not just someone who "made it through" the schools, or "got by" or was "making do." A Survivor is a person who persevered against and overcame adversity … who could legitimately say, "I am still here!" For that achievement, Survivors deserve our highest respect. But, for that achievement, we also owe them the debt of doing the right thing. Reconciliation is the right thing to do, coming out of this history.[6]

In response, we ask how we might draw upon oral history education to address the educational mandates of the TRC's *Calls to Action* within settler Canadian teacher education programs.

In this chapter, then, we suggest that doing oral history education can provide a critical historical pedagogy for educators to reread, rewrite, and perhaps reconcile the multiple ways in which our Eurocentric public schooling system worked and works to sanitize the current grand narratives that have come to constitute what some of us call Canadian history. "Like all historical accounts, grand narrative is," as Timothy Stanley reminds us, "an interpretation, a particular account whose origins can be traced to the last nineteenth century and that was popularized in the early twentieth century through the public school curricula."[7] Consequently, our capacity to study the past with regard to the IRS system has for the most part, until recently, been excluded from the grand narratives put forth in school curriculum. In turn, as John Willinsky cautions, there needs to be "vigilance about what has been lost and what has been brought forward as 'history'" both inside and outside the institutional context of its teachings within public education.[8] Or as Marie Battiste succinctly puts it, "educators must reject colonial curricula that offers students a fragmented and distorted picture of Indigenous peoples, and offer students a critical perspective of the historical context that created that fragmentation."[9] This chapter, in part, is a response to such calls for vigilance and critical perspectives within history education.

To provide context for our use of oral history education as a critical praxis for teaching historical inquiry that works against the grain of teaching grand narratives, we discuss some results that emerged from a 2011 study titled "Making Digital Histories." This federally funded study examined, in part, teacher candidates' prior historical understandings of the IRS system. These teacher candidates had yet to experience or learn the historical thinking concepts that now frame the Ontario Social Studies and Canadian and World Studies curriculum policy documents. Following this, we discuss the pedagogical possibilities and limitations of teaching historical thinking given its proliferation as a "best practice" for doing history. In the final section, we suggest how oral history education might enhance teacher candidates' capacities to address our ethical obligations to reread, rewrite, and redress the past as a praxis of reconciliation.

Unsettling Historical Narratives of the Past

To address the larger pedagogical questions of formulating what we might call a historical praxis for teaching "critical historical thinking," we first introduced teacher candidates to the methods of historical thinking, followed by a workshop that illustrated the different functionalities of the Virtual Historian website (http://www.virtualhistorian.ca).[10] Prior to the commencement of this first professional learning workshop, teacher candidates were invited to complete a survey that sought to understand their use of technologies to teach and understand history in elementary, high school, and university classrooms.[11]

A smaller group of Anglophone and Francophone teacher candidates were then invited to complete an activity where we utilized eye-tracking software to analyze teacher candidates' use of historical thinking skills and digital literacies while they navigated the historical content of a virtual exhibit titled *Where are the Children?*[12] Subsequent to the survey and this activity, we asked teacher candidates to make a digital oral history film with Algonquin Elders which focused on their past educational experiences both on and off the Kitigan Zibi reserve.[13] The following year we added a question to the survey that asked teacher candidates to write a short historical narrative about the IRS system. We encouraged them to use the "5Ws plus H" (who, what, when, where, why and how) to scaffold their historical narratives. A total of 122 Anglophone and Francophone teacher candidates wrote a short narrative of the IRS system with these criteria in mind.[14] Due to the limited scope of this chapter, in what follows we limit our analysis to the following three themes that several teacher candidates put forth in the survey: (1) assimilation and government intent, (2) spatial and temporal displacement, and (3) the official state apology.

Establishing Educational Centers for Cultural Assimilation

Thinking through how the teacher candidates articulated the purpose of the IRS system, we sought to understand how they interpreted the complex historical relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples as it pertains to the history and on-going legacy of the IRS system. In other words, how did they understand the lived experiences of those who died or survived the IRS system and its “curriculum of assimilation?”[15] In their narrative constructions, several teacher candidates recognized the assimilative intent of the residential schools. As one candidate noted, “Indigenous children [were] taken from their families to be educated/indoctrinated/assimilated by Roman Catholic Europeans.” Another candidate wrote, “Indian Residential schools were for educating/assimilating First Nations youth.” These teacher candidates recognized the double purpose of residential schooling as a disciplinary regime that both educates and assimilates.

Some of the teacher candidates articulated an educational rationale for the assimilation. For example, one candidate wrote that residential schools were used as “centres for cultural assimilation: policy makers and educators hoped to solve many issues stemming from cultural differences by removing those differences in new generations of Aboriginals.” One way to manage such cultural, epistemological, material, ontological, cosmological, and spiritual differences was to implement a vocational curriculum of compliance. “The goal,” as another candidate stressed, “was assimilation and the degradation of Native culture in order to ensure compliance.” A few used the phrase “cultural genocide” to describe the violent intergenerational consequences of the IRS system. For example, “residential schools began during the 1890s under [then Prime Minister John A. MacDonald] and were used as an extreme form of assimilation and cultural genocide.” Several teacher candidates illustrated in their responses a nascent understanding of the ways in which the Canadian government attempted to “kill the Indian in the child” by institutionalizing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children within the disciplinary regime of the IRS system.

Spatial and Temporal Displacement: It Happened “Then/Over There”

Violent history is often represented as something that happened “then,” “elsewhere,” and to “them,” outside of a “we,” with few to no consequences for the collective inhabitations of the present moment. The results of such temporal displacements and spatialized enclosures obscure the inheritance of a history that structures our lives in the current moment. As Stanley points out, however, "public memory" is one of the key ways of solidifying our historical imaginations of a national community called Canada.[16] Teacher candidates, at least in our survey, frequently located the IRS system as somewhere "over there, far away," existing "way back then," somewhere at the temporal and spatialized edges of a mythical frontier.

Several teacher candidates indicated that the IRS system happened either out west or up north.[17] For example, one teacher candidate suggested that "Aboriginals from the West were placed into residential schools for assimilation." Another remarked that "Native Canadians were put into schools and civilized, in the early twentieth century in Western Canada to assimilate them." Additionally, some suggested that it happened in northern areas of the country. One student stated, "Native Canadian children were forced out of their homes by the government, and were sent to schools with non-natives. This occurred mainly in northern Canada." Similarly, another suggested that "they existed across Canada but were more dominant in areas of higher First Nations populations such as rural and northern regions of the country." In Ontario, many of the schools did exist in more remote and/or northerly areas of the province. However, several schools were also in regions that were neither in the north nor situated in remote locations. For instance, Mount Elgin Indian Residential School was open for 100 years (1848–1948) in Muncey Town, Ontario, a community approximately 30 km from London, Ontario. This school was located in one of the oldest and most populated regions during that time period (and to this day). Even less remote than this school would have been the Mohawk Institute Residential School, open from 1831 to 1969. This school was located in Brantford, Ontario—a mere 100 km from Toronto.

The more prominent form of displacement was temporal. Here, teacher candidates located the IRS system in a time period that belies the true extent of its existence. To provide some context, the *Where Are The Children* webpage suggests that the schools first opened in 1831 (Ontario) while the final one closed in 1996 (Saskatchewan). The extent of this time frame, as many teacher candidates suggested, is largely unknown. For example, when reflecting on when the schools existed, some teacher candidates suggested "up until the mid-1900s," and that the "last schools closed in Canada in the 1950s." One candidate expressed dismay in saying that "the last of the schools, shockingly, was closed only in the last century. 50 years ago?" One candidate thought the program existed for only about 30 years, remarking that it occurred fro, “1960 to 1987.” Why the middle of the twentieth century is a commonly assumed date for the cessation of the residential schooling program is unknown, and it suggests that further research is needed to understand why this chronological point marks the end of the IRS system for many teacher candidates. Their (and our) inability to remember when this curriculum of violence began and ended is part of the larger colonial project of erasing its violence from a Canadian public memory.

State Apology and Student Understandings

In 2008, the Canadian government issued a formal apology to those who did and did not survive the IRS system. While some have noted a lack of awareness of this apology among teacher candidates, it was present in both our Anglophone and Francophone participants’ narratives.[18] Although their narratives frequently addressed the historical injustice apologized for, they were limited in terms of recognizing the intergenerational impacts or role which apologies can have in reconciliation. As one student said, “it was in the 1800s and the Harper government made a public apology to the people and their families who were sent to these schools and gave them all money as compensation.” Ken Montgomery has critiqued the ways in which Japanese–Canadian narratives of redress are taken up in history textbooks.[19] Canada’s systematic programs of institutional violence against the original inhabitants are, as he reminds us, in most cases supplanted by a narrative of compensation. This student, however, was not the only one who put forth “compensation” as a narrative trope. Another student argued, “Recently, the Prime Minister apologized for the existence of the schools. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was created to provide financial compensation for the survivors and to help the healing process by sharing stories.” Narratives of compensation, for many non-Indigenous Canadians, represent the core component to the processes of redress, superseding any necessary emotional or cultural work toward making things right with the children who did or did not survive the institutional violence of the IRS system. Discursively and politically, the historical narratives occupying our newsstands, our classrooms, and our individual and collective historical consciousness are perhaps slowly changing. Ontario teachers and students can now find the term “residential schools” within the social studies curriculum policy document. But how do we take up the complexities of their historical representations as future history teachers? What are our ethical responsibilities for responding to the *Calls to Action* put forth by the TRC? What are the possibilities and limitations of historical thinking toward storying this specific past differently?

Reconciling Ethical Encounters Within a Disciplined Past

In *Schweigen*! *Die Kinder*!, Peter Seixas suggests that there are three pedagogical orientations that history teachers lean on when confronted with conflicting interpretations of the past. The first is to simply teach the best story. Here, Seixas reminds us that while this pedagogical orientation works to enhance our collective memory, "it does not engage students in the historical disciplines' modes of inquiry."[20] For the second orientation, students are presented with multiple interpretations and are then invited to debate historians' differing interpretive stances "on the basis of a series of documents, historians' assessments, and other materials."[21] The third orientation troubles the notion that there exists one "best story." This specific pedagogical orientation cautions teachers and students that our cultural, political, and social contexts of the present inform (taint) the ways in which historians make historical narratives.

In light of the need to reframe history as a process of inquiry, current scholarship and curricular implementations are increasingly focusing on teaching the methods of historical thinking.[22] According to this literature, historical thinking is a means of "doing history," a set of cognitive and investigative techniques which calls upon teachers and students to investigate the past, construct arguments, and write historical narratives. Various scholars, including Seixas and Lévesque, have written on the methods of historical thinking, each exploring its possibilities and limits within the classroom.[23]

While each scholar takes a slightly different approach to historical thinking, all of them argue that this "unnatural act" requires the development of a set of thinking skills and dispositions used by historians themselves.[24] Indeed, many of the approaches outline a set of specific disciplinary thinking concepts that are often similar in their formulation. For example, Seixas and Morton maintain that historical thinking involves determining historical significance, working with evidence, recognizing continuity and change, reading cause and consequence, historical perspective taking, and making ethical considerations.[25] Similarly, Lévesque argues that historical thinking involves determining historical significance, seeing continuity and change, recognizing progress and decline, reading evidence, and being historically empathetic.[26] While slightly different in their formulation, each approach for doing history education applies preestablished disciplinary methods.

Although absent within the Ontario Social Studies and History curriculum policy documents, several scholars advocate for disciplinary approaches that include, in some fashion, an awareness of the ethical or moral dimension of history.[27] These scholars attend to the messiness of history, as a site fraught with affect, violence, and immoral choices, which have had lasting intergenerational consequences. And yet, much of this discussion is also couched in a language of caution. For example, in illustrating the applicability of the methods of historical thinking to a photograph, Seixas points out, "if positive judgments are risky, so too are negative judgments." Especially, as he makes clear, when racism "was part of the fabric of 19th century European thought."[28] In large part, making ethical and/or moral judgments requires an awareness of our present context in relation to the past. It calls upon us to challenge the hegemonic values, structures, and worldviews of dominant groups toward a fundamental revision of the nation-building stories we continue to teach across Ontario schools.

Reducing our pedagogical relations with the past to disciplinary procedures can lead us to ignore, as den Heyer cautions us, "students' inventive capacities to use knowledge from or about the past when they explore possible, probable, and preferable futures with regard to present situations that are deemed inadequate. It does not put ethical relations or social action at the center of the history curriculum."[29] In this regard, it risks anesthetizing the past, reframing historical events as something that can be best explained by applying a list of procedural techniques to sufficiently reveal the past in all of its complexities. Our sense is that this is not the kind of orientation that historical thinking scholars are calling for teachers and students to take up in the classroom.

In part, this could be due to the chosen disciplinary language that scholars use to justify historical thinking. For example, Lévesque argues that historical thinking is a set of "procedural concepts,"[30] for Seixas and Morton it is a set of "strategies" and a "framework,"[31] whereas for Yeager and Wilson it is the "'habits of mind' and discipline-based perspectives."[32] Elsewhere, Seixas more concisely states, "'History' has a method."[33] By making the process of doing history something that can be done as an application of disciplinary rules, historical thinking risks making inquiry methodical in nature. While this may not appear to be a pedagogical limitation, understanding our ethical relations with the past, "the capacity to know what harms or enhances the well-being of sentient creatures,"[34] cannot be "captured" or "interpreted" as a formulaic approach for making moral judgments about the past. Given this, we ask: How might we facilitate ethical encounters with the past amid the increasingly pervasive reach of the historical thinking concepts put forth within the Ontario Social Studies and History curriculum policy documents?

An ethical encounter with the past, as we understand it, involves the affective processes of relating to others' lived experiences and histories.[35] Here Donald points out, and as we saw in the responses to the survey, that Canadian history is often taught through disciplinary narratives of temporal and spatialized separation.[36] Employing the metaphor of the fort, Donald contends that history is predicated on a powerful separation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Storying certain myths of this separation in the classroom has served to naturalize the incommensurability of our imagined historical differences.[37] This separation manifests itself in a variety of ways, one of which is the methods used to approach the social construction of historical knowledge itself. If we consider the methods of historical thinking within a disciplinary "frontier" landscape, we can see that they follow patterns of formulaic and almost scientific or technical thinking. In promoting history education akin to a scientific method, Seixas and Morton ask, "why shouldn't the history classroom have comparably high goals?"[38] And yet, in advocating for a more "enlightened" Eurocentric scientific approach for studying the past, historical thinking is in danger (in the hands of certain teachers) of reproducing the very epistemological, pedagogical, and indeed relational divides we are attempting to reconcile.[39]

We suggest that oral history education can in part enable us to address such irreconcilable relational divides with the past. As non-Indigenous scholars working with a largely non-Indigenous teacher educator population, we think it is crucial to note that we see oral history education and making oral histories as a distinct pedagogy from Indigenous ceremonial and/or educational oral traditions. In this regard, we recognize that the methodological and pedagogical conception of oral history education is also informed by Eurocentric modes of knowing (and producing records of that knowing). To claim otherwise would be an inappropriate appropriation of Indigenous oral traditions of storying.

Doing Oral History Education as a Call to Action

The TRC, in their *Calls to Action*, call for both "building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect [and the identification of] teacher-training needs."[40] Although directed at the Council of Ministers of Education Canada, we position ourselves as ethically obligated to develop these professional capacities within teacher education programs. To build such intercultural understanding and empathy, we asked teacher candidates to make digital oral histories with Elders from the Kitigan Zibi First Nations Anishnabeg community.

Here we might revisit Alessandro Portelli's classic essay, *What Makes Oral History Different*.[41] Like him, we suggest that the specter of oral history, and the legacy of the IRS system, is haunting the halls of Ontario history education and a settler historical consciousness. What makes oral history education different from written historical accounts, as Portelli makes clear, is its emphasis on making meaning rather than remembering specific events, a condition that calls the "speaker's subjectivity" forth in a way that "no other sources possess in equal measure."[42] Moreover, oral histories, as Portelli observes, "often reveal unknown aspects of known events; they always cast new light on unexplored areas of the daily life of the nonhegemonic classes."[43] To this pedagogical end, Portelli reminds us, it is "the historian who selects the people who will be interviewed, who contributes to the shaping of the testimony by asking the questions and reacting to the answers; and who gives the testimony its final published shape and context (if only in terms of montage and transcription)."[44] During the final component of the project, teacher candidates were invited to co-interpret, co-edit, and co-write a 15-min digital oral history movie with an Elder that narrated and represented the lived experiences of a residential school survivor to unsettle the stories we tell and don't tell each other about what some of us call a Canadian past.

Making digital oral history narratives afforded these teacher candidates opportunities to develop a relationship with a First Nations Elder and their respective lived experiences with the past. They were also able to reflect on the ways in which the organization of Elders' narratives revealed "a great deal of the speaker's relationships to their history."[45] Teacher candidates learned that Elders' relations to what we call Canadian history were radically different from the grand narratives they learned in school. At the end of the project we invited five teacher candidates (Aidan, Clara, Jonah, Isabella, and Tommy) to reflect on and share their experiences during a focus group interview.

Reflecting on doing an oral history interview with Bertha Commanda, a Kitigan Zibi Elder and an IRS system survivor, Jonah shared the following:

> The other challenge was just when it's a really horrific story is just letting it be a horrific story. It's hard to hear when you're hearing first hand about the abuse. It's a tough thing to hear. But, what a gift to be able to be part of that.

Indeed, the teachings she shared with the larger Anishnabeg community, and when we visited, were often presented and received as a gift in exchange for tobacco (one of the four sacred medicines). During our time with Bertha, she shared some of her lived experiences at the St. Joseph's Indian Residential School in Spanish Ontario with an open heart to those willing to listen.

Indeed, teacher candidates emphasized the importance of learning how to *listen* to others' silence differently. Reflecting on the call to listen, Isabella stated:

> The challenges I found are when it, when [pauses] to be comfortable with silence especially when you're interviewing First Nations people because often they'll just stop and think. And I think it's a very [hesitates], we get nervous when people stop talking. So, we just start speaking again instead of just letting it be quiet and give them thirty seconds to think. So, that's one thing I would change next time. I would allow more time for silence.

Pedagogical encounters with Elders like Bertha called upon Isabella to listen to the past differently, its silences and pedagogical (traumatic) hesitations, which were previously absent from the processes of teaching history. In a sense, learning to listen differently enabled candidates to relate, reread, and rewrite the historical narratives that constituted not just their subjective relations with the past, but also for rereading and rewriting Canadian history as a praxis toward reconciliation.

Oral history education calls us to listen, to encounter, and to confront the difficult pasts of others in relation to the uncontested histories of colonial violence. Fostering this kind of historical listening involves attuning ourselves to the stories of those whose narratives are subsumed and silenced within the settler colonial logics of the nation-building stories we tell and don't tell each other as Canadians. For us, the practice of producing (doing, rereading, reinterpreting, and rewriting) history then implicates one in communicative relationships with others. Herein lies our privileging of survivors' oral testimonies as a practice of remembering, that by its very nature requires listeners to engage in relationships with the teller while also attempting to reconcile their relations with an unsettling past.

To this end, consider the following exchanges among Jonah, Clara, and Bertha during their oral history interview:

Jonah: Do you feel that there has been a change, so far?

Bertha: Very slowly. I hope to see a better history. Another woman came at my home last summer. She says, "I was always scared of Indians." It was my friend's friend. I said, "why?" She said, "when I was going school and I was a only a little girl there were history books where the Indians had their knives and running after little kids trying to scalp them." That's what they learned.

Clara: That's what we were brought up on. I remember growing up in the 1970s and it was Cowboys and Indians. So I think that is going to slowly change. And, with people like you sharing your stories the next generation of people growing up are, hopefully, going to rewrite that history.

Bertha: Yeah, hopefully. I hope things change. As I said, our parents, our ancestors told us "learn English, learn English" because that's all you see. The English people are coming! The Indian agents all spoke English!

As readers, we are witness to Jonah and Clara's immersion in the processes of co-creating an oral history narrative through their exchanges with Bertha. To be part of co-creating this story is, as Jonah astutely observes, a pedagogical gift. In rereading the transcripts, we can put certain historical thinking concepts into play in relation to rereading the trails of the past put forth in their references to history textbooks, popular movies, and bearing witness to the processes of colonization. Juxtaposing their relations with these different sources will later constitute their historical knowledge, and as Clara points out, they are able to reread and rewrite their settler historical consciousness both during and after their encounters with Bertha's storying of the past. In these pedagogical terms, oral history conceived as education moves beyond becoming just another source of historical evidence to be used and interpreted by historians. For any kind of reconciliation to take place, Canadian citizens will have to learn how to interpret, reread, rewrite, and make right the settler normativity put forth in popular films, history textbooks, and the provincial history curriculum. “The English people are coming!” Bertha reminds us, is the violent racialized national story of colonization that continues to haunt Canadian history education and its policymaking.

Doing oral history education enabled teacher candidates to develop a different kind of pedagogical (ethical) relation with a survivor’s past experiences within the IRS system. In a sense, they were able to grasp the differing pedagogical orientations of history education. Aidan tells us, “Because I graduated from history and I’m going to be a history teacher I’m thinking like, I know a lot of history. But, going up there I learned so much more from doing an oral history.” After completing the oral history education project, Aidan began to recognize that the narratives of others’ lived experiences were excluded from the history curricula that made up his undergraduate program, and in turn, were absent from his historical consciousness. To this pedagogical end, he tells us, “I didn’t realize how much information I would be learning from doing the interview.” Doing the oral history interview enabled Aidan to revisit his prior understandings of what life might have been like for First Nations children within the IRS system. In these pedagogical terms, Aidan’s responses gestured toward his capacity to relate more empathetically to the (marginalized) past experiences of others.

When asked what the process of doing oral history did in terms of his professional role as a future history teacher, Tommy said, “There’s still an endless amount of stories that are out there that haven’t been documented yet and they’re invaluable.” Clara expressed a similar sentiment:

> Going into it, I kind of expected to see those kinds of [terrible] conditions on the reserve because I had never been on a First Nations reserve. I didn’t know what to expect at all going up there. I learned a ton because it was a great example of how a community has changed and rewritten their history in terms of how they educate their youth.

We can return to Portelli’s assertion that doing oral histories is about making meanings of our relations with the lives of others together, rather than celebrating the historical progress we have made as Canadians. For

Clara, Bertha "added a human element to a history that had previously been composed only of numbers and dates." For the teacher candidates, it was their first visit to a reserve and encounter with a First Nations Elder. Thus, unlike archival sources, Clara recognizes that one of the primary benefits of doing oral histories is the dialogic and relational nature of co-constructing our historical understandings, a process that Tommy and Aidan imply is never complete.

The processes of doing oral history, of listening, reading, and co-writing Bertha's past, evoked a particular humanity that might not be present in our encounters with history textbooks. More than that, teacher candidates who were part of this cycle of inquiry, like Aidan, expressed that oral history education facilitated an encounter with the past where history, as he pointed out, "comes alive" and feels "more real."

The "fact" that IRS students may have had to travel great distances (as noted by the teacher candidates in the survey data) takes on different meaning when contextualized by the experiences of those who partook in the oral history. For example, during interview Bertha Commanda shared the following story:

> We waited in Ottawa. It seemed like a long time. I don't know what time it was. And finally, we got on a train. It was almost dark. When we got on the train, my dad says, "I don't have my ticket. Where's my ticket?" I don't remember much. Anyway, along the way we got on the wrong train somewhere. We had to change and we had no money to eat. Someone gave us something to eat, one of the conductors. Finally, we got on the right train. We got off in Spanish. They were supposed to meet us in Spanish. Nobody was around. What the heck are we going to do? So, as I said, we spoke a little bit of English. Finally, we ran into a man and asked him, "Where's the school?" So he says, we had to walk. I don't know how far. We had to walk in the bush a little bit. We found it. We found the school. And we told him we have nothing. We have nothing. No paper! No nothing! Because they were supposed to meet us. So they took us anyway. We were lucky. Otherwise we'd have been stuck over there somewhere. It's crazy.

Now while rereading, rewriting, and addressing Bertha's story, we are reminded that what our teacher candidates posited about the IRS geographic existence isn't entirely false. Bertha traveled a great distance from the Kitigan Zibi reserve in Quebec to attend the residential school in Spanish Ontario. Doing oral history education enabled teacher candidates to recognize what Portelli calls "the historian's presence in the story."[46]

Whereas historical thinking involves interpretative confrontations with the "stuff" of history (e.g. archival documents), oral historical methods call upon us to recognize the "partiality of the narrator."[47]

What is at stake when we create spaces for unsettling our relations with the past "is our imaginative and emotional abilities to learn from 'multiple perspectives' so as to potentially expand the range of responses to pressing issues of social concern by extending our circle of attention and care."[48] What made oral history different for Aidan was being part of the relational circle of doing historical inquiry. Such extensions of our selves involve becoming, as den Heyer and Abbott stress, historical subjects that are capable of rereading the past in relation to the lived experiences of others, and then rewriting ourselves within the present toward reimagining Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations toward the future by storying alternative histories. Similar to Jennifer Tupper's call for reading "the past through the lens of treaty," oral history education within a civic pedagogical context "creates the possibility for students to not only become cognizant of Aboriginal stories and epistemologies, but to reconfigure their engagement with the history of Canada and their own historical consciousness."[49] Responding to the *Calls to Action* put forth by the TRC, teachers, teacher candidates, and their respective students will increasingly be called to recognize the intergenerational impacts of the IRS system as part of unsettling the futurities of Canadian settler historical consciousness. In this regard, Clara offered a more nuanced response to apology:

> I am glad that Prime Minister Harper issued a public apology for the residential schools in 2008, but I feel that, in general, the Canadian public still lacks an understanding of the profound effects the residential schooling system had on the lives of Aboriginal people and how it tore the fabric of their culture and identity. That fabric is still being repaired to this day, yet many seem to think that because the schools are a thing of the past, the survivors and their families should "move on" and just "get over it," not realizing that these issues build up over generations and will likely take generations to overcome.

While Clara may not implicate herself or other non-Indigenous people in this process of reparation, her acknowledgment of the intergenerational impacts of the IRS system moves beyond narratives of compensation. Such acknowledgment of the intergenerational cause and consequences of the IRS system is a small and important first step toward reconciling Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations.

As the focus group interview came to a close, Aidan offered the following insightful reflection on doing oral history education:

> I think it's important to be involved in this project at every level. It's not enough to just go to one workshop and then go interview an Elder and then not be involved in transcribing. It's important to be part of the whole circle. I got so much out of just sitting and transcribing because when you're in the act of interviewing you're thinking of different things. It was nice to kind of sit after and hear the stories again. I don't know it was … just putting it into the written word was different.

Alongside the narrative of Bertha stands, as Portelli reminds us, the first-person narrative "of the historian, without whom there would be no interview."[50] Here both Bertha's and the teacher candidates' "discourse are in narrative form, which is much less frequently the case with archival documents."[51] In turn, Bertha is an Elder, their teacher, whereas the teacher candidates, in certain ways, become "part of the source."[52] The teacher candidates were able to identify and discuss the different tensions they experienced when confronted with narrations of the past that depart from the one "best story" that constituted, at least for them, a Canadian settler history within the school curriculum. This underscores, for us, the ethical potential of doing oral history education as a praxis for reconciliation while also addressing the other disciplinary dimensions of historical thinking.

We are indebted to IRS survivors like Bertha. That said, we recognize that our experiences with this project have by no means provided a definitive set of curricular and/or pedagogical conclusions that point to the perfect correspondence between doing oral history education and contesting the civic formation of a settler historical consciousness within the contexts of public schooling. We don't know, for example, if students will take the lessons learned here to refine some of the stories they will teach about the IRS system in their future history classrooms. And yet, "how students think about the past contributes," as Tupper makes clear, "to not only how they imagine themselves as citizens and enact their citizenship but also to their historical consciousness."[53] In response to such civic enactments, we suggest that our oral history education project afforded teacher candidates pedagogical opportunities to become historical subjects during their encounters with the past lives of others. They learned how to reread, rewrite, and redress a more nuanced storied account that responds in part to the TRC *Calls to Action*. The oral history education project provided a pedagogical opportunity to take up what Indigenous scholars, such as Susan Dion, have long noted: the storied nature of being in and relating to the world.[54] At the same time, the candidates' responses to their experiences suggest that oral history education can create pedagogical sites for us to encounter and relate to the ethical dimensions of both our and others' difficult pasts within the contexts of teacher education and public schooling. In terms of addressing the *Calls to Action*, creating such pedagogical spaces within our teacher education program is part of what we think, at this moment in time, might constitute a small first step toward renewing our individual and collective relations as Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians beyond the imaginary confines of a settler historical consciousness. If reconciling our relations with the past is the right thing to do, then what civic role will teacher education programs and history educators play in making our future actions right?

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CHAPTER 5

When Oral History Calls on You: Stories from Nunavut

Heather E. McGregor and Catherine A. McGregor

Story as Preface: Heather (Re)Considers a Research Path

[Heather] With a research proposal and ethics approval in place I was ready to get started. The research was about how Nunavut—a territory in northern Canada—had been trying to decolonize schools since 2000. I had designed various models of interviews, and a focus group, to document new education policies, programs, and practices. Then, suddenly it seemed, the context of education policy began to shift. I felt uncertain about whether that warranted changes in my research as well. I also had a feeling my research plans were too ambitious, but so much needed to be done! I went for a walk on the big hills behind my parents' house in Iqaluit, out on the tundra where you can pick your own path, in the company only of ravens. I wondered: "What research am I best positioned to do? What project makes sense *now*?" By the end of the walk, I decided to ask my mother, Cathy, if we could talk about her 40-year career as an educational leader in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Many of Cathy's stories were about how she had been drawn into curriculum projects through

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relationships, and also about how those projects produced relationships. I estimated this would involve four or five one-hour interviews. But when we finished, we had 17 interviews totaling more than 30 hours. I just kept asking questions, and she just kept telling stories. It felt like the stories were calling out, like they needed to be heard.

Introduction

[Heather and Cathy] The preface is the first of several stories that help us explain how oral history has called on us through our work and research[1] in Nunavut education. As the preface illustrates, Heather did not set out to do an oral history project for her dissertation. And yet, that is what it *became*—what it seemed the context, and relationships within the context, *called for*. Indeed, in some moments it became oral history *about* oral history, *without ever calling it that*. This chapter emerged as a way of making sense of the process of oral history becoming and calling. It addresses the following questions: Why does oral history call on us? What invitations and potentialities are produced when conversations and relationships *turn into* oral history, or are *called* oral history, instead of something else?

In addition to the first story about Heather's research, this chapter offers two more stories about the pedagogical possibilities of oral history. The second describes how interviews conducted by four Inuit youth, with former leaders of the Nunavut land claim negotiations, produced one of Nunavut's most unique and rich history education resources. In turn, the third features leadership development workshops that have brought forward (hi)stories of colonizing relationships[2] between *Qallunaat* (non-Inuit)[3] and Inuit in Nunavut, and potential therein for changing school practice.

We selected these stories as exemplars of oral history because they illuminate potentialities associated with Nunavut's decolonizing goals for schooling.[4] By decolonizing, we mean the ongoing processes of creating culturally responsive schools founded on *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*,[5] by disrupting the Eurocentric approaches that otherwise characterize schools. Our analysis emphasizes the possibilities associated with using oral history in decolonizing. As *Qallunaat*, we view ourselves as better positioned to inquire into the role of oral history in schools through the lens of decolonizing approaches—those that implicate colonizing histories and the role of non-Indigenous school staff. We recognize that more work could, and should, better identify the role of oral history in schools specifically to advance and mobilize *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* through traditional Inuit approaches—but that is not what we offer here.

We analyze our stories about oral history using theoretical tools from Arthur W. Frank's *Letting Stories Breathe: A Socio-Narratology*, in which he addresses what stories *do* in a broad range of contexts.[6] Frank's interdisciplinary analysis of story-at-work is informed by many influences, including Canadian Indigenous scholars and oral historians like Jo-ann Archibald and Julie Cruikshank. His term, socio-narratology, is predicated on an understanding that we may learn from stories, including oral histories, as actors that affect human consciousness, connect and disconnect people, hold distinct capacities as forms of narration, and must be interpreted dialogically. He explains, "Once stories are under people's skin, they affect the terms in which people think, know, and perceive. Stories teach people what to look for and what can be ignored; they teach what to value and what to hold in contempt."[7] Frank's theoretical tools, such as his explanation of the terms narrative habitus and resonance outlined below, help us make sense of how oral histories have called on us.

We explore theories, dilemmas, and practices of oral history through these stories from Nunavut, wherein curriculum is the nexus for relationship—between storyteller and learner, and between place, identity, and history. We undertake this exploration dialogically: with each other, with Frank's theorizations, and with our experiences of oral history in educational change. While one can participate in oral history and benefit from it without theoretical supports, theory may illuminate why and how learners (students, educators, or anyone involved in schools) could be *called by* oral history—as we were—to practice in particular ways and produce particular kinds of pedagogical experiences.

EXEMPLAR 1: RESEARCH BECOMING ORAL HISTORY

[Heather] In the story-as-preface above, I explain that I set out to document decolonizing changes in a school system (i.e., curriculum and policy) and ended up with an oral history project. There were numerous reasons for this change—one was the potential I saw in interviewing my mother and former colleague, Cathy. I knew Cathy tends to explain recent developments by showing how they connect to ideas and developments in the past, including her own past experience. I was interested in how she had learned to see schools differently, and work differently, in the context of Nunavut. It is a place where teaching feels—and is—vastly different from other contexts because of, for example, the environment, including distance between communities and how weather affects all aspects of life. Demographically, Inuit are the majority population, but most schools have a higher number of *Qallunaat* teachers. The people of Nunavut continue to confront colonizing relations produced over time, and in response continue to nurture the resilience of Inuit culture and language, and much more. How do *Qallunaat* educators and educational leaders[8] learn to navigate these differences?

Cathy often tells a story to explain what has driven her work in northern education for so long. It comes from the end of her first year as a primary teacher in Kugluktuk—then a small community on the Arctic Coast of the Northwest Territories (now Nunavut). I knew we had to begin with that story. A very short version of it goes like this:

> I thought I had done so much that first year to teach the kids about themselves and their community. The superintendent evaluating me said, "Well I don't think you actually did enough to teach about what being an Eskimo[9] is" or something like that. And I was really insulted. I couldn't figure out why he was so hard on me, and what more I could have done. That became a defining moment for me because I thought, "Ok, I don't know what else it could be, but I'm going to start trying to figure it out." I have spent the last 40 years working to figure it out.[10]

[Heather and Cathy] What work does this story *do*? We have realized that Heather was called by Cathy's story into a process of oral history as part of developing "narrative habitus." According to Frank, "Some stories are heard, immediately and intuitively, as *belonging* under one's skin. Narrative habitus is a disposition to hear some stories as those that one ought to listen to, ought to repeat on appropriate occasions, and ought to be guided by."[11] To develop narrative habitus, says Frank, is to gain a repertoire, or "stories that a person at least recognizes and that a group shares."[12]

This story had power with Heather because she loves history, because she cares deeply about the future of Nunavut, and because she tries to mobilize knowledge about why schools are the way they are, and how they could change to align with decolonizing goals. Yet, what educators with many years of experience in Nunavut know about schools—and perhaps know about decolonizing—does not seem to be easily accessible to new teachers and other education staff members who perpetually rotate into, around, and out of the system. Cathy's story is powerful because it narrates questions on the minds of so many Nunavut educators, old and new: How do we teach well *here*? How do we *learn* to teach well here? How do we change our former assumptions about schools, to be more responsive to the people *in this place*? How much change is enough?

Heather saw pedagogical potential in an oral history process that could make Nunavut approaches to teaching, and reflecting on teaching, *narratable*. She thought the approaches of long-term northern teachers could be made more evident in Nunavut-based resource materials, teacher orientations, and academic research. More stories were needed about the development of teaching approaches over time—how teachers persevere through their first year of teaching, their second year, or their 17th year. More stories were needed about living with, and teaching through, the dilemma of *not knowing for sure* how to be a good teacher. How do you figure out whom to ask for help, and how to ask? How do you try to teach anyway, without clear and easy answers? How do you work with and through awareness that *Qallunaat* teachers may (re)inscribe colonizing relations with Inuit students, over and over again? How could stories help educators acknowledge that schools need to be different at a deep level—without having a model or guide for what that deep change looks like?

Exemplar 2: Curriculum Becoming Oral History

[Cathy] In the story from my Kugluktuk classroom, above, the Superintendent invited me to extend and deepen how I, as an educator, could support Inuit students in learning about, and growing, their individual and collective identities. Throughout the rest of my career, I became involved in projects that tried to achieve this, such as *Inuuqatigiit: The Curriculum from the Inuit Perspective* (K–12).[13] Inuit educators and Elders worked together on *Inuuqatigiit*, identifying traditional knowledge about how Inuit lived before the Canadian state intervened to change their lives. In determining what students should learn from Inuit perspectives, writers intended for students to "know who they are, where they came from and where they belong in today's society."[14] I listened as Elders and educators articulated deep and urgent concerns about the vulnerability of youth, alongside hopes that fostering Inuit identity would increase resilience.

However, *Inuuqatigiit* did not teach about more recent historical events: the significant social and economic dislocation since the mid-twentieth century, the intergenerational effects of colonizing experiences such as unemployment, addiction, and suicide, or even the Inuit-led movement toward land claims and decolonizing.[15] It seemed to me that it was important to talk about these events in schools, but people were reluctant to (re)visit this difficult past.

In 2000, the new Nunavut Department of Education mandated that all curricula developed for schools should be based on *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*.[16] My involvement in this reconceptualization of curriculum elicited more questions: What do Inuit youth need to learn about history, about how and why life has changed? Who could/should tell them? How do Inuit youth find continuity with previous generations and within their society, when so much change has happened so quickly? What is the role of schools in this work?

I had these questions in mind as I coordinated departmental involvement in the project published as *Staking the Claim: Dreams, Democracy and the Canadian Inuit* (STC).[17] This Grade 10 social studies resource teaches students about the purposes and processes of the four Inuit land claims in Canada.[18] To inform its content, four young Inuit adults from Nunavut traveled with two filmmakers to interview Inuit leaders in each jurisdiction about the significant personal and political risks they took to negotiate land claim agreements with the federal government. Extreme patience, intense passion, and undying hope leap out of the stories shared in the film that serves as the basis for social studies instruction. Viewers discover how negotiations required young Inuit leaders to fight a “David and Goliath” battle with the federal government.

Until I saw the film, I thought of this social studies project as exploring historical events, but not as *oral history*. Then one of the young interviewers, Stacey Aglok, wrote an inspiring letter revealing the importance of the interviews to her. In the letter, she says:

> My mother was born in a caribou skin tent in the central Canadian Arctic in 1952. She was raised speaking Inuinnaqtun, travelling by dog sled, and living off the land. Of course, by this time many changes had already taken place. For one, the Hudson’s Bay Company had become a permanent fixture in Inuit life and economy. Now, just 53 years later, my mother raised four children—all of whom speak English rather than the language of their people, they use snowmobiles rather than our trusted dogs, and we live in a two-story house with central heating.

> In such a short period of time, there was an over-whelming change in our society and the way of life. Through a young girl's eyes, it seemed that we gave up everything that we valued without a fight. In a community plagued by alcohol, drugs, unemployment, and suicide, it was easy to believe that Inuit were weak. How does someone have pride in who they are and where they are from, when all they see is pain, suffering, and hopelessness?
>
> Elders and parents talked about how things used to be, but never discussed the history and politics behind why things changed as they did. Nobody talked about the young Inuit leaders who stood up and spoke for our people. Education [in schools] focused on material and history from the South—nothing that had anything to do with the Inuit way of life was represented in the curriculum. Our leaders weren't celebrated, our victories weren't praised, and our losses weren't explained.[19]

Stacey's letter shows that asking about the challenges and opportunities of the land claims negotiations opened up access to a whole set of stories about Inuit society that moved toward the goals of the *Inuuqatigiit* curriculum—to reassemble Inuit identity. The pedagogical potential of these stories became palpable. The threads of what I had been looking for as a curriculum developer emerged: oral history in school curriculum *could* be a place to build relationships between place, history, and identity.

[Heather and Cathy] STC became recognizable as an oral history project, not only because it was based on interviews between youth and Elders, but also because of what the stories *do* and how they *call on us*. Reflecting on STC along with Frank's theoretical tools helps us explain: (1) how stories work to create connections, helping people clarify the "blooming, buzzing confusion" of their lives, and taking action in response[20] and (2) how the modeling of oral history through the film may support teachers to help youth continue learning from oral history.

Frank, quoting oral historian Julie Cruikshank, reminds us that stories connect "areas of life that seem to be disintegrating"[21] or "drifting apart."[22] He argues that individual lives and groups "need constant *reassembling*," a term introduced by Bruno Latour.[23] We came to realize that STC offers more than an account of who did what, and when, to achieve agreements between Inuit and the Canadian government. It tells the (hi) story of Inuit *assembled* as a people, handing down their culture from generation to generation for millennia; it reviews the *disintegrating* impacts of many forms of colonizing; and it explains the *reassembly* of Inuit identity and self-reliance through the land claims process. Frank suggests that a common set of stories influences how people understand their world and "affect the terms in which people think, know and perceive."[24]

The first pedagogical potentiality we identify, then, is that oral history in the STC film is one example of a source of stories that contributes to establishing narrative habitus, or common knowledge, among students. This increases their understanding of where they came from, how they are part of Inuit society, and why things are the way they are today. For example, one activity asks students: "What did your parents learn from your grandparents?" and "What do you learn from your parents?"[25] Frank describes this as "connecting people into collective narratives, which assists with individual narratives."[26]

Oral history in STC illustrates what it meant to be Inuit in the past, how elements of identity live on, and how Inuit identity is different in the early twenty-first century. Frank helps us see the utility of focusing on both continuity and change in the process of reassembly.[27] Rather than deeming stories about the past irrelevant in contemporary times, Frank's point is that "People remember by telling stories of times past, but they tell in response to the needs of reassembly *at the time when the story is told*[…]."[28] STC addresses the need for young people to understand what it means to *remember* or *reassemble* as contemporary Inuit, but it also goes further than that. Frank suggests that we look for "how stories affect action or what [listeners] *do* […]."[29] He emphasizes that "[s]tories teach how to be responsible in response to stories."[30] The land claims negotiation process becomes a model for how young Inuit can continue improving life around them in the present and future. STC activities invite students to apply what they heard to their own lives, by considering: "Why Should I Care?" or "What Can I Do?" This invites students to dream and take action, like the land claims negotiators, to continue to revitalize Inuit identity.

The second potentiality involves the practice of oral history between generations of Inuit in the STC film. Viewers are drawn into the intergenerational legacy of leadership by watching the reactions of the Inuit youth who interview the former land claim negotiators. In several scenes the youth debrief together, or confess to feelings that arise after meeting and talking with the leaders and learning about the past. For example, one interviewer speaks of feeling badly for not being able to converse in *Inuktitut* (the Inuit language), having to ask the leader they are interviewing to speak in English. Students watching the film might relate to such feelings of disjuncture between the generations, due to language differences. The youth interviewers also model respectful listening, ask good questions, and think critically about how to apply what they learn to their own lives. This is an important aspect of the work teachers must do with students regarding these stories: to process and respond not only to the content of what the leaders say, but also to what the youth learn about themselves through the practice and relationships inherent in oral history. Without the youth in the film, it might be harder for students participating in the STC module to imagine the relevance of these stories from the past to their own lives, and to pursue the outcomes desired by the module outlined above. Far from the teacher being the center of instruction in this module, it is the stories shared by the leaders, and the stories shared by the youth interviewers learning from them, that do the teaching.

The STC module does not explicitly forefront theories, dilemmas, or practices of oral history in its design or pedagogy. Nor does it engage students in learning how to do oral history themselves. That is not a criticism, but rather a new potentiality we wonder about. Might thinking of the STC film and associated learning activities as oral history enhance opportunities for students and teachers to learn about the *potentialities* of oral history, and the power of stories to "become the teacher"?[31] Might STC call on students differently, if they were invited to talk about the experience of seeing youth interview their leaders and Elders? Might thinking of the STC unit as oral history help teachers act as catalysts for seeking other Inuit stories with similar potential, that exist outside the classroom in every community? Might it help teachers use stories to intentionally challenge and support youth to articulate their individual understandings of what informs who they are, how they connect to their collective identity as Inuit, and what their responsibilities are to improve the lives of *Nunavummiut* (people of Nunavut)?

Exemplar 3: Leadership Development Becoming Oral History

[Cathy] Educational leadership candidates[32] were gathered in a school gym in Rankin Inlet for day one of Nunavut's mandatory Educational Leadership Program (ELP).[33] The room buzzed with energy. Participants soon became deeply immersed in watching, and later discussing, a powerful documentary called *Kikkik E1-472*.[34] It tells the history of an Inuit family facing starvation in the 1950s. A family member, Elisapee Karetak, provides the narration, supplemented by accounts from other family members and individuals involved. What follows is my summary of the events:

> It was winter and there had been no caribou to hunt that fall—the animals that people depended on for survival. Several families camped near a communication station staffed by *Qallunaat*, in hopes of getting food, but "handouts" were not permitted, and no social services existed. Word of the famine eventually reached Ottawa, where government bureaucrats decided to relocate the people to a lake in a different area. With no first-hand knowledge of the location, or its likelihood of providing fish, no consultation, and no notice of the move, an airplane arrived to transport the families to the lake. They did not understand what was happening, and were hurried onto the plane, unable to take much with them. Looking back through the windows, they saw their caribou tents and all their belongings being bulldozed.
>
> The fishing at the new site was not productive. After some time, one man seemed to go crazy—killing the group's best food provider. The dead hunter's wife then killed the murderer in self-defense. Fearing repercussions from his family, she left with her children, travelling on foot, to attempt to reach the nearest settlement, dozens of kilometers away. Their long journey involved more tragedy, but the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] eventually rescued the mother and several children. The mother was then tried in court for "murder," under a set of *Qallunaat* laws she did not understand. A jury of white settlers acquitted her, but the family has lived with this trauma ever since.

The mother had never spoken about the ordeal with her children. "I guess the Elders and my mother wanted to protect me from that," Karetak says in a press interview about the film.[35] She talks about the impact of uncovering this difficult history as an adult, but how it eventually helped her come to understand herself, her family, and her community better. Explaining that similar colonizing experiences "happened all over Nunavut and Nunavik," she shares her rationale for making the film: "for some reason people are not talking about it. I think this will open the door."[36]

After watching the film, candidates debated the efforts of government bureaucrats, RCMP, and the justice system to support Inuit during this era, as both well intentioned and misguided. Two candidates—experienced Nunavut teachers who were new to leadership positions—rushed up to me (the facilitator) in great agitation saying, "We have never heard anything like this before! Why not? NOW we understand why Nunavut is the way it is today!"

[Heather and Cathy] Drawing from Frank, we use this story of encountering oral history, alongside our questions: What do stories *do*? What *effects* might stories have on actions? In this section we explore two potentialities of the work of oral history: (1) how encountering oral history in this context called on *Qallunaat* educational leaders to recognize that Inuit in Nunavut may be living with a different set of stories than they are living with, or are even aware of, and (2) how providing access to significant oral histories from Nunavut may help educational leaders to develop different relationships with students, parents, Elders, and community members in their everyday responsibilities.

First, the oral history in the film resulted in "a substantial shifting in horizons"[37] for the two educators who exclaimed their learning to Cathy. They *recognized* the story, and it called on them. They expressed surprise at the content of the story told in the film, and wondered why they were unaware of it before. These two individuals had clearly not had opportunities to hear such Nunavut stories and consider their impact, even though they had years of experience working in Nunavut schools.

It appears this story created *resonance*, meaning that a particular statement in a particular context acquired universal significance for those who heard it.[38] The exclamation of new understanding about "why Nunavut is the way it is" implies that the participants extrapolated from the suffering experienced by the family in this film to experiences of others in Nunavut. While it would be dangerous to universalize one family's trauma as the explanatory factor for the struggles of an entire people, this extrapolation could also be constructive. Perhaps it conveys the openness needed when listening to stories held by others, and draws attention to the importance of educators developing new relationships with families in their own communities, based on similar stories of difficult colonizing experiences. As Karetak suggested above, the purpose of sharing stories can be to open a door to more stories. The invitation in hearing one family's story through oral history is not to write it off as "just one experience," or to universalize it. Rather, as Frank suggests, "The best response to the recognition that stories represent the world from one particular, and often restricted perspective, is not to dream of a perspective outside stories; that would be a view from nowhere. The response should be to bring in more stories."[39]

Second, this resonance may signal more than learning about the "Indigenous Other." Perhaps resonance is elicited through Karetak's narration of the film—a person to whom viewers may relate, and who also wonders in the film, "Why haven't I heard of this before?" The educators may relate to her discovery of the difficult details as an adult. Oral history in the film offers educators the opportunity to reflect on themselves as well, realizing they are, as Frank puts it, “caught up in their own stories, while living with people caught up in other stories”[40] in their communities. These teachers and leaders from southern Canada arrive in Nunavut communities with life experiences, beliefs, and values that condition how *they* engage with new and different stories. Listeners may interpret the meanings of Nunavut stories based on their (perhaps unconscious) preconceptions[41] and the ways they have learned “what and how to believe”[42] from the stories they grew up with as children and youth. They may realize that they too were, and are, living and working without access to Nunavut histories. This may help them see new connections between place, identity, history, and curriculum in advancing decolonizing.

Oral history is again the vehicle for learning in this story. However, that it *is* oral history, and what oral history *does*, is not explicitly discussed in ELP learning activities. What new potential lies in learning from, and being called by, these oral histories? What associated possibilities exist for better understanding everyday relationships in schools? Frank suggests that when we analyze stories, we may look for *what is at stake* for the “storyteller and protagonist[…], listeners[…], and others who may not be present, but are implicated in the story.”[43] Below, we look for what was at stake for the parties involved in this story, in order to understand its pedagogical invitations.

The lives of the family in the film were at stake when they encountered the government’s decisions about where to relocate them, and how that impacted their ability to provide food. The mother’s freedom was at stake because of her lack of knowledge of the justice system. At stake for teachers watching the film, especially those from outside Nunavut, was that they might now see how they too represent the government, making decisions every day that affect the lives of their students—decisions to which students or parents may not have adequate access. Teachers may come to a new realization that the government is not always benevolent, and *Qallunaat* have not always had a positive role in relation to Inuit in Nunavut. Perhaps the film helped educators understand the historic, intergenerational traumas that may be part of causing contemporary individual and social challenges and struggles in Nunavut that are otherwise difficult to make sense of, or too easily pathologized. They may come to understand that these histories—to which they may not have had access—invite them to learn to deconstruct what they thought they knew about Canada and being Canadian. The experience of the two candidates featured here suggests the powerful impact that exposure to oral history can have in showing educational leaders how their roles in Nunavut schools may need to be shaped.

At stake for Cathy—the facilitator who decided to include the film in the ELP activities—was the objective, as Frank puts it, to "change people's sense of what is possible, what is permitted, and what is responsible or irresponsible."[44] At stake with showing *Kikkik* was for participants to begin to understand the need to work differently in their schools. To be effective leaders, they must deeply appreciate the lasting impact of colonizing relationships between Inuit and *Qallunaat* on the children who walk their school hallways every day. The ability to be a leader, especially for Inuit, is predicated on building positive relationships.[45] In a society still affected by colonizing trauma, those involved in schools—which includes parents, Elders, and local education authority members, as well as principals, educators, and staff—may use oral history to establish, and re-establish, positive relationships on shared terms.

Conclusion

> These stories do not direct action directly but conduct it by indirection. Characters in good stories do not exemplify what anyone anywhere must do; they are doing what they have to do, where and when they find themselves. Their doing does reflect virtues that are good, but how anyone else applies those virtues will be another story.[46]

To conclude this chapter, we revisited questions about why oral history calls on us, and how learning situations in which oral history plays a pedagogical role can be (re)considered for emerging invitations and potentialities, especially in relation to decolonizing goals.

In the first story, Heather was positioned as a learner by her doctoral research interviews with Cathy. She asked how those who have worked in Nunavut schools for a long time conceive of good ways of working. Her role was parallel to a new educator trying to situate herself in a distinct context; Cathy was positioned as an experienced educational leader. In response to Heather's guiding questions, Cathy shared more than information, more than advice, and more than "best practices." What she shared were *stories*. These stories often centered on moments of growth and learning, as an educator and educational leader who kept trying to make her practice—and her ways of working with colleagues and partners—more responsive to Nunavut communities. These stories called on Heather to think of herself becoming part of the same practice, to think of herself as belonging in that work, to be open to the stories of a long-term educator, and what she could learn from them.

As an exemplar of oral history, this story asks: How might oral history be used in decolonizing efforts, and to address some of the dilemmas encountered by new educators in Nunavut schools? What if orientation programs and similar activities invited new teachers to practice oral history—to access stories through conversations and relationships with more experienced colleagues and to develop narrative habitus? What if teachers listened for stories that "get under their skin"? Perhaps such conversations could become opportunities to gain multiple stories about *this place*—to emphasize that each place has its own stories. Could stories reveal perspectives that educators have never heard before and help them change their preconceptions?[47] Could they offer a "repertoire" for change to individual educators, trying to (re)build positive relationships, to help counter ongoing relations of colonizing between Inuit and *Qallunaat*? What experiences and wisdom might these conversations make "narratable," which are otherwise elusive in Nunavut's understanding of how to improve schools? Being open to the call of oral history in responding to the needs of new educators, making the most of what experienced educators have to offer, and participating in decolonizing practices are significant potentialities we hope to advance.

In the second story we shared, oral history calls on viewers of the film *Staking the Claim*, in which Inuit youth interview land claim negotiators. The negotiators tell the youth about their decolonizing actions through the political movements to establish land claims agreements across the Arctic. Beyond teaching the dates and events of northern political history, as might be expected in a Grade 10 social studies resource, this film offers something more. As the youth and leaders share stories, viewers are drawn into considering how this history informs who they are and how they connect to their collective identity as Inuit. Seeing the land claim negotiators through the eyes of youth conducting interviews, viewers are called to consider their own activism: What other initiatives are needed to continue improving the lives of Inuit in the present and future?

This exemplar raises questions for teachers: How might thinking of this social studies module as oral history, instead of just a teaching resource, help remind teachers to create learning opportunities that facilitate intergenerational knowledge transfer, relationship-building, and solidarity in Nunavut? How might forefronting oral history show teachers that stories often become compelling because of who is doing the telling, and how they do the telling? How might providing greater access to oral histories in schools model the continuity of connections between students and their communities—Elders, parents, and leaders—and the resurgence of Inuit identity? How might thinking of social studies as an invitation to participate in oral history help teachers recognize how stories *become the teachers*, not only sources of information?

In our third story, participants in ELP are called on to be open to stories about colonizing relations in the past. While they attend the program to enhance their leadership skills, building on their years of experience as educators, they are asked to recognize what they may not yet know. They are asked to (re)consider the stories that frame what and how they believe, to learn about what relationships have been like between Inuit and *Qallunaat* in the past, what they are like now, and what that means for schools in Nunavut in the present and future.

With this exemplar we hope to illuminate that a lot is at stake—for both the teller and listener—when someone shares a story about their past. Learners make different meaning from stories, and the associated uncertainty about what stories will *do* may be difficult for everyone to negotiate. What skills do leaders need in order to enable and facilitate respectful discussions between community members who have experienced a difficult colonizing past, with educators who are listening to oral histories for the first time? How do educational leaders provide supports for dealing with the strong, and sometimes unexpected, emotions that can arise from telling and hearing these stories but that are nevertheless part of decolonizing pedagogies? How can leaders use oral history as a constructive invitation to help educators identify the preconceptions they bring to teaching in Nunavut, and use new insights to inform their practices and relationships? We maintain that by engaging in and supporting oral history practices, educational leaders might find ways of building relationships that, by extension, advance decolonizing goals for schooling.

Following from Frank in the epigraph to this conclusion, this chapter does not direct action directly, and readers may respond differently to the stories on which we base our analysis, as well as our own stories. We have drawn theoretical influences from Frank, considered the pedagogical potential for oral history practices in Nunavut schools, and illuminated some associated questions. We placed emphasis on oral history as a site of relationship, where identity, history, people, and place are made and remade. We invite readers to likewise (re)consider sources already available to Nunavut schools, and schools elsewhere, *as oral histories*, and see what happens—to see if, and how, you are called.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Heather E. McGregor, *Inuit Education and Schools in the Eastern Arctic* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010); Heather E. McGregor, "Nunavut's Education Act: Education, Legislation, and Change in the Arctic," *The Northern Review* 36, Fall (2012): 27–52; Heather E. McGregor "Curriculum Change in Nunavut: Towards Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit," *McGill Journal of Education* 47, 3 (2012): 285–302; Catherine A. McGregor (2015) "Creating Able Human Beings: Social Studies Curriculum in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, 1969 to the Present," *Historical Studies in Education* 27, 1 (2015): 57–79.
2. We understand relationships predicated on colonial logics (colonizing), and the efforts necessary to deconstruct/reconstruct those relationships (decolonizing), as always in the process of becoming. There is always room for resistance and continuity of Indigenous cultural practices, knowledges, languages, and life ways. Likewise, in our view, there is unlikely to be a final moment of "decolonization," but rather always work necessary (including responsibility by all Canadians) to advance, implement, and renew agreements, treaties, and land claims that facilitate decolonizing commitments at multiple levels and sites. See further comments on decolonizing in note 4 below.
3. *Qallunaaq* (singular) or *Qallunaat* (plural) is the Inuit language term for people whose ancestry is not Inuit, or those who come from away. Historically, it referred to "white" people or Europeans, though now it may also refer to people of other origins.
4. We understand decolonizing as ongoing processes that illuminate and overcome divisions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, produced by historical legacies predicated on colonial logics. Decolonizing should counter colonizing by re-centering Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, and advancing Indigenous self-determination in the present and future. It is important to pursue decolonizing, especially within/led by

institutions that formerly took up colonizing roles, such as school systems. See Dwayne Donald, "Forts, Colonial Frontier Logics and Aboriginal-Canadian Relations: Imagining Decolonizing Educational Philosophies in Canadian Contexts" in *Decolonizing Philosophies of Education,* ed. A. A. Abdi (Rotterdam: Sense, 2012), 91–111.

5. *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* is defined by Elders as knowledge passed on by ancestors that is still relevant today; see Francis Lévesque, "Revisiting Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Inuit Knowledge, Culture, Language, and Values in Nunavut Institutions since 1999," *Études/Inuit/Studies* 38, no. 1–2 (2014): 115–136. It implicates all aspects of Inuit culture, including values, worldview, language, social organization, knowledge, life skills, perceptions, and expectations; see John Bennett and Susan Rowley, *Uqalurait: An Oral History of Nunavut* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004); Nunavut Social Development Council, *Report on the Nunavut Traditional Knowledge Conference* (Igloolik: Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, 1998).
6. Arthur W. Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe: A Socio-Narratology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).
7. Ibid., 48.
8. By "educational leaders" we mean program support staff: student support teachers, vice-principals and principals, regional consultants, and senior managers: superintendents, executive directors, assistant deputy, and deputy ministers.
9. We are reluctant to perpetuate the term "Eskimos"—applied to Canadian Inuit by outsiders without consultation. Including the term here reflects common use at the time.
10. Edited excerpt from Heather E. McGregor, "Decolonizing the Nunavut School System: Stories in a River of Time" (PhD dissertation, University of British Columbia, 2015), 94–95.
11. Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe*, 53.
12. Ibid., 53.
13. NWT Education, Culture and Employment, *Inuuqatigiit: The Curriculum from the Inuit Perspective* (Yellowknife: Government of Northwest Territories, 1996).
14. Ibid., i.
15. Qikiqtani Truth Commission, *Qikiqtani Truth Commission: Thematic Reports and Special Studies, 1950–1975* (Iqaluit: Inhabit

Media, 2013); Mary Simon, "Canadian Inuit: Where We Have Been and Where We Are Going," *International Journal,* Autumn (2011): 879–891; Frank Tester and Peter Irniq, "Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Social History, Politics and the Practice of Resistance," *Arctic* 61, 4 (2008): 48–61; Frank J. Tester and Peter K. Kulchyski, *Tammarniit (Mistakes): Inuit Relocation in the Eastern Arctic, 1939–63* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994).

16. See: McGregor, "Nunavut's Education Act"; Government of Nunavut, *Nunavut Education Act* (Iqaluit: Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2008).
17. Nunavut Department of Education, *Staking the Claim: Dreams, Democracy and Canadian Inuit [Teachers Guide]* (Iqaluit: Nunavut Department of Education, 2009). The film is available in English and Inuktitut.
18. These are the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (1975), Inuvialuit Final Agreement (1984), Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (1993), and the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement (2005). The claims are not just about land ownership and resource management; each one came with additional benefits and social contracts (that is, the Quebec agreement included education and the Nunavut agreement included language rights and a new territory).
19. Nunavut Department of Education, *Staking the Claim*, 154.
20. Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe,* 48.
21. Ibid., 82.
22. Ibid., 83.
23. Ibid., 83.
24. Ibid., 48.
25. Nunavut Department of Education, *Staking the Claim*, 15.
26. Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe*, 62.
27. Ibid., 83.
28. Ibid., 84. Emphasis ours.
29. Ibid., 143.
30. Ibid., 111.
31. Jo-ann Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body and Spirit* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), ix. Archibald is also quoted in Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe*, 25.
32. See note 8 that lists educational leadership roles.

33. ELP consisted of five courses; participation was legally required for principals and vice-principals. The purpose was to help them understand their roles as leaders in decolonizing schools. Day One instruction focused on intentionally telling and analyzing Nunavut (hi)stories. See also Heather E. McGregor, "Decolonizing the Nunavut School System: Stories in a River of Time" (PhD dissertation, University of British Columbia, 2015), Chapter 6.
34. *Kikkik, E1-472*. Directed by Martin Kreelak. Ottawa, Ontario: Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, 2002.
35. "Remembering Kikkik," *Nunatsiaq News*, June 21 2002. http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/archives/nunavut020621/news/features/20621_1.html.
36. "Remembering Kikkik," *Nunatsiaq News*, June 21 2002.
37. Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe*, 95–96.
38. See Frank's definition of resonance, drawing on Northrup Frye, *Letting Stories Breathe*, 202.
39. Ibid., 153.
40. Ibid., 94.
41. Ibid., 74.
42. Ibid., 75.
43. Ibid., 74.
44. Ibid., 75.
45. Nunavut Education Councils, *Tuqqatarviunirmut Katimajiit—the Nunavut Educational Leadership Project Report* (Iqaluit: Nunavut Education Councils, 2000).
46. Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe*, 160.
47. Ibid., 94–95.

CHAPTER 6

Feminist Pedagogies and Histories of Choice: Using Student-Led Oral Histories to Engage Reproductive Rights

Frances Davey, Kris De Welde, and Nicola Foote

Introduction

This chapter draws on a case study of *Histories of Choice*, a faculty-led, student-driven oral history project on reproductive rights, to examine the importance of oral history as a mechanism for engaging feminist pedagogies both inside and outside the traditional classroom. Feminist practitioners of oral history have argued forcefully that feminist oral history must go beyond merely rescuing stories from oblivion and instead embed those stories in deeper narratives and praxes of social change.[1] This chapter examines how "doing" feminist oral history research with undergraduate students can advance social justice learning. It shows how, by implementing feminist pedagogies in an oral history project, students develop a rich,

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visceral understanding of reproductive rights history and its relevance for future generations.

Feminist pedagogies are those that attend to and challenge the historical patterns of oppression, including those shaped by gender, race, class, and other hierarchies.[2] One way this is accomplished is by centering lived experience in the curriculum as a legitimate source of information (e.g., biographies, auto-ethnographies, and accounts of events). Feminist pedagogy draws on narratives, often those not canonized by academic disciplines as valid, in an effort to expose students to diverse voices, experiences, and perspectives. A further goal of feminist pedagogies is to provide transformative learning experiences for students (and teachers), which follows from realizations that all lived reality is mediated by hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion, power and marginality, submission and resistance.[3] These principles are advanced by linking feminist pedagogy with feminist oral history research, a link that engages students and faculty in inquiry and reflection that necessarily agitates traditional hierarchies in teaching and research. In *Histories of Choice*, we, as faculty leaders, embrace these tenets of feminist pedagogy and research in an effort to advance social justice learning. Our students conduct oral history interviews, hearing firsthand experiences that recorded history has ignored, sanitized, or retold for political purposes. In so doing, they are performing the critical job of collecting and preserving abortion and reproductive rights activism stories. By incorporating our students in the process of feminist oral history research, we disrupt conventional hierarchical understandings of student–teacher knowledge.[4]

Creating Histories of Choice

The *Histories of Choice* project began in January 2013 in response to an October 2012 article written by Linda K. Kerber in *Perspectives on History* titled “The 40th Anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*: A Teachable Moment.” Kerber called on scholars to capture the stories of the pre-*Roe* period before they became irretrievable. Kerber also encouraged historians to engage students in these projects:

> Here is where our students—undergraduate and graduate—can make a real difference by their research. Working with advisers and archivists … they can seek to reconstruct a history that is in grave danger of being lost. The answers they find can contribute to the accumulation of necessary knowledge …; their research, and our own, is indispensable.[5]

Inspired, the three authors worked collaboratively to develop a service-learning project in which students would conduct and transcribe oral histories of women within our local area who had terminated pregnancies prior to 1973, the year that the US Supreme Court decided *Roe v. Wade*. Taking advantage of our area's demographics—Florida's seasonal and year-round retirees—we planned to work with community organizations to reach the target population. Because faculty initially framed this as a community-based research project, students would earn service-learning hours needed to graduate while helping to create a collection of pre-*Roe* stories that we would eventually donate to our university's archive.[6] At first, we recruited students from within our relevant courses (e.g., courses with significant emphases on gender and research methodology) within which we had embedded a service-learning option to participate in the project. Additional students came to the project by word of mouth. As such, the majority of our students are History and Sociology majors, the respective authors' disciplines. Students' responsibilities included participation in intensive oral history/interview training, conducting interviews, and transcribing these verbatim.

After a few months of the project being active, we quickly recognized the need to expand its scope in order to reflect and preserve the experiences of *all* people in our community who have been directly impacted by *Roe v. Wade*. We broadened the scope of women and men interviewees across three "generations." The first generation experienced the consequences of the pre-*Roe* illegality of abortion, including women who had "back-alley" abortions and men who witnessed the consequences firsthand. The second generation navigated a post-*Roe* world in which safe and effective abortion facilities and services were still developing, but progressively available. The third generation—the generation of our students—includes those who have never experienced abortion as illegal, but who are grappling with it being increasingly under attack. We have also broadened our focus beyond women who terminated pregnancies, to examine the experiences of reproductive healthcare providers, and reproductive justice activists. This expansion allows *Histories of Choice* to explore themes that cut across multiple generations, and to examine the diverse experiences of those committed to reproductive rights in our community.

While Kerber's call to capture the voices of those who experienced illegal pre-*Roe* abortions was our original motivator, we expanded the project's boundaries because we recognized that the ongoing stigmatization of abortion has had a negative impact on the historical narrative surrounding reproductive rights.[7] Stigma has limited the historical attention paid to both pre- and post-*Roe* abortion narratives, and even the work of reproductive rights activists has received less examination than that of abortion opponents.[8] We were acutely aware from the start that this was a politically charged project; indeed our goal was to uncover historical evidence that could contribute to a multilayered understanding of reproductive justice. We conceived of our project as an example of what pioneering feminist oral historian Sherna Berger Gluck has characterized as "advocacy oral history": we seek to collect unrecorded and marginalized stories that can diversify perspectives on the past and deepen understandings of the complexities of reproductive issues.[9] Oral histories provide a tool to recenter women's voices within a debate from which women's own experiences of reproductive healthcare are often problematically absent.[10] Narrative interviews take us inside the most intimate realm of women's lives, into private spaces that are rarely present in conventional written and archival sources. They illuminate what Katheryn Anderson et al. characterized as "the emotional and subjective experience" of realities often discussed in political and legalistic terms.[11] They allow us access to the "ideas, thoughts and memories" of men and women affected by abortion in their own words.[12] In archiving these testimonies, we seek to expand and diversify the historical record and allow a greater presence for the lived experience of abortion and the struggle for reproductive freedom.

While the broader project is rooted in feminist methodology, our feminist pedagogy is also fundamental to the project. Our students are on the "front lines" of interviewing and transcribing. Like Anne M. Butler, who embedded an oral history component into her women's history class at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., we sought to make "the boundaries of the classroom bend outward and encompass women beyond the academic setting."[13] The potential of oral history as a mechanism to "demystify" research and provide students with hands-on training and experience has been noted since the field began to gain popularity in the 1970s, and practitioners have drawn particular attention to its utility for exploring issues related to women and gender.[14] The experiences that students gain through *Histories of Choice*—participating in interviews, transcribing, and analyzing data—equip them with qualitative research skills that will enable them to develop their own historical or sociological research outside of the project and that will aid them in applying for grants, fellowships, and jobs. Our goal in creating *Histories of Choice* was to create meaningful multilayered learning experiences for students, which enhanced students' historical thinking and sociological competence while providing training and transferable skills. We grounded our project design in recognized Association of American Colleges and Universities' High-Impact Practices of service-learning, common intellectual experiences, and undergraduate research.[15] These practices are shown to impact students' engagement and retention because of their ability to challenge students at a very high level, offer collaborative learning experiences, and provide them with opportunities for frequent interactions with professors. In contrast to scholars such as Elizabeth Brulé and Anna Feigenbaum, we do not believe that the focus on marketable skills and employment embedded within neoliberal academic paradigms is inherently in opposition to feminist pedagogies.[16] Instead, we suggest that feminist pedagogies can be adapted and applied meaningfully within the conceptual framework created by market-oriented educational discourses and used to develop deep learning and personal development. Through the practice of feminist oral history we are cultivating a new generation of social justice-oriented students who can take feminist mindsets and concrete practical skills into a range of new settings both within and outside the corporate world. Our applied feminist pedagogy thus works within the discursive frameworks established by neoliberal education even as the deeper learning it promotes ultimately challenges assumptions and paradigms based on job preparation.[17]

Students as Interviewers: Recruitment, Training, and Challenges

The pedagogical steps underpinning the explicitly feminist undergraduate research component of the *Histories of Choice* project are enmeshed in analytical complexities that bear deeper attention here.

One way in which our undergraduate project embeds important research skills as well as feminist praxis is through our attention to power relations that are inherent in any research project, as well as in any formal teaching-learning enterprise. Gluck identifies the narrator and interviewer as two "subjectivities" inevitably separated by a gap of "power and privilege" even as they work together to create a narrative.[18] For example, the relationship forged between interviewers and narrators, which begins with initial contact, is central to the success of any oral history project and yet is always fraught. Gluck points out that the way that a narrator is contacted may set the tone for the interview, and shape what information the narrator is comfortable disclosing.[19] We impart these critical concerns to our students in the training that they are required to participate in prior to interviewing. This training includes two workshops on feminist oral history and interviewing, as well as a required online module that focuses on "human subjects" research which is mandated by our Institutional Review Board (IRB). In one workshop, for example, we teach them about the importance of transparency. Even in a project dealing with uncontroversial matters, research shows that initial contact can generate discomfort and confusion for interviewers and narrators alike if careful steps to ensure full clarity and transparency are not taken.[20] Further, the interviewer must be prepared to explain why the narrator is important to the project, thereby potentially and intentionally disrupting power relationships between narrators and interviewers. The narrator may not initially see that her story is of any significance, especially if she is not normally in the public limelight.[21] Students are prepared to help narrators recognize the importance of their stories.

Educating students on interview strategies is the most important part of our recruitment and training. We emphasize that students must approach interviews as conversational exchanges in which they guide narrators into sharing their thoughts, experiences, and emotions. Gluck characterizes the best interview as a "quasi monologue" urged along by nonverbal or gently verbal cues. She emphasizes the individuality of each narrator, warning that interviewers must follow the narrative trajectory.[22] Kristina Minister takes this concept a step further, delving deeply into modes of gendered communication. Writing in 1991, she argues that the normative method of performing oral history is an aggressive, masculine one that places primacy on wringing the most information from the narrator on events commonly considered important. She validates a feminine model that values silences, nonverbal communication, communal methods of interviewing, and gentle probing when the narrator circumvents topics she perceives as insignificant or uncomfortable.[23] While this binary method is a bit dated (men communicate one way and women another), it is a helpful tool when speaking about abortion, a sensitive topic predicated on women's experiences. We share these complex ideas with students, and coach them by way of examples on how to develop a "quasi monologue" to encourage continued storytelling from narrators. We prepare students to manage the tensions between narrators retaining control over the (re)telling of their stories, withholding or disclosing certain details, and eliciting a full, detailed account for the historical record.

We urge students to see themselves as not merely passive conduits for transmitting an absolutely truthful story, but as actors in the creation of a historical record. To see themselves as such, students must understand that they are, as Minister points out, part of a performance. The interviewer uses questions to frame the parameters of the performance, while the narrator is the performer.[24] Inherent in this performance is a power dynamic based on a variety of possible factors, including age, social status, and ethnicity. It is the students' job to neutralize as much as possible this power balance and unearth elements of the narrator's story that the performance covers up.[25] We accomplish this via our training workshops with students, and also by striving for multi-vocal texts in the eventual finished products of the study. In training workshops, we provide students with scripted questions, but instruct them not to pepper the narrator with them. Instead, they should use the questions as a framework from which it is acceptable to stray. Once an interviewer has broken the ice with basic biographical questions, s/he gives the narrator an opening to speak at length: "You were referred to the project because of your experiences with abortion pre-*Roe v. Wade*. Please tell us about that experience." This question allows the narrator to lead and control—to some extent—the interview from that point forward, with periodic probes for greater detail or reflection from the narrator.

While we train students to allow narrators to control how stories are told, and to what level of detail, we are also aware of inherent power imbalances in qualitative research, regardless of an interviewee's intent. As a means for attending to these concerns in this study, narrators are presented with options about how their interview is used: as part of the study archive, in the research component of the study (i.e., academic journals and/or a book), or both. Narrators are provided with the option to use a pseudonym in both the archive and published work, and also to specify any additional restrictions to be associated with their interview (e.g., releasing the transcription after their demise). Lastly, narrators are provided with the opportunity to edit portions of their transcript, and can specify this in the consent and deed of gift forms they complete and sign. This allows narrators to retain some of the interpretive authority in the project.

We and our student interviewers do still hold privileged positions in the study: by selecting the topic, crafting the interview questions, in framing the findings, and in representations of our narrators' stories or excerpts from their stories. One of our research goals is to create a kind of "multi-vocal" text wherein "the author's voice recedes into the background as she highlights the voices and views of others in her text."[26] However, we still determine how these stories are represented, and which voices are heard in final products. As such, we are explicit about our goals for the research with our narrators and with readers of our published works. And while this does not neutralize the power inherent in representing others, it provides "readers with access to the process that shaped the dialogue."[27]

An additional, essential aspect of students' work that we urge them to understand is their role in the creation of a historical artifact, the interview itself. By the time of the interview, the student must be able to accomplish simultaneous goals: first, to gather factual information about the narrator's experience and, second, to elicit reflective responses revealing the narrator's particular perspective about her or his experience. In short the interviewer must be able to go beyond merely rescuing a story to eliciting a narrator's "authentic" voice and experience.[28] These processes are complex, imperfect, and evolving, but they point to the centrality of the interviewer–narrator relationship from first contact to the conclusion of the actual interview and beyond. These goals are further enhanced by our very deliberate pairing of "seasoned" interviewers with inexperienced ones. Every new interviewer must conduct their first interview with a student who has been on the project and conducted at least one other interview. Experienced students serve as peer mentors, and help coach newer students on the norms and expectations of the project. For example, this pairing helps novice students learn what to do if an emotional situation arises. We train students to be empathetic, stop the interview if needed, and remind narrators of their prerogative to skip a question/topic or end the interview entirely. To date, the majority of our narrators had abortions pre-*Roe v. Wade*, which we have found has meant that trauma or emotion directly tied to their abortion experiences is blunted by the many years that have passed.

These complexities, coupled with the sensitive nature of our topic, are behind our careful selection and training of student researchers. As faculty facilitators, we are up-front with our students about the political nature of *Histories of Choice*, the fragile relationships between them as interviewers and our narrators, and their critical role in documenting and thus preserving subaltern experiences. We require interested students to read about the complexities of reproductive justice politics so that they can interview women and men with compassion, respect, and without judgment. And, we do not require that students identify as pro-choice. In fact, we do not ask about this when talking with prospective student interviewers. This means a student who objects to abortion could interview someone who identifies as strongly pro-choice, just as a student who identifies as a pro-choice activist might interview a woman who regrets her abortion(s). Part of students' training as interviewers revolves around helping them develop strategies of non-judgment, regardless of what a narrator says. While interviewing someone with different ideological views is challenging for interviewers (and not just students), we believe that this further strengthens the lessons imparted to students about the ethical, methodological, and epistemological complexities of our project. Our goal is to have students engage in an important, nuanced, complex, and meaningful research/service-learning project, not to transform their political perspectives.

Not all students have been ideal participants. We have had a few instances of students volunteering to participate in the project and then being unable to meet our high expectations. For example, one student rushed her narrator during an interview because she was scheduled to work just after the session and had not allotted sufficient time. In such atypical situations, students join the project for one semester and then do not return on their own accord. We actually encounter more students who welcome the challenges associated with the project, as well as the personal and professional growth they experience as a result of being involved.

Selecting and Engaging Narrators

As the faculty representatives of the project, we have thus far been responsible for locating and contacting potential narrators. It has been important for us to control the representation of the project, especially in its early stages, both to monitor to whom project information was disseminated and to serve as a buffer between inexperienced student interviewers and potential narrators. Further, we simply did not know how students and narrators, separated by decades, would react to one another. We have been especially pleased by the results of these latter dynamics as our students have come to embrace the importance of older generations' experiences as relevant to their current realities. In fact, at least one of our students (now graduated) remains in faithful contact with a narrator-turned-mentor who connected strongly with her.

Our initial recruitment of narrators was rooted in our community connections to pro-choice and progressive organizations (e.g., Planned Parenthood, the National Organization for Women, the League of Women Voters, and the Unitarian Universalist Church). We believed that interviewees connected through these associations may be easier for our students as the narrators would be well-versed in reproductive justice politics and would connect us to other potential narrators through “snowball sampling.”[29] Within the first two semesters, we received emails representing a variety of experiences ranging from pre-*Roe* illegal abortions to current advocates for reproductive justice. Our first stories included a woman who traveled to Tijuana to have an abortion in 1965, a retired nurse who witnessed the aftereffects of back-alley abortions, and the daughter of a clinic worker killed in a bombing.[30] The kinds of email responses to our call for narrators are exemplified by the 83-year-old woman who wrote: “I read that you are doing a study of women who had abortions pre *Roe vs. Wade*. I have a story to tell about an abortion I had in 1954 that nearly cost me my life.”[31]

As the project advanced, other regional community organizations became aware of *Histories of Choice*. For example, the Southwest and Central Florida Planned Parenthood invited us to headline their respective commemorations of the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. We enlisted the assistance of three students who had committed multiple semesters to the project, and who created presentations to explain the project’s premise, work completed to date, and potential future directions. Most importantly, students discussed their own experiences, and ably fielded questions from the audience, most of whom were retirees and winter residents. The students’ commitment and maturity closed the substantial age gap between themselves and most of the audience members, and elicited an enthusiastic response. At the close of the event, several attendees volunteered to be interviewed or suggested funding resources to expand the project even further. We realized that our students may be the most important face of the project.

As we have sought to broaden our focus and capture testimonies of even very recent abortions, the role of student interviewers in recruitment has become more pronounced. Because of our original focus, we have more oral histories representing the pre-*Roe* generation than from the second and third generations. To remedy this imbalance, we now encourage our dedicated students to uncover potential narrators from friends, family, and other connections. This has empowered our students to feel a sense of ownership over the project, while also giving them hands-on experience of narrator recruitment, which further enhances their historical and sociological skills. To protect the privacy of those who wish to share their stories (and to adhere to our IRB directives), we delineate exactly how students may act as intermediaries. This portion of the project is unfolding. We seek advice from our IRB and University General Counsel as the project evolves to maintain the highest integrity of the experience for students and potential narrators.

At the end of each semester we ask students to share with us their experiences of being on the project. During these discussions, as well as throughout the term in more informal ways, students "teach" us about the content of their interviews. They share details from interviews that shocked them, confused them, or changed their thinking about an issue. In this sense, our students are encouraged to disrupt the expected direction of knowledge dissemination in traditional learning, and are instead placed in a position to "teach the teachers" about the histories they are preserving. We provide historical and sociological context for them when needed, and help them see connections between their History and/or Sociology coursework, but often they do this themselves, developing their own deeper, informed meanings from the stories they have collected. In this way, the interviews themselves become transformative learning experiences that legitimate the production of knowledge in alternative, even subversive, ways. Feminist approaches to oral history and feminist pedagogy thus guide each step we take in this project: recruiting and training student interviewers, embedding the project in relevant courses, recruiting narrators, interviewing, and having reflexive discussions with students.

The Interviews

The interview methods used in *Histories of Choice* emphasize topical interviews rather than life histories.[32] Authenticity is always a problematic goal in oral history. It is widely accepted that no oral histories are objective retellings of actual fact; instead, each interview reveals narrators' truths as they choose to present them at that time. But the issue of authenticity takes on a particular complexity within the context of advocacy oral history. Consciously or not, those who have had abortion experiences will construct their narratives within a political framework. In *Histories of Choice*, the women and men being interviewed are sometimes well-prepared and, to varying degrees, have already framed their stories as they wish to tell them. Well-rehearsed oral histories call for probing beneath the surface, particularly on a personal level. Probing requires nuance, requiring the interviewer to engage with the narrator over body language and nonverbal cues. Leaning forward, becoming emotional, or laughing can indicate eagerness, reluctance, or nervousness; the interviewer may respond with compassion, good humor, interest, and sometimes tissues. The interviewer, at times, must wait through silences where the narrator is pondering her next words, or listen for what is understated or unsaid. S/he must then follow up with questions that both validate the narrator's feelings and experience and give enough space to expand on the original point.[33] The interviewer must also note speech patterns, as when the narrator creates what Dana C. Jack called "meta-statements," conversational markers where the narrator indicates that she is still in the process of organizing and framing her thoughts.[34] At other times, the interviewer must validate an uncertain narrator's story by nodding or interjecting an occasional *sotto voce* "uh huh" or "hm."[35] All of these nuances are difficult to impart to students in training sessions, despite best efforts, and must be learned over time. Partnering newer interviewers with experienced students facilitates this learning process.

On the one hand, the narrators' ease in telling a well-worn story facilitates rapport with students. On the other hand, some narrators do not stray from the rehearsed narrative, and need additional prompting to be reflective. When getting to the heart of the interview, open-ended questions and careful listening helps interviewers gauge whether a narrator will monologue for an extended period or need gentle prodding. In the former, Gluck advises interviewers not to rein in the story, and even allow the narrator to change the course of the interview itself; interviewers can revisit missed details later in the process. In the case of the latter, interviewers are well-advised to ask pointed follow-up questions if narrators gloss over important information.[36] In a topical interview contributing to an advocacy oral history project, allowing the narrator free rein is both beneficial and potentially problematic, as students may not know how to handle information that may seem irrelevant. In all of our reviews of audio files and transcripts, however, our students have indulged narrators, and followed their lead on conversation topics. One narrator, unsure where to begin her story about a clinic bombing, asked "well they [the narrator's parents] got involved in 1990 with uhm … should we start with that part?" The interviewer's response ("I would like to start whereever you would want to start. If you want to start talking about that, feel free to") led to a confident monologue.[37]

The results are rich and complex stories that weave together aspects of narrators' lives that they see as interconnected. For example, one narrator spoke at length about her concern for LGBTQ rights. For her these issues, and abortion rights, were intimately connected. Our students skillfully listened, encouraged her elaborations, and then asked her to make the connections between the topics. In fact, some narrators, especially those who themselves have agitated, and still do, for broad progressive social change, are pleased to see young women and men taking up the struggle for reproductive justice. This commonality forms a basis for rapport, but also allows students to see themselves in the narrators, and to see broader, deeper connections between social justice issues.

Social Justice Learning

While feminist oral historians have focused on strategies for communicating effectively with narrators, there has been little attention paid to the impact of "doing" feminist oral history on participants themselves. Delving deeply into the lives of strangers is bound to impact interviewers in complex and perhaps unanticipated ways. The personal and political nature of *Histories of Choice* thus has an impact on students who form relationships, however brief, with women and men who tell them personal and sometimes painful stories. Hearing stories of abortion and activism, legal and illegal, leaves indelible marks on our students' sensibilities of equity and justice. Most recently, we have become keenly interested in our students' experiences on this project—how *do* they engage with reproductive rights as a result of collecting these oral histories? After securing approval from our IRB, we have begun data collection on student researchers involved in the *Histories of Choice* project. Our data consists of student reflections, responses to an open-ended online survey, and focus group interviews led by the professors on the project. In terms of their responses, we are aware that students might try to create a narrative that fits into a framework of what they feel they *should have* experienced. We thus emphasize that there is no "right" way to respond; being underwhelmed or unaffected by the project is as valid as having a profound emotional and educational experience. Further, students' participation in this secondary, embedded project is entirely voluntary and not all students consent to participate. For instance, in spring 2015 we had 14 students on the project as interviewers, but only six of them joined the secondary project on their experiences as student researchers.

Students understand *Histories of Choice* as both an advocacy oral history project and an undergraduate research project designed to foster transferable skills and deep learning. In their responses thus far, students indicate that *Histories of Choice* has helped them cultivate and evaluate their identities as members of their intellectual communities: as historians and sociologists. Notably, students develop their ability to "think historically" and to understand how personal histories intersect with wider social and political shifts.[38] However, what is most impactful is their understanding of reproductive justice, and this stems directly from an enriched understanding of the historical complexity that underpins this struggle. As Lynn Abrams demonstrates, by engaging in an advocacy project, interviewers and narrators alike benefit from the sharing of stories. In addition to gathering stories that may be used for a political purpose, interviewers add nuance to their own worldviews. They also empower narrators to use their stories to enrich a community's interpretation of a political topic—in this case, abortion.[39] From these stories, students gain greater historical consciousness, and understand how the past—and its contested narratives—shapes the present. They are able to gain enhanced understandings of the ethical dimensions of historical interpretation and contestation—one of the most challenging elements of historical thinking to teach—and obtain greater insight into the discursive field within which discussions of abortion are couched even at the most intimate level of personal experience.

The major advocacy themes running through most student reflections include understanding the complicated reality of abortion decisions and politics (and how these intersect), and the significance of reproductive rights in students' own lives. The historical understanding that students gain equips them to grapple critically with contentious political and personal issues in their futures. Danielle Kraft (a pseudonym), who has worked on this project since its inception, pondered the former. Already active in pro-choice politics, Danielle was not shocked by the stories that she heard, but found that hearing the variegated experiences brought the complexities to life for her.[40] Elena Diaz came to the project at the end of its second year as a firmly pro-choice young woman. At the end of a semester, she found herself "better able to understand the multitude of possible reasons for needing an abortion."[41] *Histories of Choice* sparked personal revelations for some students. Many, if not most, had seen reproductive justice as an abstract concept that did not touch them directly. But through their interviews, they forged intellectual and emotional connections with this topic. Rachel Agron, a recent addition to the project, realized that she had "taken for granted all of the resources and information available."[42] Other students bridged larger gaps in coming to terms with the project. Gregory Tours, who was active in the project for its first two years, initially saw himself as an “outsider.” He wrote: “I am, after all, a male, so unless if something REALLY surprising happens it is safe to assume that I will never have to face the choice on whether to receive an abortion. It was a women’s issue that women should sort out amongst themselves.”[43] Collecting and reading stories about abortion led Gregory to the realization that “this is not a simple matter that I can safely dismiss as someone else’s problem: this is a serious civil liberties issue that needs to be addressed.” Brittany Linden was on the fence about abortion when she joined *Histories of Choice* during her second semester as an undergraduate. She had been raised in a conservative Catholic household, but as her experiences in the university unfolded she began to realize that she “no longer had to fall into … ‘proper’ gender roles.” Participation in the project allowed her to connect with women of previous generations who had been socialized to expect and accept secondary status in society. After her first interview, she felt compelled to read more widely on the topic of reproductive justice, realizing the connections between women’s rights and reproductive rights. Brittany continues to grapple with her developing political and personal ethos. Active in the university’s Catholic student organization, she is “surrounded” by vocal “pro-life” activists and reports frustration at not being able to engage in a “civil dialogue” with them.[44]

While we expected students to develop their research skills, an unexpected, though significant, pedagogical outcome came in the form of empathic skills. Having learned content and context for abortion and complicating their understanding of reproductive justice, students were sometimes surprised by the emotional connections they made with narrators. The strengthened interviewer–narrator relationships fostered cross-generational alliances while also establishing parity between the two parties. In a focus group in which students discussed their experiences as interviewers, they considered these connections. One young woman noted that “interviewing is easy for me because I know what questions I need to ask because I’ve felt them, I’ve felt the emotions they have felt.”[45] Another young woman forged a bond with her narrator via a particular traumatic experience. She said, “The lady that I interviewed got pregnant as a result of being raped and because I went through a rape myself being able to connect with her … I understand [her] decision making, why [she] did that, I was thinking the same exact thing and it helped me ask better questions and talk to her more about her experiences.”[46] Student participants develop complex, visceral understandings of reproductive rights history and its relevance to current and future generations as a result of participation in this project.

Conclusion

Advocacy oral history, particularly on a sensitive topic like abortion, has its challenges. However, the pedagogical rewards are great. Throughout the evolution of *Histories of Choice*, feminist pedagogy and feminist methodology have remained central to the project. By implementing feminist methodologies and embedding them in pedagogical approaches to *Histories of Choice*, we push undergraduates to complicate their understanding of reproductive justice in particular and social justice issues at large. The stories of narrators that students collect and preserve remind them that the divisive issue of abortion is not a political or moral abstract. Instead, it is rooted in deeply personal and variegated stories that inform and reflect political, religious, ethical, and medical trends, beliefs, and practices. Coming out of this project, students may apply their historical knowledge and heightened critical skills to contemporary social justice issues. They are thus equipped to help shape highly politicized debates over reproductive justice, an issue where established voices of politicians or religious figures often dominate.

Empowering undergraduates to take a leadership role in an oral history project allows the radical potential of oral history—envisaged by early generations of feminist oral historians but later questioned as overly romantic[47]—to come to the fore, bringing the oral histories out of the ivory tower and allowing them to be the foundation for intergenerational alliance building. Supporting undergraduates to serve as lead interviewers challenges some of the power imbalances inherent in even the most engaged oral history: in this model it is not the privileged researcher but a student who is interacting with the narrator. Students uncover knowledge that has been suppressed, trivialized, and ignored, as the narrators they work with are allowed to "say the unsaid."[48] As students gain insight into the emotional and subjective experience of a historical event they develop an emotional connection to the topic that is not always available elsewhere. The result is an overwhelmingly positive one on multiple levels: narrators share an experience that is often stigmatized and hidden, students gain research skills and historical and social empathy, and community relationships are energized and strengthened. It is our hope that the oral histories our students are collecting will become a tool for researchers to enrich the national discussion of reproductive rights, grounding pundits and ethicists of all political stripes in the everyday realities of those who have dealt—and continue to deal—directly with abortion.

Notes

1. See especially Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, ed., *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (New York: Routledge, 1991). Gluck and Patai were on the forefront of establishing feminist oral history as a viable field, and thus broke new ground in terms of feminist methodology.
2. Kristine De Welde, Nicola Foote, Michelle Hayford and Martha Rosenthal, "Team-Teaching *Gender Perspectives:* Feminist Pedagogies in the Inter-Disciplinary Classroom," *Feminist Teacher* 23, no. 2 (2013): 105–125.
3. Emily F. Henderson, "Feminist Pedagogy," *Gender and Education Association*, accessed 15 January 2013, http://www.genderandeducation.com/resources/pedagogies/feminist-pedagogy.
4. See Debbie Storrs and John Mihelich, "Beyond Essentialisms: Team Teaching Gender and Sexuality," *National Women's Studies Association Journal* 10, no. 1 (1998): 98–118.
5. Linda Kerber, "The 40th Anniversary of Roe vs. Wade: A Teachable Moment," *Perspectives on History* (2012), https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/october-2012/the-40th-anniversary-of-roe-v-wade.
6. Further into the project, we began offering a one-to-three credit Independent Study for students participating in the project outside of a formal course to ensure that they have a stake in the project. Additionally, we require students to sign a "contract," which functions much like a syllabus, explaining expectations and sanctions if those expectations are not met. Our "sanctions" outside of a formal course in which a student is enrolled are rather limited. We explain in said contract that students who do not meet the expectations of timeliness, responsibility, and integrity will forfeit their ability to participate in future semesters of the project, and will not receive letters of recommendation from the professors.
7. Gluck, "Introduction," Gluck and Patai, *Women's Words,* 2; Susan H. Armitage, Patricia Hart and Karen Weathermon, eds., *Women's Oral History: The Frontiers Reader* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska

Press, 2002), 3. In designing the project we followed the methodology of early feminist oral history: to rescue stories of underrepresented populations from oblivion. We have since moved on to a more nuanced approach.

8. See, for example, Katha Pollitt, *Pro: Reclaiming Abortion Rights* (New York: Picado, 2014). In this recent work, Pollitt argues for the normalization of abortion, and a move away from the "general truth" that "comes close to demanding that women accept grief, shame, and stigma as the price of ending a pregnancy."
9. Gluck, "Advocacy Oral History: Palestinian Women in Resistance," in Gluck and Patai, *Women's Words*, 206–207.
10. In this conviction we draw from some of the classic formulations of the power of feminist oral history. See, for example, Kathryn Anderson, Susan Armitage, Dana Jack, and Judith Wittner, "Beginning Where We Are: Feminist Methodology in Oral History," *Oral History Review* 15 (Spring 1987): 103–127; Joan Sangster, "Telling Our Stories: Feminist Debates and the Use of Oral History," *Women's History Review* 3, no. 1 (1994): 5–28.
11. Anderson et al., "Beginning Where We Are," 112.
12. See Shulamit Reinharz, *Feminist Methods in Social Science Research* (Oxford University Press, 1992), 19.
13. Anne M. Butler and Gerri W. Sorenson, "Patching the Past: Students and Oral History," *Frontiers* 19, no. 3 (1998): 200. Butler was less interested in archiving and more interested in demonstrating the significance of all women to history. She was inspired by Gerda Lerner, *Teaching Women's History* (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1981), which pointed out the efficacy of incorporating interviews into a women's history course.
14. Jean Humez and Laurie Crumpacker, "Oral History in Teaching Women's Studies," *Oral History Review* 7, no. 1 (1979): 53–69.
15. George D. Kuh, "High-Impact Educational Practices: A Brief Overview," *Association of American Colleges & Universities* (2008): https://www.aacu.org/leap/hips.
16. See Elizabeth Brulé, "Going to the Market: Neoliberalism and the Social Construction of the University Student as an Autonomous Consumer," in *Inside Corporate U: Women in the Academy Speak Out,* ed. Marilee Reimer (Toronto: Sumach Press, 2004), 247–264; Anna Feigenbaum, "The Teachable Moment: Feminist Pedagogy

and the Neoliberal Classroom," *The Review of Education, Pedagogy and Cultural Studies,* 29, no. 4 (2007): 337–349.

17. Our more optimistic vision mirrors that of cultural studies theorist Brenda Weber who argues that feminist pedagogy can be adapted to the logistical realities of neoliberal education, such as large class sizes and a focus on lecture courses as opposed to discussion, characterizing feminist pedagogy as being "in transition" rather than "in decline" as it confronts changing institutional realities. See Brenda R. Weber, "Teaching Popular Culture Through Gender Studies: Feminist Pedagogy in a Postfeminist and Neoliberal Academy?" *Feminist Teacher,* 20, no. 2 (2010): 124–138.
18. Gluck, "Introduction," 2–3.
19. Gluck, "What's So Special About Women?" in *Women's Oral History: The Frontiers Reader*, ed. Susan H. Armitage with Patricia Hart and Karen Weathermon (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 10.
20. Butler and Sorenson, "Patching the Past," 201–202.
21. Gluck, "What's So Special About Women?," 10.
22. Ibid., 13.
23. Kristina Minister, "A Feminist Frame for the Oral History Interview," in Gluck and Patai, *Women's Words*, 28–31. Minister bases her conclusions on the fact that men have traditionally been at the forefront of the field of oral history and have set the standards, and on an anthropological study demonstrating that boys and girls learn how to communicate differently.
24. Ibid., 28.
25. Ibid., 35–36.
26. Gesa E. Kircsh, *Ethical Dilemmas in Feminist Research: The Politics of Location, Interpretation, and Publication* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 68.
27. Ibid., 85.
28. Gluck advocates a similar approach in "Advocacy Oral History," 205–218.
29. Snowball sampling is a method wherein interview respondents or narrators suggest possible names of others who may meet the project's parameters and be interested in participating. This is a common recruitment strategy in sociological and historical research.
30. Personal correspondence to authors, January 2013.
31. Personal correspondence to authors, January 2013.

32. Gluck, "What's So Special About Women?," 6–7. While we conduct topical interviews, Gluck leans toward creating life histories, which requires the reconstruction of a narrator's life experiences over the course of many interviews.
33. Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack, "Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses," in Gluck and Patai, *Women's Words*, 11–14.
34. Ibid., 22.
35. Minister, "A Feminist Frame for the Oral History Interview," 32.
36. Gluck, "What's So Special About Women?," 14.
37. Interview by Brittany Linden and Danielle Kraft (14 November 2013), transcript, np.
38. The imperative for historians to help their students develop the skills of thought known as historical thinking has been powerfully articulated by historical education researchers such as Samuel Wineburg and Peter Seixas. See Peter Seixas (ed.) *Theorizing Historical Consciousness* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); Peter Seixas and Tom Morton, *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts* (Toronto: Nelson, 2013); Samuel Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001). Historians Thomas Andrews and Flanery Burke have argued that the ability to understand how personal histories relate to "big events" is at the core of historical thinking. See Andrews and Burke, "What Does it Mean to Think Historically?" *Perspectives on History,* 45, no. 1 (2007), https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/january-2007/what-does-it-mean-to-think-historically.
39. Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 164–172.
40. Danielle Kraft, response paper (Florida Gulf Coast University, 2015), np.
41. Elena Diaz, response paper (Florida Gulf Coast University, 2015), np.
42. Rachel Agron, response paper (Florida Gulf Coast University, 2015), np.
43. Gregory Tours, response paper (Florida Gulf Coast University, 2014), np.
44. Brittany Linden, response paper (Florida Gulf Coast University, 2015), np.

45. Anonymous, focus group interview conducted by authors, April 2015.
46. Anonymous, focus group interview conducted by authors, April 2015.
47. See, for example, Sangster, “Telling Our Stories,” 5–28.
48. Anderson et al., “Beginning Where We Are,” 104.

CHAPTER 7

STEM Histories: Complicating Dominant (Object-Oriented) Narratives

Amanda Wray

INTRODUCTION

Oral history research—whether making use of oral history archives or producing new ones—fosters within students a greater understanding of how the self and culture intersect,[1] helps students to overcome stereotypes,[2] improves students' technical literacies,[3] and provides students with a means for contesting and (re)informing historical narratives.[4] Current scholarship showcases the use of oral history across multiple fields including teacher education, psychology, writing studies, sociology, new media studies, urban development, and (of course) history. Less explored is the importance of oral history outside the Humanities, including the use of oral history within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Given that oral history puts the human experience front and center, including oral histories in the STEM classroom will offer subject positions that may be missing from STEM students' understanding of disciplinary content.

This chapter explores the ways in which oral history can help to inform and, potentially, complicate dominant narratives in STEM education. In

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naming dominant narratives, I do not intend to generalize a set of values or pedagogical practices across diverse STEM fields. Instead, I wish to draw attention to some ways that oral history archives can help to (re) orient STEM students' ways of knowing, inviting them to look at disciplinary knowledge through a lens of the human experience as opposed to seeing primarily, or even exclusively, through the lens of objective truths. Dominant narratives linking STEM education include treating tools of measurement and other objects of inquiry (e.g., the mass spectrometer) as somehow transcending human involvement. Oral histories can orient students to the scientists who construct disciplinary knowledge, including the influence of positionality and the process of honing that which would one day be considered scientific "truth."[5] A second dominant narrative frames STEM knowledge as particularly content-based—a set of findings and theories to be memorized and applied—instead of a subjective sequence of practices that produce particular results. Oral histories can historicize discovery theories, further emphasizing the process rather than the product of science, as well as philosophizing the values and guiding practices that govern the STEM community. A third narrative complicated through oral history is that of science and society's intersectionality. The agency STEM fields have in shaping public policy and social contexts cannot be overstated, and oral history archives can direct STEM students' attention to the lived realities that inform and/or are impacted by scientific advancement.

SCIENTISTS AND NOT JUST SCIENCE: TEACHING POSITIONALITY

The Chemical Industry Collection[6]—which supports over 500 oral histories—introduces the Center for Oral History in this way: "Science is as much about scientists as it is about the experiments they perform." Their collections elucidate "the successes and disappointments, the triumphs and failures—from the perspective of the men and women intimately involved in new discoveries and innovations."[7] Carroll A. Hochwalt, for instance, narrates her nonlinear process of developing lead tetraethyl and other antiknock compounds, and German immigrant Vladimir Haensel discusses the construction of Universal Oil Products' Platforming process, showcasing how false starts and intuition lead to scientific advancement.

Tools of measurement, once perfected over time, become objectified as scientific truths somehow transcending human involvement, and yet oral histories invite students into the process by which such knowledge becomes quantified as somehow beyond or separate from the scientist. To complicate this narrative, STEM students can study *The Critical Mass: A History of Mass Spectrometry Collection*. Eighteen oral history archives track the growing presence and application of mass spectrometry, primarily within the petroleum industry and biochemistry; importantly, this archive also chronicles (through multiple and intersecting narratives) the process by which mass spectrometry was perfected into the universal object of inquiry it became in the twentieth century. The "unsung hero of instrumental analysis," mass spectrometry was developed in the nineteenth century as a technique for determining the elemental composition of molecules.[8] Though only one female voice is present in the collection, many of the physicists and chemists are interviewed twice with 8 to 15 years between interviews. Listening to the lived experiences of those responsible for creating and fine-tuning this tool calls into question the static, assumed objectivity associated with the mass spectrometer. Robert Finnigan, for example, highlights the influence of positionality while discussing the role Electronics Associated Incorporated played in refining mass spectrometry as a field.

> "So what we were doing … was saying, 'We really think that there is a need for analog controls that would really do the job better. They're relatively inexpensive and you could have, ultimately, a digital decision-maker back here—it would be sort of hybrid. But you need different and better sensors. You could really improve your process, if you had better sensors.' And ultimately we saw a quadrupole mass spectrometer as one of those instruments which would give the composition of the products of a process plant, allow you to control levels of certain organic components, and so on. I think they're doing a lot of those things now forty years later … I'd say a lot of the things, including quadrupoles, are used in process control now. But this was thirty-something years ago. And, then, that was too far out."[9]

The archives help to show this tool as a process of human experimentation, one that was shaped and molded by the demands of the market as well as being a product that enabled major advancements in the fields of chemistry and physics. The presence of time between interviews further enhances the lived aspect of the mass spectrometer. Multiple interviews with the same scientists can reveal changes in their own beliefs, attitudes, and ways of knowing, which has great potential for reinforcing that STEM knowledge depends on the current state of *scientists* and the paths of inquiry they choose to explore.

Though STEM scholars have explored how emotions and unsubstantiated hunches, intuitions, and gut feelings factor into their work,[10] a scientist's positionality is not generally addressed as a value or convention within STEM educational paradigms.[11] Nancy Tuana finds greater focus on procedural and extrinsic ethics, which involves adhering to Responsible Conduct of Research and assessing scientific knowledge's impact on public policy and society. Intrinsic ethics, however, are a result of a scientist's positionality and are, thus, embedded in the process of scientific production.[12] Positionality, as defined in ethnographic, feminist research methods, involves a reflexive awareness about the ways individual identity markers can shape how we see and what we see as we engage in research.[13] Especially for STEM practitioners, one's position in relation to the study can influence the assumptions and values present in how the hypothesis is developed, as well as which equations, constants, and variables are chosen, how data is analyzed, the ways in which error is handled, and the degree of confidence present in scientific projections. Even the language used to communicate results—to the public and to those within the field—is subject to situation and context, thus involving positionality. In "Methodological Dilemmas and Emotion in Science," James McAllister argues that the lack of a unified and principled value system in regard to scientist bias "leaves a space for dilemmas to arise" where scientists use epistemic and cognitive value judgments that are not characterized by intra-level consistency or inter-level functionality.[14]

The presence of moral and ethical dilemmas is not a weakness of STEM; rather, it is the invisible role such dilemmas play in advancing the field that proves problematic. Turning again to McAllister, "Scientists often make important decisions not by systematically taking all relevant factors into account, but by selectively focusing on a specific aspect of the situation."[15] Positionality biases scientists, McAllister explains, because they tend to favor "empirical findings and theories that resemble those confirmed correct in the past."[16] Oral history archives can bring into question the influence of scientist positionality, including the knowledge paradigms and assumed truths a scientist subscribes to, and they can help to demystify the governing values and guiding practices within a process of discovery.

Turning to the Archive for the History of Quantum Physics (1898–1950),[17] educators can make explicit the contested nature of scientific "fact" by showing how the situation and context of scientists determine the course of this field's trajectory. This collection offers 107 recordings with powerhouse physicists such as Niels Henrik Bohr, John L. Heilbron, and Thomas S. Kuhn. Published and unpublished manuscripts as well as personal letters sent between physicists are also available in the archive sponsored by the American Philosophical Society. Another collection supported by the American Institute of Physics[18] includes different interviews with these same individuals. Highlighted within the collections is the evolving conversation and history of quantum theory, in particular the wave/particle paradigm shift that split the field of physics in the early part of the twentieth century. Quantum theory was faced with a dilemma where the precept for explaining empirical data violated the style of theorizing used to validate such findings in classical physics.[19] Because the archives allow students to compare the same voices across time, students are brought into a conversation between key players—Niels Henrik Bohr and Werner Heisenberg, in particular—as though it is happening in real time. The uncertainties that are narrated create space for students to critically consider how situation and scientist impact scientific findings. Bohr's interviews in one collection, for instance, showcase different ethical dilemmas and value statements than those explored in another, which further amplifies the subjective nature of historical "truths" and the ways in which the rhetorical paradigms (or *grammars*) a scientist subscribes to can construct disciplinary boundaries. Philosopher Wittgenstein makes explicit in *On Certainty* that the perceived certainty in scientific findings "does not mean just that every single person is certain of it, but that we belong to a community which is bound together by science and education."[20] The agreement on a scientific fact creates a certainty that, theoretically, is contextually construed and subject to revision over time.

Governing Values and Guiding Practices: Teaching Process

STEM professionals, perhaps more than in other fields, build new research on the paradigms and findings of previous discoveries, and yet dominant narratives in STEM education can position discovery as an outcome rather than a process. A deeper understanding of the origins and processes of theory-building, including the false hypotheses and perceived "errors" inherent to research, can draw students to the process of research as a site for new discoveries. Governing theories of STEM knowledge are contextually based, according to Inês Lacerda Araújo, a Brazilian linguist and science philosopher. A system of presuppositions structure concepts, and empiric propositions exist as "nets of an inquiry system."[21] Drawing upon Ludwig Wittgenstein's and Thomas Kuhn's theories of language and science, Araújo argues that scientific knowledge may be fact-based knowledge, but that should not imply objectivity: "Scientific knowledge forms a system of convictions, it is supported by experience, but this is not viewed as a foundation or prerequisite, it is simply the way science functions and its knowledge is transmitted; people believe in facts of geography, chemistry, physics, and their convictions and beliefs rely on these kinds of knowledge. But facts do not speak for themselves."[22] Scientists, who are in the process of doing science, direct the shared values and assumed truths within STEM ways of knowing.

Oral history archives, by their very nature of being scientific voices rendering individual memories and processes of remembering as they relate to larger "social" stories of STEM ways of knowing, help to center the human element in constructions of STEM disciplinary knowledge. In so doing, they highlight science as a process and not just a product. Austrian mathematics and language philosopher Wittgenstein refers to the governing theories and guiding practices of a discipline as *grammars*. Akin to Kenneth Burke's theory of language in *A Grammar of Motives*,[23] Wittgenstein describes rhetorical paradigms as inherently linked with context and situation guiding the ways in which STEM professionals form judgments, express concepts, and teach information. Rhetorical paradigms are subject to discursive shifts across time within one's field, shifts caused by scientific advancement and new understandings of historically situated scientific findings. Though paradigms are presented in textbooks and curriculum as rather static, a "paradigm does not solve every problem, there are gaps and questions that cannot be answered" and such "crisis" can lead to changes in guiding paradigms and even "scientific revolution."[24]

Such *gestalt* change is documented through the three phases of AIDS oral history archived with the University of California at San Francisco. Phase one, 1981–1984, highlights the voices of those most intimately involved in documenting and researching the early stages of the virus, including university and public health physicians, scientists, and medical administrators. Phase two includes interviews with nurses and one medical journalist. Phase three offers interviews with community physicians who exerted important influence in early AIDS politics. San Francisco physician Paul O'Malley's oral history, for instance, makes explicit how established knowledge paradigms within science can blind a scientist to new discoveries. O'Malley explains how blood samples collected from patients who were being screened for Hepatitis B in the late 1970s enabled scientists to make advancements in understanding a disease (HIV) not yet determined to be sexually transmitted. The research participants in this collection render a rich number of stories about personal conversations at medical conventions and within the field that demonstrate just how perplexing AIDS was at first to the medical community. Medical knowledge and advancements were bound by scientists' routine ways of knowing, and O'Malley narrates his struggle to get others in the field to invest in a new process of discovery.

O'Malley explains that blood specimens to be used were three and four years old, a fact that he and others initially felt invalidated the findings of the research. Though he admits now, given the more accurate knowledge of the disease, the specimens captured a particularly important time frame for documenting the beginning of HIV infections: "[It was] more of a hunch initially. I thought that the stored serum and interviews covered the three years prior to the AIDS outbreak, and might provide clues to this new disease. I did not make a strong connection at this time … I was thinking, maybe we've got another sexually transmitted disease here that's caused by a blood-borne virus, just like Hepatitis B. Except we didn't have documentation then that it had such a long incubation period." O'Malley explores the process through which scientists discovered objective markers for this blood-based disease, thus enabling more accurate diagnosis. Another historian in this collection, Selma K. Dritz, also tracks the epidemiological course of AIDS, focusing in particular on the presence of Kaposi's sarcoma as linked with Pneumocystis in patients, a connection that enabled a more concrete profile of HIV.[25]

Though STEM ways of knowing may privilege scientific outcomes as static and minimally subjective, Araújo reminds us that no objective reality exists, "no true or definitive theory proved once and for all, but paradigms provide method and patterns for research that a community of scientists accept and practice. … Objectivity is in permanent construction."[26] Intuition reflects just one conceptual foundation shaping our understanding of STEM objectivity. The amassing of attitudes, beliefs, and opinions, intuition results from individual and cultural experiences and also governs the existence of certain mathematical concepts including, for example, geometric notions.[27] Without intuition, many scientists would find themselves without a foundation for scientific reasoning. Tuana, a philosopher, advocates for more explicit attention to the value decisions entrenched in STEM research, models, and methods. Doing so, she argues, spotlights inquiries and questions that are under-examined, ignored, and made invisible by the dominant narrative of object-oriented outcomes characteristic of STEM ways of thinking. Critiques of scientific realism are prominent in current STEM scholarship and yet, Arne Kjellman and others argue, this way of thinking continues to influence scientists and their daily agendas.[28] An object-oriented lens of STEM findings diminishes, and often neglects, the subject-oriented process of conducting research. The oral history of Charles S. Zuker, a molecular biologist who was born in Peru, provides a rich narrative about access as one constricting force when attempting to make research advancements in academia. Though Zuker's work with photoreceptor cell functions is dependent upon technology, he concludes his oral history by stating that intuition and imagination cannot be replaced (only enhanced) by technology.[29]

The Princeton Mathematics Community collection provides another particularly relevant history for studying how process shapes the "assumed truths" within a field's governing theories and guiding practices. Princeton became one of the largest and most influential centers of mathematics research in the 1930s, thanks in large part to the building of Fine Hall. Dedicated to Dean Harry Fine, this building offered space for mathematicians and mathematical physicists to congregate informally and to engage in formal collaborative research. While the oral history collection only peripherally considers the technical accomplishments of this community, the voices here offer a thorough history of the evolving and emerging STEM-related educational and research specializations across the country. The scholars of this time period were at work developing specialties such as mathematical logic, topology, mathematical statistics, mathematical physics, and differential geometry. Many of the interviews also assess the impact of the Depression and European political contexts on their academic work, further emphasizing positionality as an important influence in scientific discovery.[30]

Joseph Daly and Churchill Eisenhart, for instance, tell stories about their mentor Sam Wilks, a leading member in developing the field of mathematical statistics in the early 1930s (as well as an influential cocreator of the SAT). Daly describes Wilks as having "a knack of bringing out ideas that just weren't in the literature at that time." During this time, the statistics research happening across the USA was mostly unknown within individual academies:

> I'm sure not very many people realized, for example, that the analysis of variance, which was the big thing then, and the theory of linear regression are exactly the same thing. Sam made that perfectly obvious to me. It didn't become obvious to a lot of people until many years after that, I guess because you'd keep getting articles in these two fields as though they were entirely different. The notions of statistical tests, unbiasness, and optimum procedures were just beginning to develop, but we had a lot of fun with them. … So that sort of thing developed, and it was a natural development commencing just before the war.[31]

Daly and Eisenhart, as well as most of the other oral histories represented in this collection, survey the increased specialization of the field of mathematics. The voices assess the risks and rewards of this trend as it happened at Princeton and other flagship mathematics programs at Columbia, Iowa State College, and Rothamsted in Great Britain. Oral history archives make the intersections and disconnect between specializations come alive. They showcase theories as they evolve as well as research models and/or scientific "truths" as they come into being, enabling students who may encounter these narratives to have a richer and more humanized appreciation for the scientific process behind discovery.

Social Justice and STEM: Teaching Agency

STEM education goes beyond teaching students the content and conventions of their field. Education is a guide for students' participation in public life. In a *Knowledge Quest* special issue tracking the influence of online library resources on STEM students' content knowledge, Marcia Mardis and Kaye Howe refer to "education as the nation's civil religion."[32] In the field of education, of course, the debate remains about whether the practices of teaching and learning should have explicit social justice aims, especially in terms of teacher education. Even among those who agree that social justice intentions should factor into higher education, disagreement exists about whether students should be compelled to act on their growing critical consciousness.[33] Oral histories enable students to experience the human side of science and the ways in which shifting technologies and access to scientific advancement influence everyday lived realities. Listening to the voices of others helps students to see how social, historical, and political contexts anchor our everyday experiences, creating what Henry Giroux refers to as a "hybridized" educational space where singular perspectives and status quo ways of thinking are contested. The goal of such critical pedagogy is the ability for individuals to see "the social gravity and material force of institutional power" as it relates to their academic and everyday lives.[34]

Consider *The Rural Electrification Project* sponsored by the Southern Oral History Program (SOHP).[35] This collection of 44 interviews addresses the ways in which local electric cooperatives emerged in the early 1930s, spotlighting at times the influence of women in organizing their communities to politically advocate for electricity. Included within these stories of technological advancement, though, are feelings of fear, a resistance to change, and experiences of discrimination. Electricity altered the everyday lives and work of North Carolina residents, and, even though electricity may be uniformly associated with social progress, this collection invites students to (re)imagine and complicate the role technology plays in shaping day-to-day realities. When asked if electricity made his life better, David Bateman of Tyner, North Carolina, agreed that electricity was a benefit to rural people but:

> we've had several trade-offs. When some people refer to the good old days, think they're talking about when people had time to visit or felt like they had time to visit. People were more dependent on one another in the neighborhood at that time than they are now. With the coming of electricity everybody is sort of self-sufficient so far as around the house, especially with the coming of the television. Think the good old days was when people had the opportunity to just sit around and chew the fat and socialize and enjoy one another. Think much of that has been lost through modern technology.[36]

No doubt electricity made the work of cooking, farming, and washing clothes much easier and time efficient, but it irrevocably changed the ways in which we build and sustain community, especially in rural spaces. Electricity also increased the operating costs of a household, putting some rural families in debt for the first time in their lives.

Bill Moore addresses some of the discrimination rural people faced in their quest for electricity. Carolina Power and Light Company (CP&L), for example, "weren't very trusty of rural people on major utilities they didn't think they could pay" so "CP&L just refused to serve the rural areas." As a stockholder-owned company, CP&L would not run lines for areas with few homes. Moore explains, "And good common horse sense can see that no way that Carolina could make money off of three or less customers per mile for their stockholders … that's what it boils down to, you know, it's a money situation."[37] This oral history archive offers a hybridized space for students to learn about the benefits of technological advancement as well as the ways such advancement is used to discriminate and disempower others. Thankfully this collection is careful to include those who exercised agency by socially organizing to advocate for and eventually secure rural electric cooperatives.

Turning to other collections within SOHP, students can explore an additional 5400 oral history interviews demonstrating the intersectionality of science and technology with society.[38] Information technology students, for instance, can use *Business History* to study city histories, lived narratives related to economic phenomena such as "Hostile Takeover," and the impact of manufacturing as it comes into and then leaves a town. The archives provide useful "simulation" projects for students as they test out potential theories for managing crisis, and they put multiple perspectives in conversation. Because the SOHP collections can be searched by occupation, any number of experiential learning simulations can be devised. Aspiring environmental scientists or biologists, for instance, could use the *Environmentalism: Forests and Communities in Western North Carolina Collection* to research how to best manage and maintain government-regulated lands for public use.[39] These oral histories debate the process of regulating public land, National Forests in particular, through the testimony of park rangers, botanists, and outdoor sports enthusiasts. The collection explores the community and biodiversity impacts of the changing patterns of forest usage over the past 30 years, helping to reveal to students the interrelated nature of their disciplinary work within shifting historical, political, and social contexts. Importantly, the archives share stories about individuals who were (sometimes forcibly) removed from their land so that the government could deem it "public use."

These collections showcase multiplicity, demonstrating a process of problem solving that is impacted by and has consequences across social, political, regional, and environmental contexts. Importantly, many of the oral histories offer a human face to technological advances, showcasing, among other things, the ways in which scientific and technological progress can shift lived realities in unintended ways. Increased awareness about the intersections of science and society may help STEM students to be more ethical, reflexive researchers, but such knowledge will not necessarily result in positive social change. I believe educators must also empower and prepare students to see their role in constructing, sustaining, and/or dismantling such structures of inequality. When we fail to encourage student action, we are perhaps implying that inaction is benign. Pepi Leistyna, a leading critical pedagogue, contends that "literacy development should work in a way that helps people read the economic, social, and political realities that shape their lives in order to develop the necessary critical consciousness to name, understand, and transform them."[40] Students emerging with STEM degrees are in a powerful position to shape future public policy and the social well-being of our society at all levels, and we need them to be prepared to think critically and strategically about how to best apply their specialized skill set and knowledge base.

Genome research is an ideal hybridized space for contemplating what we should study and how our findings can work for and/or against public good. The Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory oral history collection offers a thorough history of the Human Genome Project (HGP) as told through 54 voices.[41] Particularly useful are 11 topical markers that link themes between the interviews, including the "dangers of human genome testing" and the "ethics of gene patenting." Though the research trajectory of eugenics was largely impacted by widespread societal biases,[42] modern understandings of humans at the molecular level emphasize just how similar we all are. Leif Andersson speaks at length about the misuse of genome research, though he concludes, "I think also if you go to eugenics, what I think we have learned really that how closely related humans are, how similar we are, which is very important. That all humans share a common history very recently … although of course we all see differences between humans, but the similarities is what is dominating."[43] Other collections that focus explicitly on the HGP and eugenics research include the incredible Canadian-sponsored *Living Archives on Eugenics*.[44]

Thinking on the social repercussions of scientific work (i.e., judging lines of inquiry in terms of public value) should not be a privilege of working within the academy. In the corporate and community organizing world, STEM professionals may have even more agency to shape public good. The Bancroft Library (UC Berkeley) collections focus on industry leaders of biotechnology. In "Conducting Research in Academia, Directing Research at Genetech," Dr. Richard Scheller offers an extensive oral history (three interviews conducted over a span of twenty-three months) about his transition from being a Stanford professor of Biological Sciences to developing Genentech, a biotech company that develops, manufactures, and commercializes medicines.[45] At one point, he explains that experimentation in the corporate world reflects different STEM paradigms:

> "[Y]ou had not only to think about whether the experiment would work; you had to think about was there really a medical need that you were eventually moving towards. What would the product be? How long would it take to get the experiment done? What outside investors would think of this area? Those types of issues were never factored into our thinking at all at Stanford. I found the decision-making process and having to factor in those issues curious and, because of their novelty, interesting."

Scheller's history is contextualized through 22 additional interviews with STEM practitioners working at Genentech, and collectively these voices explore *technology transfer*, that is, the movement of knowledge from the industry *into* the academy. More commonly, dominant narratives within academia highlight the production and movement of knowledge from the classroom into the public market. Given the investment of political and corporate entities in funding STEM research projects, students who seek careers beyond academia now have powerful potential to shape and structure educational paradigms. Oral history archives can help STEM students to see from multiple perspectives and, in so doing, to complicate the object-oriented lenses they are conditioned to value to the exclusion of the human element. Taking a more subject-oriented view can encourage STEM students to not only see their agency but also know how to act on it.

Bringing Oral History to the STEM Classroom

Though I have focused exclusively in this chapter on using existing oral history to contest and/or complicate dominant narratives within STEM educational paradigms, I see great potential in STEM students collecting and archiving oral histories. Preparing students for this work, of course, takes time away from content areas, but I can imagine a beautiful co-teaching model where STEM faculty and oral historians within the Humanities develop curriculum together that results in new STEM oral history archives. Documenting greater diversity in STEM voices is important work that must be done. Without contest, STEM remains a largely white, male domain. As I sifted through names in 50 or more oral history collections devoted to STEM topics, of the tens of thousands of names I encountered, few stood out as particularly female.[46] Nearly all of those interviews have been recorded in the past ten years. And yet this reality should not erase the important influences of women, people of color, and other marginalized individuals who have and will continue to shape and contribute to STEM ways of knowing.[47]

Oral history, in comparison to less contextualized textbook knowledge, can present a more authentic rendering of the values and practices that govern STEM ethics and distinguish STEM specializations from one another. Listening to the lived experiences and the reflective memories of others can create spaces for students to philosophize within their field and to think more critically about how STEM paths of inquiry have agency (and thus, responsibility) across social, political, and economic contexts. I believe STEM educators should encourage students to make new discoveries by inviting them to revisit the historical narratives of science. To, in short, take a more liberal studies approach by investigating the "unquestioned truths" framing one's field, looking at science through multiple lenses and subject positions, and considering the role of process within discovery. Oral history has the potential to illuminate—and therefore interrupt—bias, subjectivity, and prejudice as it exists in the history and progress of STEM work.

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33. Stanley Fish and others paint a picture of critical advocacy that marginalizes points of view, privileges certain belief systems, or mandates particular kinds of action. Critical advocacy involves, first and always, listening. Not just listening to our students and listening for our own bias but listening with our students to better understand bias. Critical advocacy works to create a "contact zone"

for students (to use Mary Louise Pratt's term), a space where differences are put into conversation and intersections are illuminated. Fish insists that students should be taught how to analyze an issue, but they should not be required to make pronouncements on the issue. I think this position endorses complacency or passivity as an outcome of critical thinking. Good reasons exist for teaching students how and why to make use of their analysis by taking an active stance. I think the process of forming and defending a position helps students become better acquainted with their attitudes and assumptions. Reasoning through one's position involves a back and forth momentum, questioning and answering, listening and speaking, reading and writing, where students learn to listen for bias as a measure of validity.

34. Henry A. Giroux, *On Critical Pedagogy* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011), 162.
35. *Rural Electrification Project*, Southern Oral History Program, accessed January 15, 2015, http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/s/Southern_Oral_History_Program_Collection.html.
36. Southern Oral History Program, accessed 09 Nov 2015, http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sohp/id/10635/rec/1.
37. Southern Oral History Program, accessed 09 Nov 2015, http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sohp/id/10617/rec/29.
38. Southern Oral History Program, accessed January 5, 2015, http://sohp.org.
39. *Environmentalism: Forests and Communities in Western North Carolina Collection*, Southern Oral History Program, accessed January 15, 2015, http://sohp.org/research/past-projects/listening-for-a-change/environmentalism/.
40. Pepi Leistyna, "Preparing for Public Life: Education, Critical Theory, and Social Justice," in *Handbook of Social Justice In Education*, eds. William Ayers, Therese M. Quinn, and David Stovall (New York: Routledge, 1999), 53.
41. *Genome Research,* Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, accessed January 15, 2015, http://library.cshl.edu/oralhistory/category/genome-research/.
42. Tuana, 1962.

43. Leif Andersson, Oral History Audio, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Oral History Collection, accessed January 3, 2015, http://library.cshl.edu/oralhistory/interview/genome-research/dangers-genome-research/leif-andresson-dangers-of-genomic-research/.
44. *Living Archives in Eugenics of Western Canada,* accessed March 24, 2015, http://eugenicsarchive.ca/about.
45. Bancroft Library Regional Oral History Office, accessed January 15, 2015, http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/projects/biosci/oh_list.html.
46. Gendered names, of course, do not actually reflect an individual's gender identification, and many names are gender-neutral. My point here is that the landscape of STEM professionals remains, in the oral history archives especially, largely male identified and white. This reality demonstrates a host of intersecting forces including different types of access to education.
47. The Chemical Heritage Foundation offers 42 histories in *Women in Chemistry*, which address person research, paths of inquiry, and, among other things, the role mentors and networks played in gaining access to the field. Sixty-five interviews make up Iowa State's *Women in Science and Engineering* collection. Echo's Women in Science and Engineering Projects, collected by George Mason University, offers 30 female perspectives. Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory supports 20 voices related to *Women in Science* (though some of these historians are male). This collection showcases compelling narratives about the challenges that being female presents to those entering and working in STEM fields, both in the academy and in the workplace. The Society of Women Geographers has to date collected and transcribed over 80 interviews across many specializations and types of position within the discipline. Just this year, Dr. Janet Abbate released through the *Engineering and Technology History Wiki* 52 oral histories with British and American women in computing chronicling the history of women's presence in the coding world.

PART II

Methodological and Pedagogical Dilemmas

CHAPTER 8

"We Tell Stories": Oral History as a Pedagogical Encounter

Brenda Trofanenko

> *Words and images as a bearing of witness, an enactment of difficulty [is], at times, a terrible gift.*[1]

Introduction

In a touching explanation that links the task of personal attention to the value of another's life, educational sociologist Roger Simon demonstrates how the importance of individual life stories helps us to "learn anew."[2] Simon's support of knowing another's life by problematizing the ethical practices of such an event—through words, images, and objects—functions to go beyond what the norms of history elicit. He challenges the partial historical accounts of past experiences by questioning how human life is regarded as more than a truthful and factual claim set again historical evidence. If any life is a "terrible gift" that we need to consider, our main instruction as educators is to understand the growing significance of oral history that is

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increasingly present in both public and private spheres, and in both scholarly and academic contexts. This in turn leads one to ask: What attention, learning, and actions should our accountability for living in the present with one another require in both telling and listening to such stories?[3]

Simon's questions pertaining to the responsibility we hold for another's life are particularly notable in the current use of oral history, an activity that is evolving as a common pedagogical practice. Oral history is an important phenomenon for its potential to include the broad strokes of undocumented and unspoken social history in the public arena in an increasingly common way, notably through the telling of an account or story. However, first-person narrative accounts are not without significant challenges. Alessandro Portelli rightly ponders not only how oral history remains focused on the personal narrative but also how it forms relationships between the past and present, between one speaking and another listening, and between the text that is written and the text that is spoken.[4] While oral history has its own set of distinct educational intentions that are formulated and informed by the narrative structure of history and the personal nature of storytelling,[5] it transforms a private and personal experience into a public act that acknowledges and emphasizes individual lived experiences of both tragedy and fortune that contribute to individual and collective histories.[6]

Certainly there has been significant interest in and utilization of oral history as a pedagogical tool in recent years through first-person narrative accounts. These acts of declaring or telling, whether in the service of evidence or proof, reveal how we connect with, commemorate, and contest the past. When utilized as a pedagogical tool, they hold various complexities and demands on learning. I suggest, however, that oral history is less about the event and its telling and more concerned with what is remembered and the meaning made through that memory for those telling and those listening. While oral history has evolved to represent the voices of minority groups or issues of redress, and notwithstanding its popularity, there remains little critical examination of how educators consider the teaching and learning encounters of oral history as an event that works to make public accounts and testimony that is otherwise personal.[7] Even as we live in a time of publicly declared events and experiences surrounding incommensurable social injustice (through an exclusion of particular histories) and historical trauma (as experienced in past events) that make demands on learning, educators need to ask how to reconsider our teaching/learning responsibilities as we encounter testimony through oral history. What I seek to understand is how we can best utilize oral history as a sound pedagogical approach without inadvertently repudiating the tension of its use. The problem I perceive as inherent in oral history and its ubiquitous use as a pedagogical activity in history education is how little consideration is directed to the impact of the affective elements on both those telling the narrative and those listening. Understanding what was said and what was heard and how both may, intentionally and unintentionally, elicit an emotional response is often ignored, with oral history serving predominantly as a conduit to a discrete body of personal historical knowledge. Yet, instead of regarding oral history as providing insight into personal experiences from which interpretations and understandings of the past can be gleaned, it is often utilized to prompt an emotional response in place of intellectual engagement, with a desire to understand and empathize with the experiences of the storyteller.[8] However, I suggest we do not always realize the difficulty students face when we hear of difficult stories being told. Often, the focus is more on the organizational and pragmatic elements (doing an oral history and gathering information) than the process through which students grapple with the information provided.

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the dilemmas that come with utilizing oral history as a pedagogical tool by way of a case study examining intergenerational conversations occurring in a museum and in a community public-history program. It draws on two research projects—one situated at the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of American History and involving students enrolled in a Grade 7 classroom in Washington, D.C., and the other situated at a College Preparatory/Laboratory school for Grades 8–12 and at the local National Public Radio (NPR) station in Urbana, Illinois. Both studies show that the use of oral histories as pedagogical tools is neither clearly delineated nor mutually exclusive within the context of middle school history education. In fact, the use of oral histories highlights the need to foster both critical consideration of and connection to the individual stories of the past that have remained unspoken. The extracts I gathered, from field observations, recorded conversations, interviews, and document analysis, point to the necessity of teacher educators developing a reflexive awareness of the authority of oral history as a pedagogical endeavor, to ensure understanding not only of the impact the experience has on the individual providing the oral history, but also of the impact on the individual listening to the story. This chapter explores two different attempts to navigate the use of oral history to highlight the tensions that arise when teachers aim to help students find personal and collective meaning through first-person accounts: first, that oral histories do provide voice for those often left voiceless or ignored in the grand narrative of past events, and second, that oral histories transform complex lived experiences into an understandable and accessible narrative form.

Living in the Time of Telling

The first step in setting my argument is to note, as Jay Winter does, that we live in a memory boom.[9] This popularity of remembering and telling about past events is evident through the presence of various public and social media sites (i.e., StoryCorps at NPR, Facebook, and Twitter), online oral history sites (i.e., the US Library of Congress and Canada's Oral History Centre and the Memory Project), private foundations (the Shoah Foundation's Holocaust Survivor database), and dedicated oral history research offices (i.e., Columbia University's Center for Oral History, Concordia University's Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling). Our contemporary obsession with remembering past events is situated at the intersection of various social, cultural, and economic trends observed in commemorative events, revered monuments and memorials, and redemptive celebrations. While often situated in narratives as national catastrophe and rebirth, Winter notes that the strength of nation, national identity, and collective memory ensures that society is so immersed in this boom that it can fully understand the processes and their dynamics. As he puts it, memory is embedded in rituals and processes of commemoration through which "different collectives … engage in acts of remembrance together."[10] These processes and collectives are, of course, the building blocks of how particular historical events are brought forward and remain present. He further suggests that the strength memory holds at the public level is no longer the exclusive domain of academic historians, as is witnessed by the increased popularity of public genealogical research and programs. The recent privileging of memories—multiple, subjective, and contested—has bestowed a new authority on the public presented primarily through the increased utilization of oral history. Observe our contemporary public sphere, which has seen the emergence of events "concerned with the stains of the past, with self-disclosure, and with ways of remembering once taboo and traumatic events."[11]

At its core, oral history is an authentication of any event through firsthand experience. The first-person narrative has become a central element in our understanding of how to know about the past and what it means to the individual. Through the act of storytelling, along the lines of untold tales, personal stories are premised on an imbrication of experience, remembrance, and sharing. It is often considered a counter narrative, one that democratizes narratives about the past by being inclusive of other voices. Since the 1970s, when social history sought to give voice to ordinary people in public spaces, oral history has served to highlight community, collective memory, and the place of the everyday in ordinary life for individual meaning making—as an alternative to the dependence on documents in the discipline—by offering opportunity for interactive engagement or contemplative considerations. More commonly, it has become part of the process of wider individual and collective remembering. The popularity of oral history reflects a move from privileging authorized accounts interpreted from archives, government documents, and statistics toward an emphasis on storytelling of encounters not necessarily represented or included previously.[12]

This popularity has provided opportunity for scholars, as well as those telling the narratives, to deal with bleaker themes. The recent use of oral history in a range of formal situations has prompted increased awareness of its use in issues related to human rights, including, for example, in Canada since 2008 with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Residential Schools; in South Africa since 1995 with the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act to examine human rights violations, repatriation and rehabilitation, and amnesty; and in Australia since 2003 with the forgotten Australians. This is not limited to political retribution and redress. There is an increase in the number of scholarly centers in Canada, the USA, and worldwide where the use of the term *memories* refers to the construction of narrative in oral history. This use of such a term suggests how deeply implicated memory is in oral history, which does not necessarily seek to follow the traditional narrative tropes history supports.[13] The common elements of wide-scale oral history are the narratives of individuals who have suffered abuse and neglect. In a specific move to capture the lived experiences through a narrative that offers a voice of authenticity and legitimacy, such oral histories are paradoxical, with these narratives functioning for and against the exercise of personal experience as a collective action. Indeed, it is the tension between the dominant historical narrative and the oppositional forms of hegemony that oral history helps clarify.

We know that history has traditionally been the tales of the victors focused on particular successful experiences, often excluding the experiences or points of view framed by non-dominant race, ethnicity, class, and gender. Oral history has become an object in its own right, as evidence of a historic record. While some may believe that oral history is solely the telling of experiences in narrative form, it holds the capacity to situate individuals within a web of social processes through which individual identities are formed within the process of interaction.[14] As such, the turn to oral history extends discussions about subjectivity, identity, and lived experiences, and how the individual explains or makes sense of what is told. It is not a static genre, and its form, content, and relationship to scholars have demonstrated a flow and flexibility.

Pedagogy and the Limits of Oral History

The popularity and prevalence of oral history is not missed in public education in Canada and the USA.[15] While not limited specifically to the domains of history education and social studies, these disciplines are without question the most common place for the inclusion of oral history and testimony as a pedagogical endeavor. Whether educators engage in oral history in the name of history education or embrace its commitment to social justice more widely, the level of engagement demonstrates how an increasing number of educators have responded to the broader, societal dialog about the personal issues occurring at both local and international levels. This includes not only a shift in considering oral history as an essential element in the wider collective remembering process, as previously mentioned, but also the increased awareness of individual experiences and the value of the personal. Given the personal nature, it is assumed such activities are inherently pedagogical.

The commonplace definition of pedagogy is that which is equated with what educators do in classrooms and what is directed by district and state mandates. More recent understandings of pedagogy, influenced by critical theory, have been defined in broader terms. Pedagogy is that which "we are encouraged to know, to form a particular way of ordering the world, giving and making sense of it."[16] Following from this perspective, pedagogy influences our experiences and can be considered anything engaged in for the purpose of learning within formal and informal situations. Pedagogy seeks to "organize a view of, and specifies particular versions of what knowledge is of most worth, in what direction we should desire, what it means to know something, and how we might construct representations of ourselves, others, and the world."[17] To consider oral history as a pedagogical encounter requires exploring how it organizes individuals and narratives around personal experiences, and what these hold for those telling the stories and hearing the stories.[18]

I do not think I would be mistaken to suggest that we are well aware of a frequent scenario utilizing oral history projects in history and social studies classrooms. Often, it follows a common plan. A topic is decided upon, a student finds an adult who lived through an experience that satisfies the topic (insert war, Holocaust, deportation, immigration, inequity; or in case of an event, consider labor riots, environmental destruction, devastation, human suffering) contained within their state-mandated curriculum. Then, individuals are interviewed, transcripts are formulated, and the end project is the presentation of specific personal information gained from an individual to inform a generalized topic. In a year-long school program, such activities can be determined by months (African American history; Woman's history; Thanksgiving) or by significant calendar dates (Memorial Day or Remembrance Day), the point being that oral history holds a ubiquitous position from which, it is commonly thought by educators not well-versed in oral history's complexities, the students merely retell what they heard and represent it as history in a concrete form for others.

No doubt this scenario sounds jaded, but I do not wish to be so. To highlight how oral history is utilized both in and out of regular school programs, below are portions of two research projects. An oral history assignment situated at the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of American History in Washington indicates the growth of oral histories occurring within public museum settings. Public museums are utilizing museum spaces as sites where conversations serve as the provision of evidence. Museums have quickly realized the emotional engagement of those telling the narratives with those listening to the narratives. In keeping with their broader civic mandates, both the emotional/affective and the embodied responses to exhibitions, whether through audio inclusions in exhibition practices or the physical involvement of individuals in curatorial decisions, seek to provide the public with access to information as a way to develop more empathetic citizens.[19] The second example, an oral history collaboration between an NPR station and one school classroom—both located in Urbana Champaign—shows how new media's impact on oral history extends to matters far more than technical, shifting the terrain on which oral history has been practiced by making more public stories that are often untold and unheard.

Do You Always Feel the Same?

The *Price of Freedom: Americans at War* exhibit at the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., had an explicit purpose: to advance through a narrative how a nation evolved through war. Its physical presence on the Mall makes it accessible for various schools within the greater D.C. area. Over the course of one school year, students from a local chartered school worked with veteran members to understand how war continues to be positioned as a defining national action. This project involved the inclusion of World War II veterans who provided narratives about their experiences. By involving the veterans in the project and by utilizing the exhibit as a starting point for the oral history project, the students were provided with an opportunity to consider the veterans' information as a source from which to further understand the exhibit itself, to realize how various objects come to represent a lone event or era, or to question the exhibition narratives about war—specifically how war defines an identity and how displays of war serve various nationalist purposes. The exhibit also served as a starting point for an oral history project, where any point of the exhibition could serve as a starting point for the oral history discussion.

One student working with a veteran was Sam, the 12-year-old son of a navy officer stationed in Quantico, Virginia, at the time of the research. Although Sam worked specifically with Joseph, a World War II veteran, from the outset of the research project, his point of contact with Joseph in the exhibit came through a series of pictures depicting soldiers carrying the war dead. These served as a prompt for Sam to ask about the experiences of war, the camaraderie among soldiers, and the individual's own thoughts about his possible death when engaged in war. The photographs presented a moment for Sam when his knowledge about the result of war—death—came up against his capability of understanding it. He asked Joseph explicitly to speak about his experiences and feelings. Joseph responded by saying that he "doesn't always talk about [war and death] all the time and it is difficult when seeing this picture." Sam would not take this as an indication that Joseph did not wish to comment, and sat with Joseph quietly until he asked Joseph specifically, "do you always feel the same" (referring to his talking or not talking about the war). Joseph's response to this question was more pertinent: he said that he "always felt sad [at the amount of death and dying]" and how "this sadness is with me all the time."

Two themes are evident here in this brief conversation: first, the explicit refusal of Joseph to talk about it to Sam, even with the agreement by Joseph to be involved in the oral history project; and, second, the response Sam had to this refusal. These two elements do not speak directly to the difficult subject at hand—war and death—but do speak to the anxiousness Sam held about the project. Certainly, Joseph did not explicitly ignore the question Sam asked. Yet, in his follow-up question to Joseph, Sam insightfully asked specifically about Joseph's feelings and whether these were related to the context of war or of looking at the photographs of war. Although Joseph did not immediately respond, he did eventually distinguish between his own experiences and his remembrances of his experiences when prompted by the photographs. When asked to explain the difference in a later interview, Sam initially spoke openly about how he did not understand why Joseph did not wish to engage in a conversation but he came to realize that the particular topic and the remembering of the topic proved difficult for Joseph. Sam did not explicitly state the limitations of Joseph's testimony other than in light of the program requirements. He just wanted to "know what [Joseph] felt when surrounded by war, death, and dying." He "just wanted to … complete the assignment."

Perhaps it is a limitation of educators not well-versed in the use of oral histories that highlights the dilemma Sam faced when engaged in this project. The completion of the assignments and the end result became a focal point for Sam rather than his own awareness of Joseph's desire not to comment fully on his war experiences. It is often thought that our youth ought to be protected from various topics including trauma, death, and war. Joseph may have been "protecting" Sam. Joseph safeguards Sam by not engaging in a conversation, which allows for Sam's further understanding of the impact and experiences of war. By safeguarding his own narrative about his experiences, Joseph inscribes the "event" of war more into a serial emotional structure of experience that he is not willing to share. An exchange, or lack of exchange, serves to reaffirm the ruling protective nature of pedagogy that Joseph may unknowingly have offered. Such protection moves back toward a singular pedagogical emphasis on knowledge attainment rather than stirring up any emotional element that may come with the difficulty in either learning about particular events or the emotions associated with attempting to learn. What has resulted in the exchange has been a practice of remembrance related to violence and death that is not purposefully defined in the museum exhibition itself but through the interaction between Joseph and Sam while discussing the context of the exhibition.

The emotional response that Sam experienced with this assignment came in part because of the assignment itself and what classroom preparation occurred prior to Joseph and Sam's exchange. This was not the first time the two conversed in and beyond the museum exhibition. Throughout the year that Joseph visited the classroom as an "adopted" Honor Flight Veteran from Illinois, the classroom discussions focused on his experiences and how they were only being recognized by various organizations (notably the establishment of the World War II monument and the Honor Flight Service Group). The comfort level within the classroom was contained as it focused primarily on gaining knowledge from Joseph as well as other sources to meet the curricular requirements and the selected focus by the teacher. The difficulty Sam experienced in the museum occurred because of a partial understanding of what Joseph said, what Sam wanted to know, and the context in which the exchange occurred. Sam's own conceptual framework, his emotional attachment to the assignment and Joseph's knowledge, and his own desire to learn influenced his ability to settle the meaning of what Joseph said with the emotions that it prompted in him.

The frequency of utilizing oral histories in middle school history classrooms often serves to "bring history alive" without realizing the limits. The use of individuals as sources for oral histories is not without its questions. Even when it is done to engage students in what is considered a dull and uninteresting school subject by hearing first-person accounts of experiences, there is always an anxiety associated with the narratives' complicity in the evocation of emotions. This could suggest skepticism over the usefulness of oral histories. Rather, I suggest, it is more a question of teacher preparation and discussions with students about how to deal with the emotions that may result.

We Tell Stories Ourselves in Order to Live

The second example is an oral history project initiated and supported by the local NPR system in Urbana, Illinois. To its credit, the Illinois Public Media radio station on campus at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign has worked with students from the University of Illinois Laboratory High School since 1995. Central to the Grade 8 Illinois social studies curriculum, as conceptualized in this charter school, is an extensive oral history project to produce radio documentaries involving all 60–70 students in each entering class. Working in teams, these students prepare for and conduct oral history interviews with up to 15 people from the local community who have some experience or expertise to share on the project's chosen topic. Interviews are usually singular and between one and two hours in length, and are conducted in the professional studios of the Illinois Public Media facility located in Campbell Hall on the University of Illinois campus. Over the last several years, the topics, as chosen by the social studies faculty, have focused primarily on issues of race, ethnicity, gender, ability, and equity, and have included "Oral histories of the Holocaust," "In the wake of Brown: Stories of integration and struggle," "The 20th century exodus: Journeys of the Jewish in our community," "Title IX," "Disability," "Asian Americans in CU," and "Gender equity."

During the 2008–2009 academic school year, I attended two social studies classes as the oral history project specific to examining the Jewish diaspora was initiated, completed, and presented publicly in the school context prior to a wide-scale media blitz completed by the local NPR station. In the final presentation and follow-up discussions of the oral history projects by the students to their cohort/colleagues and contributors, two students—Carmen and Jonah—provided a more in-depth explanation of their experiences with both Jewish and non-Jewish community members. They highlighted how those who they interviewed spoke of their experiences both as newcomers to the area and as local individuals who responded to the migration of Jewish families into the area. Beginning in the mid-1950s, the Urbana Champaign area witnessed the beginning of Jewish immigration from parts of Eastern Europe and major US cities into the university community. They discovered through the narratives with their community members the emergence of a rich intellectual community. Although the Urbana Champaign communities were never entirely Jewish, their strong presence within the area of the university helped to create the popular perception that Urbana Champaign was indeed a "Jewish" place. The ideological and religious commitments varied within the community proper, which served as an opportunity for the growing Jewish community to advance their community involvement and support. Moreover, the narratives showed how these newcomers managed to build and establish, within a relatively short time, an impressive presence in the community, along with a range of visible and highly developed community and institutional networks including their synagogue.

There was another—and perhaps less obvious—outcome of the oral history project for both Carmen and Jonah. All of the oral histories taped, transcribed, analyzed, and addressed in their own ways two central themes: one relating to the intellectual production of a community and the other to how the community, in turn, produced an intellectual presence. More specifically, the first theme queried how an intellectual space came to stand in for Jewish American experience. This also assumes that the negotiation of space was not passive or reflective of an already existing place. Here, the two community informants spoke of how they established their presence beyond the university through positioning themselves as similar to the dominant groups in the community. In other words, these individuals spoke of how they impacted and helped to shape Urbana Champaign and the university communities by narrating their identities and experiences to explain the way the representation of the university and the community became one of diverse intellectual groups.

The second theme, no less important, became a flash point for both Carmen and Jonah when their two community members began talking about their families' experiences with the Holocaust, survival, and relocation. While still recording their conversations, Carmen asked her informant why she would talk about this, and how this is related to the topic at hand. An obvious pause occurred, with the informant then telling Carmen that she "tells stories in order to live." Carmen did not initially understand this comment and again there was a pause on the tape. The informant then spoke of how these events were important for her family and, as a result, important for her. In a follow-up discussion with Carmen and Jonah, both of whom are Jewish and have parents on faculty at the university, they said that they did not understand that particular explanation of the Holocaust and how such a comment came to stand in for Jewish identity positioned in oral histories. In other words, the informant brought up the subject before either Carmen or Jonah did, which, in turn, helps to shape how Carmen and Jonah know, narrate, and experience themselves, the way they are identified and experienced by others, and how this influences their understanding of others' narratives, testimonies, and oral histories. Therefore, examining the way the students understood both the immediate information and the peripheral narratives shows how it is the storyteller who is making sense of the narrative and placing importance, or not, on what story is told.

Even with the difficulty that Carmen and Jonah experienced in this project, the success of this project cannot be ignored when considering the development of skills related to oral history, research projects, and community service gained by the students. But the learning that occurred was positioned as an uncovered and unknown fact and often framed within a "discovery" terminology. The impact was, according to the two teachers involved, "where the greatest discovery was." The educators were unable to further explain what the students learned through the experience, other than how such events continue to "bring history alive," and to challenge the commonly held belief that history is "dead" and needs to be made more interesting through oral testimony. However, this response ignores the complexity of the oral history engagement. Carmen and Jonah were more insightful about what they learned from the experience than perhaps the teachers realized. Again, the students were confused about what they should do with the information and came to realize that the value of the stories is not determined by those who hear them but by those telling them. In this instance, narratives of personal stories and of reliving a moment are not particularly effective for the students, but need to be framed within a relationship of partnership, accountability, and reciprocity with the various communities.

Concluding Thoughts

Here I argue for an understanding about the limitations of oral narratives as a pedagogical endeavor when utilized in the classroom. This discussion has mainly focused on two examples, but they have been contextualized with a range of other representations that contribute to the possible issues about personal narratives. All of these presentations position the oral history storyteller as providing a testimony of sorts and the receiver as the witness to what had been experienced by the storyteller. In this way, each contributes to an exchange of information, one more explicit than the other. But this also highlights the paradox of utilizing such learning activities. Oral histories in these examples position the storyteller as providing testimony with the receiver as the witness to then take on the role of storyteller as they relate the information in some format to their final required project. But how do we then deal with the youth as witness when they are required to provide testimony of the exchange? How do they move between such roles within the often-considered benign experience of doing oral histories? While the qualities of oral history are grounded in hearing and seeing, we need to realize how both create an emotional response, perhaps more so than reading transcripts. Such an impact certainly enhances oral history's impact and power and connects it more with the orality (and aurality) of society. Yet such a challenge to the traditional notions of history as rational needs to be aware of what fallout listening to such stories may entail.

Educators have increasingly become willing to utilize oral histories related to a range of personal experiences as pedagogical events, including war, conflict, violence, loss, and death. Even with this increasingly common usage, it remains our pedagogical responsibility to consider what it is about such experiences that renders the engagement between youth and others pedagogically useful. The questions of what constitutes our pedagogical responsibility and practice specific to testimony is an issue where the telling of difficult narratives extends to "learning anew" in ways that are pedagogically and programmatically different from other forms of pedagogy. Certainly, oral histories provide youth with important opportunities for learning about political, cultural, and social history within an exchange that differs from standard classroom-based practices. Educators of teacher educators may infer some of the issues and influence decisions about the use of oral narratives in the classroom. But it ought not to be solely an activity that is fun and engaging in ways that are absent through the textbook/lecture/worksheet cycle. We need to ask what stories are being told that have not been told before. In simple terms, have we heard enough of well-established atrocities? Or have we not captured their stories yet? There has been a reliance on utilizing particular historical events in oral history experiences without explicitly asking about suitability or the ability to deal with such issues, particularly as oral history as a pedagogical endeavor creeps down into lower grade levels.

In both these examples, there is (whether intentional or not) the development of a narrative chain. When one tells a first-person narrative, someone is listening. As Laub noted many years ago when referring to testimonies, they "are not monologues; they cannot take place in solitude."[20] The same can be said for oral histories. In both instances noted above, youth engaged in projects that served to advance their knowledge and understanding of particular events. The educators are to be commended for creating a task that helped set up the conditions necessary to forge a chain of testimony. Oral history places primacy on comprehension that influences what emotions may be experienced. What is being said and how it is being said not only appeals to our intellect but also to our emotions. It is difficult to end an oral history without internalizing one or two of the emotions inherent in any narrative, in the same ways as it may be difficult to filter it from the personal element and the emotional pain the narrator may have experienced.

Our students need to conceive of themselves as subjective individuals and understand how their interpretations of oral histories are their own stories and their own representations of truth to bear witness. In bearing witness, we need to be concerned that the students realize the difference between bearing witness and being a spectator, and know the confusion that comes with the two roles. Can we conceptualize the next step in the completion of oral histories in what the students take away emotionally?[21] The next step educators need to consider with oral histories is exploring further how hearing and seeing continues to allow for a critical inquiry about the world, and people, around us.

NOTES

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CHAPTER 9

Where Macro and Micro Histories Meet: Position, Trumps, and Pitfalls of Family History as a Form of Oral History in Flemish Education

Karel Van Nieuwenhuyse

Introduction

For several decades, scholars in the field of history education have been examining how students think historically and how this learning process can be enhanced.[1] Scholars have found that students' historical understanding is not only related to cognition and cognitive acts, but also to various social and cultural processes that enable us to establish relations with the past. Socio-cultural approaches toward learning the past tend to examine the interplay of rationality, values, and emotions.[2] However, a socio-cultural pedagogical approach for studying the past is often overlooked in history education. The influence of cultural and ethnic backgrounds on one's understanding of their relationships with the past is often underestimated

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within history educational research. In response, Peter Seixas examined in a qualitative way how school and family influenced six students' historical knowledge.[3] He concluded that historical family stories and experiences play an important part in how students attribute significance to the past, for these stories shed light on enduring or emerging issues in history or contemporary life. Between school history and family history as sources of historical knowledge, however, discrepancies and conflicts can occur.[4] This especially applies to ethnic and cultural minority groups. Terri Epstein, for instance, concluded that white and black students hold different accounts about US history.[5] While white students identify personally or collectively with the nation's history and situate family experiences within a national(ist) framework, black students take a much more critical stance toward US history. Their historical stories do not match up well to the historical narratives presented at school. On the contrary, they often reject school history as based on white supremacy and black oppression, and underrepresenting the contributions and experiences of black people and other people of color. They do not identify with school history and therefore attribute only little value to school history, which has a large impact on their learning process.

Meaningful history education, by contrast, connects school history with students' private understanding of the past.[6] Seixas stressed the fact that family history can contribute to meaningful history. He pleaded for an integration of family history in school history education:

> Attending to students' prior historical knowledge, based on their families and communities, school history might enable students to (1) critique their prior knowledge, (2) extend their prior knowledge, and (3) understand the relationships of their family and community stories to those of other groups in the population.[7]

In connecting school and family history, oral history comes to the fore. Research into one's family history, with the help of oral history methods and techniques, is very appropriate to bridge the gap between private and school history. That is, if the stories are considered in a broader context, and approached in a critical way. Oral family history can then at the same time contribute to a meaningful history and to fostering students' historical thinking skills. Barbara Brockmann speaks to such meaningfulness within this collection.

In what follows, I situate the use of oral family history as a case study within a Flemish context. I then examine the differing ways in which students, the history curriculum, and textbooks take up the possibilities and limitations of oral family history in relation to historical thinking and making meaning of their pasts.

Situating Oral Family History within a Flemish Context: A Case Study

> During the holidays, I always went fishing and swimming in the river the *Dommel*, close to the mill at *Haspershoven*, together with my friends. In this mill, a miller called Rietra, was at work. He taught me how to fish. … Before we could start fishing, we always had to ask the miller first if he was almost done working, so the lock could be closed. For if the lock was open, the strong current made fishing impossible. Of course, the miller was smart enough to say that, if we would help him, he'd be much sooner done. Therefore we often helped the miller carrying sacks of grain.[8]

This was part of the story 65-year-old Pierre, from a little Flemish town called *Overpelt*, shared with a Grade 12 student. The student had to carry out an assignment including oral history. A fellow student, in order to accomplish the same assignment, examined her own life story, by describing three events as she remembers them, and subsequently corroborating her memories of the events with those of a close family member. These examples demonstrate that oral (family) history is part of school assignments in different ways.

Oral family history can be understood as the construction of a family history, through the use of oral history methods and techniques. It addresses the historical stories circulating via oral tradition within families, who range over three to five generations. Grandparents can tell their grandchildren about their own grandparents, thus creating a family biography of five generations.[9] The concept of family history covers many different appearances, regarding finality (the design of a genealogical tree, recording family stories), methodology (genealogical research, oral history through semi-structured interviews), research angle (social history, cultural history, anthropology), time span (recent vs. "older"), and range (stress on one's own family, larger family connections, broad context).

How is oral family history perceived and addressed in history education? Do students consider this an interesting historical method for studying the past? Do teachers and history textbooks pay attention to (oral) family “micro” history, or are they more geared toward “macro” history? And what about curricular requirements? To answer such educational questions, I draw on an internationally oriented body of literature related to historical thinking, to oral history, to students’ opinions about and interest in history, and to a socio-cultural approach to history education. I also analyze history curricula, history textbooks, and concrete history educational practices. Many of these practices stem from Flanders, the northern, Dutch-speaking part of Belgium.

From the 1960s onwards, Belgium’s two largest language communities made different choices concerning education, a process which was completed in 1989 with the formal transfer of power in matters of education to the three Belgian “communities,” the Dutch (Flemish), French, and (very small) German communities. In 1990, a new secondary education curriculum was set up in Flanders. History became part of this curriculum. The number of hours per week devoted to history varies between one and two, according to the type of secondary education (Grades 7–12). The final curricular objectives were set by the regional government, which in turn delineated the minimum attainment targets which history education students should seek to achieve. In defining the standards, a deliberate choice was made not to present an extensive enumeration of historical knowledge that students in turn were required to learn. The history curriculum primarily aimed to develop critical thinking skills and attitudes, namely historical consciousness, and offered criteria to select subject matter. Teachers thus have substantial freedom to select both content and methodologies for studying the past with students. Moreover, the government does not regulate the production and distribution of textbooks. Therefore, publishers have great freedom in the way they give shape to their history textbooks. In other words, Flemish history education certainly affords curricular and pedagogical opportunities for teachers and students to study family history, while also learning the application of oral history methods. While the Flemish case is a starting point, much of what appears in Flanders can and has been taken up in other parts of the world.

Students' Versus Curricular Perspectives: Vivid Interest Versus Silence

In society at large, family history is a source of great interest. Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen asked some 1500 adult Americans from different ethnic and cultural communities about how they dealt with history in their spare time.[10] More than half of the respondents identified family history as, in their opinion, the most important type of history. The same conclusion occurred in a recent Canadian study comprising 3119 respondents, of which 52 percent indicated they were interested in their family's past, and 66 percent considered family history to be "very important."[11] Most of the respondents reported a high level of involvement in activities relating to family history, such as looking at old photographs, keeping heirlooms, visiting places from their family's past, documenting family history through scrapbooks, cookbooks, diaries, or home movies, and working on a family tree or genealogy. Those activities helped respondents to feel connected to the past.

And how about young people, aged 12–18 years old? Do they, just like adults, consider family history interesting? Do they not prefer to learn about wars and voyages of discovery, or about the national past and culture? In the last few decades, many studies have been published that examined secondary school students' preferences for types of history. Katrien Kauffmann asked 615 Grade 12 students in Flanders to order several historical themes according to their interest.[12] Family history appeared in first place with both girls and boys. Dorine Vijfvinkel examined the opinions of 257 Dutch Grade 10 and 12 students about history (education) and the role history plays in their lives.[13] One of her questions was about which historical sources they considered most gripping. The students put "stories of elder people" at one on their list, "historical television documentaries" and "historical movies" at two, and "stories of the history teacher" and "places where one can see the past" at three. It thus seems that concrete stories appeal more to students' imagination than, for instance, "websites about history" (put at seven), "school textbooks" (put at nine), and "computer games" (put at ten). "Stories of elder people" is easily linked to oral family history. In 1996, the large-scale European research project *Youth and History*, in which 32,000 Grade 10 students were surveyed in 27 European countries, reached a similar conclusion about students' interest in family history and in storytelling.[14]

Furthermore, research demonstrates that youth from different cultural and ethnic communities have more affinities with family history as a preferred pedagogy for learning about the past. By order of the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy, Dutch historians Maria Grever and Kees Ribbens examined the experiences with school history of youth from different ethnic backgrounds, in order to better understand the role of history and history education in "determining" and conveying a national identity.[15] This research was conducted from an international comparative perspective in France, the UK, and the Netherlands with 650 Grade 9 and 12 students in Rotterdam, Lille, and London.[16] Again, in all three countries, both autochthonous and non-Western students marked family history as the most interesting type of history.

Even though students testify to their great interest in family history, this type of history, combined with oral methods, does not automatically receive adequate attention in secondary school history education. For it is not students that give shape to history education, but standards and curriculum developers, and subsequently the teachers, who are bound to established history education standards and curricula, and who rely, to a greater or lesser extent, on history textbooks to prepare their history classes. The question of which position they ascribe to oral family history then rises. Therefore, Flemish secondary school history education will act as a case study to be assessed in this respect. Flemish history education is characterized by a structural and social history approach to the past. It searches for large underlying patterns in the past. It is no coincidence that the standards, for instance, implicitly refer to Fernand Braudel's ideas about history.[17] Flemish history education addresses what Braudel called the medium-term, cyclical history, focusing on empires, civilizations, economy, and social groupings. This approach for studying the past results in large and abstract stories in which there is little room for the concrete and tangible person. It should hence come as no surprise that oral family history is not mentioned in the history standards in Flanders. Oral family history sources or assignments are not mentioned in the history textbooks either, since these also adopt a structural and social history approach to the past. Despite this, individual history teachers, supported by concrete manuals like Elaine Rabbitt's chapter in this volume, do integrate oral family history in their lesson plans throughout the school year. In the next section, I will address and analyze several concrete teaching practices, as well as the assets and pitfalls of oral family history.

Possibilities and Limitations of Doing Oral Family History

Oral family history fosters students' historical thinking, and in turn makes history education more meaningful for students, as it can relate their private history to "big" history taught at school. Historical thinking is currently the main goal of history education within many Western countries. Seixas and his research team in the Historical Thinking Project developed "six benchmarks of historical thinking," to distinguish six ways of scientific historical reasoning, connected to six important general questions every professional historian asks, and apply them to secondary school history education.[18] Historical significance (1) is connected to the question about what is worth being studied and taught about the past. Evidence (2) has to do with sources and their critical assessment. Continuity and change over time (3) is what historians try to understand from the past. Moreover, they try to explain human behavior and historical evolutions from cause and consequence (4). In doing this, historians must detach themselves from the present and take a historical perspective (5). Finally, an ethical dimension (6) is perceived, admitting that history is never value-free, but always contains moral judgment. Dutch scholars Carla Van Boxtel and Jannet Van Drie developed a slightly different model, in which they organized key elements of historical thinking.[19] They identified elements such as asking historical questions as a motor for historical thinking, and providing counterarguments in building historical reasoning.

In what follows, I examine the possible contribution of oral family history to four important key elements. Regarding "asking historical questions," I argue that students need a sufficient amount of freedom in assignments to do so. Concerning "historical contextualization," I stress the need to connect concrete and private stories to broader societal developments, in order for school history to become meaningful. In "using oral history sources as evidence," I emphasize the importance of addressing oral testimonies as evidence instead of a mere collection of facts, and of exceeding a pure "reliability check" approach. Finally, I explain how oral family history can contribute to students' understanding of continuity and change, by not perceiving change as they experience it in everyday life, but by considering continuity and change in a long-term perspective.

Asking Historical Questions

In a chapter on societal and socio-economic change since 1945, a history teacher wanted to make daily life in the early post-war period tangible for his students. Therefore, he applied a strategy often used by several teachers: he designed an oral history assignment. In order to construct an understanding of daily life in the 1950s, he asked his students to interview their grandparents. The assignment ran as follows:

> Interview your grandparents, both on your mother's and father's side, on their daily life in the 1950s. Ask them the following questions: (1) What did you eat at home, "on average"? Did you have specific culinary habits at home? Did you have a fixed menu on certain days? (2) What kind of clothes did you wear? Did you buy them in a shop, or where else did you get them? (3) Which consumer goods did you have at your disposal at home? (4) How did you inform yourself about current affairs in your country and in the world? (5) What were the prevailing values and norms at home? (6) What did transportation look like? (7) Where did you go to school? Until what age? Between which branches of study could you choose? (8) At which age did you leave school? What did you do after you graduated from school? Where did you work? (9) What were your hobbies?[20]

Historical thinking starts from the act of asking certain questions about the past. In turn, good questions can function as the driving force for building our historical reasoning. Moreover, historical thinking questions help to problematize the past, to shatter natural assumptions, to examine and understand past events from different perspectives, and to exceed a naive historical consciousness.[21] Albert Logtenberg considered the act of asking questions by students an important learning activity in history education.[22] That act, however, is not easy, for students do not always know which questions to ask. Oral family history can be of great help here, because it concerns a tangible past. It can serve as a starting point to raise concrete questions, and then move on to questions in relation to macro historical events. From grandparents' stories about the limited amount of leisure time in the first half of the twentieth century, for instance, the general evolution of the ratio between work and leisure in society in the past centuries can be addressed. The same applies to topics of, for instance, migration or consumption patterns.

In the abovementioned assignment all questions were already primed. This did not provide sufficient freedom in the design of the oral history family assignment. The risk with such an assignment is that the interview will become a mechanical act instead of a learning activity. Students should have the opportunity to ask meaningful questions driven by their own interest, and by the issues raised during the interview. Teachers can in turn encourage students to open up new issues to consider, in search for a better understanding of particular historical events, which will stimulate and foster their historical thinking.

Historical Contextualization

In order to offer some counterbalance against the structural and social history approach to the past in history education, some history teachers ask their students to conduct interviews with family members, in order to enliven certain past situations. In the following example, a history teacher asked her students to draw a vivid picture of the life of common women throughout the twentieth century, through an oral family history assignment. Students were asked to interview an elder female family member, and afterwards to write down her story. Tess, a student in Grade 12, interviewed her great-grandmother Celine, who was born on December 6, 1922.[23] Celine, Tess reported, started to work in a butcher's shop in Mechelen (a regional Flemish town) when she was 16. She started as a helper, and became a butcher herself afterwards. Celine, Tess wrote in her essay, said:

> Normally that was no work for women. But I did everything male butchers did. And although I say it myself: I did a better job. I was much respected for my work. … When the Second World War started, many men were drafted into military service. More and more women started to work in the butcher's shop. Yet I still was one of the few persons that started to work that early in the morning. At night I passed by a German command post. I was checked, and after a while those soldiers started to recognize me. I was nicknamed: *Das Mädchen mit die Hösen* (the girl with the trousers). During the war, a rationing was established. Everything was sold in only small amounts, and increased in price. Coupons were distributed with which one could buy food and other stuff. At that time, I was paid very well, with an hourly wage of six francs. The roast beef, however, cost 52 francs per kilo.

Tess continued:

> Celine also talks about how she used falsified coupons to gather food, which she then distributed. After the war, she continues, "with some others, I started a wholesale business in meat. I worked on the shop floor, bought animals, went collecting them myself, slaughtered them, processed them, in short … my days were well filled. Of course, I got help from other people. Finally, the wholesale business became too large. We decided to have it taken over, which was already accomplished two hours later. The only condition was that I had to keep on working there for at least three years. That way, the buyer wanted to prevent me from starting a new business close by. I stayed much longer than those three years."[24]

In this account, Tess paid little attention to the broad context in which Celine's life took place. The place of women in the labor market of the 1940s and 1950s, gender relations before and after the Second World War, German occupation during that war, and the increase in scale of business enterprises, the post-1945 economic climate are all important elements of context information which were yet not connected to Celine's life story. Furthermore, the story focused very much on individual agency. Of course, human actors play an important part in past developments through their actions and the resulting (intended or unintended) consequences. However, larger structures, conditions, and constraints beyond the actors themselves play a role as well.[25] Yet, these were not included in Tess' report. In short, no connection was made in Tess' report between personal, private, micro history, and macro history.

This can be considered a missed opportunity. Because of the structural and social history, and thus the abstract approach to the past, students often consider history a difficult subject. It is a challenge for history teachers to unlock the past for students, and to make it comprehensible. Oral family history offers many possibilities in this respect. It makes abstract macro historical evolutions more concrete, and turns abstract phenomena into tangible and recognizable events. For instance, the transition from an agrarian toward an industrial and post-industrial society, the increase in women's rights, or the rise of consumer society after the Second World War are often hard to imagine for students. But then, when they hear from elder family members, such as (great-)grandparents, when the first refrigerator arrived in their homes, or the first television, microwave, or personal computer, the picture of the past becomes clearer. Oral family history can, in other words, function as a counterweight for an often "structural" approach to the past as micro and macro histories are connected. In the abovementioned example, too much emphasis is placed on the role of individuals. The risk is that students will approach agency in history as individual and give less attention to those structures that limit and/or guide individuals. For research shows that students automatically maximize the role of human behavior, and minimize the influence of institutional and other structures in history.[26] Therefore, oral family history assignments should pay attention to a well-balanced ratio and sufficient connection between the big history and the private family history. This can prevent discrepancies and conflicts between school history and family history as sources of historical knowledge, as Seixas argued.[27]

Oral family history certainly has the potential to succeed in connecting abstract macro history and concrete micro histories. Barbara Brockmann's chapter in this collection provides an excellent example. Another good example can be found in the History Network for Young Historians in Europe (EUSTORY) competition. EUSTORY organizes an annual competition in which oral history and family history occupy center stage. The common underlying concept of all EUSTORY competitions is "learning through research." Every year a new theme is addressed, such as the transition from school to working life, transnational migration, or life during the First World War. Students have to interview family members as contemporary witnesses of a certain evolution or phenomenon, use family sources such as letters, diaries, and photographs, search for original material in archives, or visit the scenes of historical events. According to the organizers, students examine and consider history from multiple perspectives and develop the ability to think critically.[28] The essay assignment about the migration family history theme "story of a traveling case" states that every student probably knows someone within his or her family, circle of friends, or direct environment who migrated: "In order to participate in the EUSTORY competition, students interview their grandparents or contemporaries about their migration story, connect that story to the broader historical context, comment on it, and present it in an original way."[29] The same strategy can be applied by educators in the classroom to other twentieth- and twenty-first-century phenomena and developments, such as life during occupation in the World Wars, the fear of communism during the Cold War, the rise of ecological consciousness, or the rise of consumer society.

Using Oral Sources as Evidence

In one Flemish school, a history teacher organized, starting in the 1990s, an annual oral family history assignment, aimed at fostering a concrete understanding of daily life in the twentieth century. An assignment for Grade 11 students consisted of interviewing elder family members about their behavior during the Second World War in occupied Belgium, and afterwards writing a report on the topic. A student named Benjamin gave an account of the activities of a doctor.[30] In his essay, he almost literally reproduced the doctor's words, resulting in a heroic story of brave resistance against the German occupier. Benjamin had blind faith in what the respondent told him during the interview. There was neither a critique of the oral account nor a corroboration of testimony with other sources. The essay was simply an account of a transcription. References to certain emotions or body language of the respondent during the interview, for instance, were not made. The oral testimony seemed to be considered as a collection of facts, instead of as historical evidence. Furthermore, Benjamin seemed unaware of the fact that his respondent gave testimony from a perspective with hindsight. An oral testimony is a form of personal memory and should hence be treated as such. In analyzing, interpreting, and assessing oral testimonies, it is important to take into account the temporal distance between the interview and the event discussed in the interview. Benjamin, for instance, did not take into account that the doctor, when he interviewed him in 2000, was well aware of the end of the Second World War. This could have certainly affected the account, possibly romanticizing and/or exaggerating his position on resistance. Furthermore, Benjamin was not attentive to the performative character of the oral source. Historians Jan Bleyen and Leen Van Molle argued that students should be aware of their own role, and should be honest and open about it in their account of the interview: "The only way to understand the shape and content of the stories acquired through oral interaction, is to consider them as a dialogue and to present them as such."[31]

It is important that educators encourage students to take a critical attitude toward oral testimonies. Oral testimonies are never a mirror of the past: the past cannot directly be derived from them. On the contrary, those testimonies are representations of events, always made by the person involved, in a specific social context, from a specific perspective, with a certain goal, and meant for a specific audience. Oral testimonies are, just like every historical source, inevitably subjective.[32] Therefore, oral sources should always be dealt with in a critical way, as Brenda Trofanenko argues in her chapter in this collection. Research clearly showed that students often spontaneously adhere to a realist or objectivist stance and consider sources to be exact representations or mirrors of the past.[33] They testify to what some scholars call a naive historical understanding.[34] Taking a critical attitude toward oral sources is not easy. Often, there is a lack of other sources available to corroborate oral testimony. Moreover, certainly when the testimony comes from a family member, it is not always emotionally easy to take rational distance from the person and his/her story. Nevertheless, corroboration is necessary, and can be achieved through interviews with other people who witnessed or took part in the same event, or through examining other historical and secondary sources.

Of course, too critical a stance by students—judging oral testimonies as simply biased—would create a missed opportunity. In Flanders, just as in many other countries, teachers encourage students to apply *the* historical method, aiming to determine to what extent, according to a Flemish history textbook, a historical source is "reliable, impartial, complete and thus useful."[35] This risks overlooking the fact that the usefulness of a source depends on the research question accompanying the source. Nor does it stimulate reflection on the concept of reliability by showing, for instance, that subjectivity and untrustworthiness are not synonyms.[36] Therefore, how might students understand that testimonies reveal a great deal not only about historical events but also about the way the person thinks in the present about the past? In short, an approach only focusing on the reliability and impartiality of sources tends to cling to straightforward, "realist" approaches of historical practice rather than instilling reflection on the interpretative nature of sources, and consecutively of historical knowledge among students. In doing so, students are confirmed in their naive understanding of historical thinking, rather than stimulated toward thinking historically.

Continuity and Change

The following assignment came from the abovementioned history teacher, who wanted to make daily life tangible for his students in a chapter on societal and socio-economic change since 1945. In this assignment, he expected the students to address the changing living and working conditions in Flanders after the Second World War. Those changing conditions were connected to the transition from an agrarian toward an industrial and post-industrial society. The assignment ran as follows: "Describe the transition from an agrarian towards an industrial and post-industrial society, by interviewing one or two of your grandparents about their experiences in this respect."[37] Lena interviewed her grandparents on her father's side. Afterwards she prepared a presentation, in which she described how her grandfather told her he still remembered the day he moved from the countryside to the "smelly" city, and all of a sudden arrived in a completely new and unfamiliar environment. Based on the memories of her grandfather, Lena concluded that "in Flanders, the transition towards an industrial and post-industrial society occurred in a very abrupt way in post-war Flanders."[38]

Change versus continuity over time is one of the key aspects historians address in examining the past.[39] While historians see continuity as an uninterrupted succession or flow, change is considered as "an alteration; possibly evolutionary erosion or sudden collapse, gradual building, or revolutionary upheaval."[40] Those two key concepts in historical thinking are inextricably bound up with each other. For change only becomes visible, often with hindsight, in contrast with what remains the same. Moreover, they mostly occur together, because where in one sphere of life and of society changes might occur, in another continuity may be the pattern.[41] Here we are reminded by scholars in the field of history education that students should consider the concept of historical change as they experience change in everyday life, where it is simply seen as an event, limited in time and space, which has taken place intentionally. That, however, is how students often conceive of change.[42] In the abovementioned example, for instance, Lena equated a single, individual experience of her grandfather with a much broader development. She did the same when describing the moment the first refrigerator was brought into use in her grandfather's house. Again, she considered the appearance of the first refrigerator as an abrupt change in lifestyle, and generalized this conclusion to the Flemish population. It appeared that she did not fully understand the historical thinking concept of change. And, although she focused on certain aspects of change, she neglected continuity.

How can students become better acquainted with the way of thinking and argumentation of historians? Scholars argue that change should be approached as a process, through which students leave behind the idea of history as a mere series of events, and become able not only to describe the "what" of the change but also to gain an understanding of how and why change occurred.[43] Oral family history assignments can contribute to a better understanding of continuity and change among students, if, at least, attention is paid to multiple generations. For instance, students may be encouraged to interview two to three different generations, if possible. Another idea would be to ask students to corroborate the results of their own oral family history assignment with those of other students, and also with other types of sources, such as diagrams of demographic and socio-economic data. By doing so, they would be able to build a critical stance in relation to their chosen topic of study, and realize that change did not occur that abruptly, and that change in one field always goes hand in hand with continuity in another field. In other words, in all oral family history assignments, it is crucial to encourage students to go beyond notions of change in their everyday life and grasp a view of the gradual, slow, and unintended continuity and change that takes place over time.

Conclusion

This chapter examined how oral family history can contribute to fostering students' historical thinking, and to meaningful school history. Research shows that oral family history is of interest to students because it is personal and tangible history. This type of history fosters students' historical thinking skills when family oral histories are contextualized and critically taken up as historical evidence instead of a mere collection of historical facts. Oral family history assignments also need to offer students opportunities to ask historical questions, and become more familiar with how historians research and write historical accounts of the past. Oral family history assignments can help students to connect "micro" and "macro" histories, to connect micro family histories with the macro (national) histories taught at school, hence making the latter meaningful for students. I argue that in this respect it is important that the assignments call upon students to consider their family stories in relation to the broader context of economic, political, and social developments, as well as to critically assess them in relation to other historical sources. In turn, both history educators and students can more effectively contribute, as this research suggests, toward bridging the curricular and pedagogical relational gaps between family and school histories.

NOTES

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CHAPTER 10

Ethical Complexities for History Teachers: Accredited Oral History Training in Australia

Elaine Rabbitt

Introduction

It is timely to consider how oral history practitioners, educators, and others acquired their expertise and how these skills are being passed on to others. This transference process is particularly important in Australia, where the popularity of oral history as a medium to record history has received a recent boost with its inclusion in the new *Australian Curriculum* for schools. The implementation in 2015 of the *Australian Curriculum*, a nationally prescribed school curriculum, aims to teach students the same skills and knowledge across the nation, and to be assessed against uniform standards.[1] The development of the *Australian Curriculum: History* is a means of ensuring that all Australian students have the opportunity to learn history: "Awareness of history is an essential characteristic of any society; historical knowledge is fundamental to understanding ourselves and others, and historical understanding is as foundational and challeng-

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ing as other disciplines."[2] The national history curriculum is the "basis of planning, teaching and assessment of history in schools" and aims to invoke in students an awareness of and curiosity for history.[3] During the initial planning stages for the curriculum, stories and oral history, along with maps and real or virtual artifacts, were suggested as appropriate sources. Endorsing the importance of oral history, the curriculum states: "History is a story, told by many story tellers, that links the past to the present. Through an understanding of their own and others' stories, students develop an appreciation of the richness of the human past and its implications for the future."[4]

An emphasis within the history curriculum is the acknowledgment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) history.[5] Racist notions of Indigenous inferiority and western superiority have previously undermined the importance of Indigenous Australian society and traditions. Euro-centric versions of history have omitted Indigenous people as they were considered to be primitive and of a lower status. Stories brought back by those from the colonies helped formulate a general worldview that the colonizers were bringing civilization to barbaric people. Mysterious and exotic, "'they' were not like 'us', and for that reason deserve to be ruled."[6] Narrative was used by those conversant with the imperial process to contest and reflect on frontier issues such as ownership, occupation, and the future of the land. These oral testimonies became a source of empowerment for further colonial enterprises.[7] These viewpoints have been used as a means to justify the nature of colonial relationships and the type of interactions between Indigenous people and the settlers. The paternalist attitude of the pioneers toward the Indigenous people was one of "civilising the uncivilised," using religious indoctrination.[8] Post-colonial approaches to writing and reading from the margins challenge traditional western standpoints as they are written from the perspective of colonized, minority peoples themselves. The works of a cross section of writers, such as Franz Fanon, bell hooks, Albert Memmi, and Edward Said, examine colonial power relations and aim to honor peoples and cultures that have been suppressed and devalued.[9] They view the imperial process and the resistance by Indigenous peoples from the colonized standpoint. There is acknowledgment that other cultures and societies did exist, and resistance by Indigenous peoples to the empire and imperial subjection was a cultural right. It was a fight for cultural recognition between "us and them."

In Australia, Indigenous people were virtually written out of history from 1900 until the 1960s.[10] Global changes in attitudes toward

Indigenous people, women, and migrants in the 1960s filtered to Australia and attitudes began to slowly change. The plight of Aboriginal people and their lack of rights was brought to the attention of the broader Australian public, culminating in the Australian government's 1967 referendum. The catchphrase at the time was "Right wrongs vote YES for Aborigines," resulting in 90.77% of Australian voters supporting the YES vote. The Australian constitution was changed. Aboriginal people were counted in the national census and subject to Commonwealth laws rather than state laws.[11] Yet despite attitudes being challenged, the changes for Aboriginal people as a result of the referendum were regulated. By the 1970s, social history was being recognized and developed as an academic discipline, and in Australian the oral history movement was emerging.[12] Yet there remains a "gap" in historical understandings. In Australia, an attempt to rectify this situation came about with the establishment of the first Indigenous publishing house, the Broome-based Magabala Books, in 1987. Publications cover a variety of subjects which include autobiographies, local histories, traditional stories, and natural histories of the Kimberley. However, one of the fundamental problems is that there is no public access to Indigenous accounts of the colonization of traditional lands, such as stories provided within more recent Native Title Court hearings. This makes the Indigenous peoples' viewpoint of this history less evident. "Failure to weave the Indigenous story into the nation's political and social fabric has affected Indigenous people's participation in Australian society"[13]

> Reconciliation involves building mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and other Australians that allow us to work together to solve problems and generate success that is in everyone's best interests. Achieving reconciliation involves raising awareness and knowledge of Indigenous history and culture, changing attitudes that are often based on myths and misunderstandings, and encouraging action where everyone plays their part in building a better relationship between us as fellow Australians.[14]

Reconciliation in Australia encourages good relationships between ATSI people and non-Indigenous people. It is about striving for a better, fairer future for Indigenous Australians, a future where their standard of living is improved. A goal of reconciliation is to educate all Australians about Indigenous history and Indigenous ways of life.

Oral stories are a vital resource for institutional collections and are used successfully by students, community, and both public and academic historians. Thus, oral history appeals to people of all ages as storytelling is entertaining, enticing, and enlightening. This growth in interest brings with it challenges in ensuring that those involved in collecting oral histories are supported by appropriate training, including sound pedagogical practices and cultural and ethical considerations. While the inclusion of oral history with an emphasis on ATSI history as a component of education in the Australian school system is applauded, a vital question arises: Are history educators conversant in the ethics and protocols of working with ATSI people, and what training is available to them and their students? I argue in this chapter that if educators are to be mandated to use oral history in schools, then they must be appropriately trained so that they are cognizant of important ethical and cultural requirements. I make this argument based on my own oral history practice and experience working with Aboriginal people and teaching oral history courses in Western Australia.

In Australia there has been ongoing dialogue by Oral History Australia (OHA) on the development of an accredited oral history training course. This discussion has been pertinent as each of the six state oral history associations under the umbrella of OHA offers its own training.[15] Additionally, oral history studies are available at some universities. The content and length of training varies in each context. In 2011, at the national OHA conference, I presented a proposal to accredit an oral history course within the Australian Vocational and Education Training (VET) sector. I reviewed existing oral history resources available in Australia and consulted with representatives of OHA, particularly the Western Australian state association to develop the course content and assessments. This is competency-based training, where the assessments are based on performance criteria and standards determined by the Industry Skills Councils.[16] The Australian nationally accredited oral history training VET course AHCILM404A *Record and Document Community History* was piloted in Broome during 2013. The course was written in response to an emerging interest in the community to have the unique local history of the area recorded before the times within living memory passed. The next stage in the development of this now nationally accredited oral history training is to create recognition by history teachers and history practitioners that this qualification is essential to their practice. *Record and Document Community History* can be tailored to meet the needs of the secondary sector, as VET courses[17] are taught within the secondary system. This is colloquially referred to as VET in schools.[18]

Central to the learning process for the students in this course is an awareness of the cultural context and protocols for Indigenous Australians, or ATSI people. Indigenous Australians have experienced tragic hardship and have struggled to gain the opportunities that other Australians enjoy. They have had to fight to be accepted as equal citizens. They have remained strong through their family ties and upbringing, their relationship with the land, culture, and traditions.[19] Aboriginal historian Penny Taylor states that “The invaders’ denial of ATSI history has created a massive barrier of misunderstanding which works against improved race relations,” and she acknowledges that recording “local history has enormous value in changing people’s attitudes [and] can form a basis for mutual understanding.”[20] These understandings are also embedded within the *Australian History Curriculum* for school students. The importance of Indigenous Australian histories, engaging with oral traditions and recognizing that the past is communicated through stories passed down from generation to generation, is acknowledged. The curriculum reads: “The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priority provides opportunities for all learners to deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the world’s oldest continuous living cultures. This knowledge and understanding will enrich their ability to participate positively in the ongoing development of Australia.”[21] In the following discussion I present an oral history training model based upon the experience of establishing the *Record and Document Community History* course, and draw attention to the pedagogical implications of delivering the training to a range of participants.

The Course and Curriculum

The inaugural accredited course commenced with a diverse group, including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal researchers, students, park rangers, librarians, and community members. They came with different levels of expertise and varying skill levels and had assorted reasons for wanting to undertake appropriate oral history training. Park rangers and environmentalists, for example, attended the course as oral history and the recording of personal recollections of place relating to cultural heritage sites. Oral history becomes for them a basis for cultural heritage assessment and a means to learn not only how landscapes have changed but also social values that impact the use of place.

Record and Document Community History is taught over three consecutive days, face to face in a classroom setting. Participants are encouraged to draw upon their employment and life experiences. Students gain competency by meeting the performance criteria for the unit, such as setting up an interview, ethics considerations, gaining participants, preparing for the interview, interview questions, the interview, concluding the interview, recording, transcribing, record keeping, and archiving.[22] Under the Australian Quality Training Framework, students are issued with national certification, known as Statement of Attainment. Online learning is not an option within this delivery model. Underpinning the methodology for teaching *Record and Document Community History* is the premise that a high level of cultural awareness and the need to observe cultural protocols are important components of the process. For Indigenous contexts, the delivery and assessment of this unit must comply with community protocols and guidelines, and must be supported by Elders and custodians of the country.[23] This raises ethical considerations that are central to the pedagogy employed in the course and discussed throughout this chapter.

The course content is delivered in an informative, practical, and experiential way. While the content is similar to other oral history courses being taught internationally, localized application, such as using Indigenous and non-Indigenous examples, with emphasis on cultural protocols and ethical practice makes the course relevant. The training has been delivered several times and on each occasion the course content is systematically modified for continuous improvement. During the course it is acknowledged that storytelling is an ancient tradition used to pass on information, preserving customs, beliefs, and events of significance. Aboriginal historian Wayne Atkinson explains:

> Written history is a new thing because before the pen and paper were introduced, and before the greatest part of man's/woman's existence, history was passed on by oral methods. In past times it was a broader thing, which was called oral tradition: this meant that all knowledge, religious and philosophical beliefs of the community were handed down to the next generation using stories and songs and also visual things such as a rock and bark paintings and dances formed an unbroken link with the past, and were carried on through each following generation.[24]

The group discusses how oral history provides a voice for Indigenous people and others who have not had the opportunity to be heard and have their histories recorded. The recording of their stories becomes a resource of information that can be interwoven with the stories of others to gain alternative historical perspectives. Making the recorded histories of ATSI people available, for example, is a means of furthering the reconciliation process through education.[25]

Ethical Issues and Cultural Protocols

The ethics of conducting an oral history interview is an integral component of the course and is discussed at great length. Students are required to think carefully about their prospective projects. Questions considered include: What is the project? Who do they want to interview and for what reason? What will happen to the story? How will it be used and stored? and Who will have access to it? They are given examples of invitation letters to be a part of an oral history project and informed consent documentation to scrutinize. Specifically, students are asked to pay close attention to the wording of these documents as their practical exercises include writing a letter of invitation to be interviewed and informed consent. These exercises are particularly pertinent as multi-cultural Australia has an ongoing adult literacy problem and it cannot always be assumed that the person to be interviewed is literate and can read and understand the informed consent documentation.[26] A way of addressing this problem is to include provisions for illiterate interviewees whereby the written documentation can be read aloud. Having a more educated member of the family present allows that person to read the documentation and provides the opportunity for the interviewer and family member to explain to the interviewee what the interview is about and to what they are consenting. In these instances the family member also signs the informed consent documentation as a witness to the reading and explanation of the interview documentation to the interviewee. A further step is to record the interviewee confirming they freely agree to be interviewed, and that they understand what is involved and that they have read or had the letter of invitation and informed consent read to them and/or explained. Yet before approaching an interviewee careful planning must be undertaken. Emphasis is placed on following correct cultural protocols, such as who to ask for advice and gaining assistance to go about the interview in the "right way." When considering undertaking oral history interviews with Indigenous Australians, Community Elders or "bosses"[27] must be approached first to gain permission for the project to proceed. Once the governing group has been informed and given their consent, individual storytellers can be approached to have their stories recorded and documented. The interviewer should work with a local Aboriginal person—and not just any Aboriginal person but someone connected to that Country—to ensure the correct procedures are adhered to, and culturally appropriate introductions are made. In this initial stage of setting up the interviews, Elders themselves are often the correct people to interview as they have the right to tell the story. They may suggest who should be interviewed, but in my experience I consult with a local Aboriginal colleague to suggest who to approach to be interviewed, and where and when. Relying on local knowledge is the key to a successful project, as acceptable cultural conventions may differ from community to community, depending on their history. For example, some communities were originally established as missions and became places of residence for the Stolen Generation, whereas other communities were not colonized by missionaries. There are communities that have had less influence but are separated by geography, island communities, mainland communities, desert communities.

The Aboriginal communities I have worked in are small, close-knit communities where the residents are either related or have grown up together, living in family groups. These remote communities comprise clusters of housing with a general store, fuel depot, and office. As a courtesy, visitors are asked to report to the office and an entrance fee may be charged. This is to ensure that they know who is on their Country and for what purpose. When there is a death in the community it can virtually close down. Mourning periods may be extensive to give other family members time to travel back to the community to fulfill their cultural obligations. During "sorry time" or "sorry business" it is not appropriate to approach people or attempt to continue a project. Another protocol to be observed is the use of names of deceased persons. The interviewee should be advised that participants do not have to say names if they are not allowed or do not want to, and they should not be probed for that information relating to the deceased. However, other family members might be able to mention names—it depends on relationships. A simple, respectful way around this potential dilemma is to be guided by the local advisor, or ask the interviewee if they are able to say/give the names of deceased family or others.[28] Not having a local Aboriginal person's guidance on how to approach the community can lead to the interviewer making serious mistakes in relation to cultural etiquette. Ignoring cultural protocols is disrespectful and patronizing, and may be deemed as an indication that the researcher considers the interviewees as mere research objects. As communities are small, visitors are noticed and word of their work or purpose spreads quickly. Failure to conduct interviews in the correct manner may lead to others not participating.

While there is an emphasis on the practicalities of conducting oral history, students are also made aware that there are other implications to be considered, such as validity of the story, bias of the storyteller, subjectivity, memory, social acceptance, and professionalism. Significant emphasis is placed on the insider/outsider relationship, the ramifications of having insider knowledge, and ethical complexities. Everyday patterns of behavior and personal feelings are significant to and affect the storytelling process, as does the relationship between interviewer and interviewee. During the workshops participants break into small groups to discuss the dynamics of the insider/outsider relationship. Due to their insider status, at times the interviewer may be aware that there is perhaps more to the story than is being revealed. Arguably, it is ultimately the storyteller's choice to withhold information, and the onus is upon the interviewer to handle the situation with great care and diplomacy. This raises ethical dilemmas regarding how far a researcher can probe, the repercussions of disturbing the narrator's composure, the psychological effects, and the question of letting people speak for themselves.[29] The students are made aware that, despite any notions that it may be the researcher's "duty" to challenge the silences or to rectify misconceptions of other histories, the well-being of the storyteller must be respected and protected. The ethical issues surrounding the insider/outsider relationships arouse in-depth discussion and contemplation, as it is common for community-based researchers and school students to interview people they know. As an insider, the interviewer becomes a "situated knower," a participant in the actual process of inquiry and discovery.[30]

Conversely, the community and family setting may present an "insider" relationship disadvantaging the interview process. Due to previous knowledge of the interviewees' lives, some questions may not be asked out of respect for their privacy and personal sensitivity. Particular pockets of information may not be elaborated upon, or may be overemphasized. An "outsider," anonymous in the community, may be made privy to a differing rendition and provided with another perspective.[31] In the course it is emphasized that the existence of prior knowledge or hearsay between the narrator and the interviewer can create expectations and preconceived ideas. The process of remembering and how the story is told may also be affected by perceptions of each other. Referred to as "cultural likeness,"[32] it is advocated that a higher rate of success will be achieved in the interview process if both parties can find a common bond. Once trust and respect are established, tensions and apprehensions can be alleviated, providing an opportunity for an in-depth interview to evolve. Alternatively, students are also made aware that, at times, questions are asked with all good intentions, but hit on sensitive issues in which the interviewee may not wish to engage. There really is no common denominator as to the topic or type of question. While unplanned elements can often be part of the interview experience, thorough preparation is recommended to assist the interviewer to be discerning and culturally cognizant. For example, I was interviewing an Aboriginal woman and asked her where she went to school, and she unexpectedly burst into tears. The interview stopped, we apologized to each other, and over a cup of tea she told me her story off the record. After some time she recovered and insisted on continuing the interview. After the interview I rang her niece who joined us and took her home.

The Interview Process

The *Australian School Curriculum* fosters the importance of oral history, and therefore both teachers and students must be aware of the interview process. The type of questions and the way they are asked influence the responses and the way the story is told. Usually interviews commence with orientation questions such as full name, place, and date of birth, but it should not be assumed that these preliminary questions are easy to answer. Although date of birth may be a simple question to answer for the majority, there are minority peoples such as "stolen" Indigenous Australians, known as the "stolen generation,"[33] that do not know their date of birth, and have been given the date 1 July as their birthday by government authorities.[34] For example, in 2010 I had the privilege of interviewing an elderly Aboriginal woman (now deceased) about her life. As a baby she was taken to Beagle Bay Mission, by police: "Some say I was born in 1911, government say 1905, but my sisters … when I used to meet them in Derby before, they used to tell me I was born in Christmas time."

When considering the type of questions to ask, enquiries about aspects of ceremonies, singing, and dancing may not be appropriate. Researchers must be guided by their Aboriginal colleague and be careful not to ask about secret or sacred business. Guidelines for ethical research when working with Aboriginal people are available from the Australian Institution for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), "the world's leading research, collecting and publishing institution in the field of Australian Indigenous studies."[35] Researchers undertaking projects with AIATSIS must use prescribed informed documentation that has a section on culturally restricted information. The informed consent must "state whether any culturally restricted information will be collected or not, and if so, indicate that permissions will be sought from relevant community organizations, traditional owners, elders etc."[36]

The question of whether the interviewer should have a list of questions, prompt cards, or a notebook is topical and worthy of debate. By having a list of questions the interviewer may concentrate on whether the questions have been asked or what is the next question, rather than listening intently and taking the cue to ask a question as a natural progression. However, the parameters of the project may require set questions. Once the interviewer loses eye contact and looks down to read the next question, the storyteller becomes distracted and watches the interviewer and the flow of the story may be interrupted. A similar situation may occur when the interviewer looks at the recorder to ensure the device is working correctly mid-way through the interview. Both open-ended questions and closed questions also have their place. Open-ended questions invite opinions to be expressed and provide opportunities to explore the details of the story, whereas closed questions generate details, facts, and precise information.

Among the practicalities covered within the course is the importance of the location of the interview. Although it is often the prerogative of the person being interviewed to suggest the setting, their choice may not be suitable. Some interviewees prefer to be interviewed at home in their familiar environment, whereas others may choose to be interviewed at their office, the library, or a community center. Students are made aware of considerations of privacy and potential for interruptions, as well as pragmatics such as the effect upon the quality of the interview recording. In the Broome tropical setting where an outdoor lifestyle predominates, external noises can be picked up by the recorder. Outdoor interviews, on the veranda, under a tree, by the river, or at the beach, are fraught with problems due to the numerous sounds in the background, and one is quick to learn that wind in particular causes distortion. When interviewing Aboriginal people, it is a prerogative, wherever possible, to conduct the interviews on Country, because this is where the interviewees have the authority to speak. Indigenous Australian lawyer and author Terri Janke says: "The right to tell stories and to link into that history, to that land, and that connection is an Indigenous cultural right."[37]

On day one of the course, emphasis is placed on conducting interviews with "objectivity, honesty, and integrity," and with respect for the interviewee.[38] It is vital for students to familiarize themselves with

OHA's guidelines of ethical practice and adhere to the code of ethics. The guidelines distinctly state: "Oral history involves recording, preserving and making available candid information that may be sensitive or confidential. The Oral History Association Australia advises all interviewers to act to preserve the rights and responsibilities of the different parties involved and to refuse to work in any other way."[39] Students are made aware that the storyteller, although guided by the interviewer, has control over the flow of information. The interviewee has the "power" to choose how to respond, if at all. The storyteller may ignore the question and answer via another tangent. Students are made aware that it is imperative that oral historians are cognizant of "defamation laws and the implications, for all parties concerned, of recording potentially defamatory material."[40] They are asked to reflect upon how they would manage this type of situation.

Students also acquire an understanding of the variety of skills that need to be developed to become a good interviewer and an effective oral historian, with an emphasis on interviewing in cross-cultural settings. Based on his experience of working with Elders in Alaska, William Schneider has observed that usually the person interviewing comes from a literate tradition, whereas often the person being interviewed comes from an oral tradition. Schneider states: "In cross-cultural settings the interviewee or narrator is creating narrative from his or her oral tradition and personal experiences, while the interviewer is working to make a record for reference after the recording session."[41] The course also addresses the effectiveness of learning about the use of body language, such as nodding or using hand gestures, rather than speaking. Being able to ask discerning questions, developing intent listening skills, and interpreting information are integral components of the course. Presentations and discussions in the final workshop of the course alert students to the need for effective follow-up processes, which may include transcription. After the interview, the interviewer may transcribe or involve a third-party transcriptionist, according to the parameters of the project and signed informed consent. Transcribing raises the issue of how the dialogue becomes a written text that when punctuated can misconstrue meaning.[42] Transcripts in the form of the typed written word cannot give the reader the full flavor, passion, and verve of how the stories were narrated. The written word cannot fully portray emotions, such as the intonation of the voice, the laughter, or the tears, as they were recorded in the original dialogue. Again examples are presented. An instance of good practice is validating the transcript with the narrator. The final product may not be what the interviewee had anticipated and could be interpreted as being a breach of trust and confidence.[43]

In an Indigenous context if information is to be used for a government report, newsletter, or website, for example, it is important to validate the stories with the storyteller and traditional custodians.[44] Giving the storytellers their transcripts and seeking their comments and changes can alleviate concerns about accurate transcription. This is a means of ensuring the interviewee's story has been transcribed to their satisfaction. I have found gaining the correct spelling for Aboriginal words and names can be complex as there may be numerous variations to consider. The first time I transcribed a one-hour interview with an Aboriginal Australian it took me 20 hours as I was not familiar with many of the words, place names, and acronyms used. I relied on my Aboriginal colleague for the correct spellings or appropriate contacts to ask for correct spellings. ATSI specialist linguists Harold Koch and Luise Hercus acknowledge: "In Australia Aboriginal approaches to the naming of places across Australia differ radically from the official introduced Anglo-Australian system. However, many of these earlier names have been incorporated into contemporary nomenclature, with considerable reinterpretations of their function and form."[45] If the researcher does not check the spelling and transcript with the Aboriginal storyteller, and uses traditional Anglo-Australian spelling, it is disrespectful, does not endorse cultural identity, and upholds the notion of colonial superiority.

Cross-Curriculum Approaches

When it comes to the portrayal of ATSI histories and cultures, the *Australian School Curriculum* includes a cross-curriculum priority designed for all students to engage in reconciliation, respect, and recognition of the one of the world's oldest continuous living cultures. The curriculum is working toward addressing the need for ATSI students "to be able to see themselves, their identities and their cultures reflected in the curriculum of each of the learning areas." This is a means of enhancing their self-identity and a learning tool to encourage them to fully participate in the curriculum.[46] "The development of knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' law, languages, dialects and literacies is approached through the exploration of Cultures. These relationships are linked to the deep knowledge traditions and holistic world views of Aboriginal communities and/or Torres Strait Islander communities."[47] To further these understandings, and explore ATSI culture, the significance of recording oral histories of people from an oral tradition has not been undervalued. But what has been underestimated is the need for teacher training in how to do oral history. To facilitate these positive learning experiences into the world of oral history, significant resources are required in supporting nationally accredited training for history teachers. Implementation of this recommendation first requires an understanding by schools of the potential successful outcomes for students. Second, it places importance upon the allocation of resources toward professional development. Third, it calls for ongoing evaluation of schools' oral history programs to develop a cycle of continuous improvement.

At a national level, there is a need for the existing Western Australian initiated course *Record and Document Community History* to be expanded. For this to occur, experienced and proficient oral historians in all states of Australia, who do not have an oral history qualification, need to undertake the accredited training themselves or gain recognition of prior learning.[48] Competency-based training allows for the same unit of competency to be taught around Australia and modified to suit the needs of individuals or groups. The qualification issued on completion of the accredited course is a standalone qualification, at Certificate IV level, and can be used as a precursor to university studies.[49] Added to this accredited oral history course, trainers are required to hold a current Certificate IV in training and assessment so that they are qualified to teach others.[50] In Australia this is the qualification required to deliver accredited oral history training within Australia's VET sector. A Diploma of Teaching or Bachelor of Education provides you with the skills to teach adults but does not give you the correct credentials to teach, train, and assess VET courses. Australian oral historian and teacher working in the VET sector, Carol McKirdy, wrote, [the qualification] "means a great deal to me because it recognises my capability in the vocational area of oral history. I have lots of qualifications including a Master's degree (in a different field of expertise) and a three year fulltime diploma in teaching high school history, and I have a lot of experience in working in the field of oral history. But it always troubled me that I did not have a specific nationally recognised qualification in oral history."[51]

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the relationship between oral history, education, and appropriate training. This oral history training, available through the Australian VET system, is innovative for oral history practitioners, particularly for those planning to fulfill curriculum requirements and instruct others. "Around the world more teachers have embraced oral history to promote active learning."[52] Oral history and oral historians have become more global. As Donald A. Ritchie, US senate historian, says: "while oral historians focus on issues and events specific to their home countries, they share the same concerns over interviewing equipment, processing and archiving that creates a global network." Akin to Ritchie and other oral historians, I argue that oral history interviewing is more than simply asking questions and recording answers.[53] Oral history is an interactive process involving both the researcher and the participant. It is dependent upon many individual variants, such as cultural identity, gender, residency, occupation, socio-economic status, and religion. Oral stories are a representation and version of the past, based on the narrator's own experience and relationship to the past. In this chapter, I have given examples of the localized pedagogical methods used throughout the oral history training and scrutinized the possible ethical and cultural dilemmas. Interviewers need to be prepared to expect the unexpected, as human experience is being recorded. These experiences become a primary source of information that can be used and interpreted in a variety of ways for family and community histories.

The key reason for having an accredited qualification in Australia is to ensure national recognition and consistency in teaching practices so that certain standards are maintained. Given the potential for a broad application of oral history teaching and learning, it is imperative that educators undertake appropriate training before they teach curriculum requirements and instruct others in interviewing. Nationally accredited oral history training should be a prerequisite not only for history teachers but also for all those wanting to record and document community histories. Since the implementation of the course I have delivered it to diverse groups of people including family historians and oral historians, museum staff, librarians, environmentalists, ATSI rangers, broadcasters, artists, PhD students, a counselor, and a lawyer. A high school teacher, interested in history but not a history specialist, completed the course and another history teacher gained recognition of prior learning. The next step is for accredited oral history training to be offered to student teachers, as an elective in their Australian teacher training programs. There is also an opportunity for the accredited course to be taught directly to high school students, within the *Australian School Curriculum*, thus paving the way for the next generation of oral historians to be inducted into a professional level of training from the outset. A professional qualification can enhance the prominence of oral history in Australia and the international oral history movement.

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CHAPTER 11

Re-Visioning Self-Determination: Planning for Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Oral Histories with Indigenous Communities

Christine Rogers Stanton, Brad Hall, and Lucia Ricciardelli

I don't like my history class, because—you know—it ain't gonna be my history.[1]

Piikani *Speak!*[2]

Introduction

As illustrated by the above quotes, two of our former students acknowledged very different approaches toward sharing history within Indigenous[3] communities. The approach suggested by the first quote, which remains popular in formal educational contexts (e.g. schools, colleges, museums) serving both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners, emphasizes "settler history" and typically privileges European and Euro-American views while diminishing or excluding Indigenous perspectives.[4] The approach underlying the second quote illustrates the potential for a re-visioning of

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history through recognition of oral storytelling as a valid means of knowledge transmission in today's world. In response to such sentiments, this chapter illustrates the differing ways in which oral history education can advance educational and cultural self-determination. Such work is, however, complex and evolving, especially given the rapid and global expansion of digital technologies as they relate to ethical issues in oral history education. Therefore, this chapter also highlights the ongoing challenges that we have encountered and continue to encounter in our oral history education and research, as well as recommendations based on lessons we have learned.

In addition to cultural attunement and alignment, oral history storywork[5] supports learning that encourages sensory and affective *experience* in the understanding of complex historical phenomena.[6] Through their focus on living story and experience as history, oral history projects offer the potential to support development of sophisticated historical thinking skills, including recognition of the dynamic and contextually dependent nature of historical content.[7] Oral history projects can be effective in terms of honoring Indigenous knowledge systems and promoting powerful learning about Indigenous experiences. However, as Michael Frisch warns, oral histories also hold the potential to "treat historical intelligence as a commodity" instead of collaborating with community members in the processes of "active and alive" remembering.[8] For example, final products may be distributed in limited ways, resulting in restricted access to collective knowledge for community insiders, or they might be distributed too broadly, resulting in outsiders' access to sensitive knowledge without appropriate cultural guidance.

Although each community and individual is unique and many differences exist between groups, scholars agree that there are often commonalities linking groups within cultures. For example, within Indigenous communities the line between story and history may be blurred. Within Eurocentric contexts, people often believe that "history" consists of discrete events that are linked and that can be observed, studied, and documented (usually through writing) in objective and chronological ways. For many Indigenous peoples, history is circular and cyclical. Therefore, Indigenous perspectives of history are complex in that they embrace holism, subjectivity, orality, and both physical and metaphysical interpretations.[9] As a result of the disconnect between Eurocentric and Indigenous perspectives of history, non-Indigenous anthropologists, educators, and literary scholars may provide "weak translations" of Indigenous stories, presenting them as simplistic myths, legends, or children's tales, while Indigenous peoples view them as histories filled with active "doings" instead of static "beings."[10]

The purpose of this chapter is to advance the conversation regarding the development and distribution of oral histories *with* Indigenous peoples. To frame our discussion, we highlight conceptual, methodological, and pedagogical considerations stemming from storywork in Indigenous communities in the United States. Throughout the chapter, we consider the following questions: (1) How might educators, scholars, and project leaders promote "culturally sustaining/revitalizing"[11] oral history storywork? and (2) How might we resist the "commodification"[12] of Indigenous knowledges during oral history storywork, particularly in the digital age?

To address these questions, this chapter is organized into four sections. First, we offer an overview of the need for oral history storywork to promote culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies and methodologies within Indigenous communities. Second, we introduce the methodologies we used to develop and evaluate three storywork projects. Third, we present illustrations from the three projects to demonstrate the potential for oral history storywork to advance culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy. We then provide an overview of methodological and pedagogical recommendations based upon our own experiences and the work of leading Indigenous historians, filmmakers, educators, and scholars.

The Importance of Culturally Sustaining/ Revitalizing Storywork

Traditionally, many Indigenous peoples have shared, and continue to share, their histories through what many people, including Indigenous scholars, call storytelling.[13] However, there is a difference between "public, autobiographical, confessional" storytelling—which offers brief glimpses into an individual's lived experience[14]—and Indigenous oral history, which focuses on the lived experiences that have uniquely affected Indigenous communities. As First Nations scholar Jo-Ann Archibald explains, "Indigenous storywork" is more than sharing Indigenous stories for entertainment, self-promotion, or basic education. Such work reaches far beyond mere listening. Instead, it demands reverence, respect, reciprocity, relationality, holism, synergy, and responsibility.[15]

Storywork promotes active and interactive learning, in which participants collaboratively engage in questioning, problem solving, and making verbal, kinesthetic, and affective connections. Oral history storywork is very different from colonizing and assimilative approaches for sharing histories, where learners are expected to passively read and obediently believe settler narratives. Within Indigenous communities, experiences are often remembered and shared in live settings, where the teller and hearer can interact with one another. These interactions depend upon the memory of *knowledge keepers* who have been charged with remembering the histories passed from one generation to the next. In this way, oral records and stories from Indigenous communities have been shared across multiple generations. Significantly, sharing histories orally offers more compelling experiences than telling/reading those same histories using written text. Gerald Vizenor, an Anishinaabe writer and scholar, notes that written text projects a "silence of the written word,"[16] while oral accounts encourage communication that extends beyond symbolic language by activating the teller's and listener's corporeal, affective, and idiosyncratic responses.

Teaching and learning that embraces storywork responds to the call for expanded attention to cultural knowledges and ways of knowing throughout the curriculum. In his 2012 article, Django Paris calls for "culturally sustaining pedagogy"[17] as a means to more fully and accurately honor the living histories and experiences of diverse peoples. Teresa McCarty and Tiffany Lee build upon this idea by noting that, for Indigenous peoples, education demands a "culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (CSRP)," which recognizes the importance of educational sovereignty as inherent to tribal sovereignty and re-centers Indigenous identity and self-determination within Native American communities.[18]

To sustain and revitalize Indigenous cultural knowledges that have been repeatedly and forcefully oppressed due to various forms of colonization, McCarty and Lee recommend pedagogy that advances three elements: (1) a direct confrontation of the "asymmetrical power relations and goal of transforming legacies of colonization," (2) recognition of "the need to reclaim and revitalize what has been disrupted and displaced by colonization," and (3) a centering of "community-based accountability."[19] When applied to storytelling, this pedagogical approach (CSRP) recognizes the importance of Indigenous agency and self-determination, while diminishing focus on what Vizenor terms "the legacy of victimry."[20] In other words, CSRP promotes action *with* historically marginalized communities, instead of emphasizing what is often interpreted as impending extinction and/or bolstering dominant-culture resources (e.g. "Since the Elders are all passing away, let's record this story to add to the university archives"). Indeed, CSRP goes beyond content preservation—which potentially seeks to control and commodify knowledges—to recognize both the content (i.e. what specific knowledges to include) *and* epistemological strategies (i.e. how participants learn about and share the specific knowledges) inherent to storywork.

When the principles of CSRP are integrated within Indigenous storywork, the resulting content and processes advance deep learning about historical knowledges and culture, while honoring and revitalizing Indigenous ways of learning and doing. Culturally sustaining and revitalizing storywork demands awareness of the broader context of historical knowledges through a discourse that is both *politicized* and *historicized* in that it confronts colonization, racism, and oppression. As a result, participants engage in thinking about power differentials, instead of ignoring or minimizing them, in order to advance justice for/with Indigenous peoples. Such a view is very different from the individualized, decontextualized, and consumerist approaches to storytelling that, as Alexander Freund explains, endanger democracy.[21]

To confront power differentials that have been enforced for centuries in North America, storywork elevates attention to both the knowledges (i.e. content) and ways of knowing (i.e. processes and epistemologies) that are unique to Indigenous contexts. For example, in oral history projects that focus upon communication of traditional knowledges[22] and Indigenous language preservation and education,[23] both the content (i.e. traditional knowledges and Indigenous languages) and processes of knowledge preservation (i.e. how knowledge is constructed, imparted, and preserved) are integral. This intersection of content and process offers an orientation that engages participants, researchers, teachers, and students as *co*-learners, as opposed to dominant-culture models that typically position researchers and teachers as leaders and community members and students as followers. Therefore, to promote CSRP storywork and self-determination, Indigenous participants must be able to engage in the decision-making processes related to sharing stories in culturally appropriate ways[24] and promoting self-determination through increased cultural revitalization, pride, and action within tribal communities.[25]

METHODOLOGY: PLANNING AND PRACTICING STORYWORK

To cultivate culturally sustaining/revitalizing storywork, project leaders and participants commit to long-term partnerships that value the complexity of relationality and reciprocity—two key elements of Indigenous and participatory research methodologies.[26] Specifically, Thomas Schwandt argues that participatory research has three guiding features: (1) it encourages collaboration between the project leader and "other participants," (2) it follows a "democratic impulse," and (3) it seeks to generate change through action.[27] Therefore, in participatory research, researchers and participants should "equitably design and implement" projects.[28] Ideally, project leaders should go beyond merely including community members as interviewees in the research process; instead, they should "center" the community (i.e. focus on community knowledge keepers, knowledges, and ways of knowing) within and throughout that process.[29]

In practice, participatory work can be challenging to implement for multiple reasons. While it is common, for example, for community members to identify research questions, appropriate methods, and participants, it is less common for them to analyze data or make decisions regarding the dissemination of findings. Consequently, without community member participation throughout all phases of research projects, including oral history work, there is a tendency for final products to primarily or exclusively represent the views and practices of project leaders.

Three projects offer insight into the benefits of, and challenges related to, culturally sustaining/revitalizing storywork. In the Elder Interviews project (2005–2013), youth in two high schools (one in a reservation border town and one based in a reservation community) conducted interviews of Elders to learn about historical content and conceptual elements of storytelling. The Museum Exhibits project (2012–2013), which involved high school youth from another reservation community, engaged students in using oral history to learn about repatriated artifacts. The Piikani[30] Digital Histories project (2012–present) partnered Montana State University film studies students with Blackfeet Community College students to develop short documentaries. Together, these projects provided opportunities for us—as researchers and as project leaders—to learn about storywork. While the Elder Interviews and Museum Exhibits projects concluded in 2013, the Piikani Digital Histories project is ongoing. Therefore, we have applied, and are continuing to apply, lessons we learned during the earlier projects to the Piikani Digital Histories work.

Elder Interviews

As a high school teacher in a reservation bordertown, Christine grew frustrated with the lack of attention to Indigenous experiences and local histories within the school's curricular resources. To develop an introductory awareness of these experiences and histories, she asked her students (80% of whom self-identify as White; 20% of whom identify as Indigenous) to interview community Elders about key historical events. For the Elder Interviews project, the students were encouraged to work with Elders they knew well, and they were coached in cultural interviewing etiquette. These interviews were recorded and, following the interviews, the students selected portions of the interviews to transcribe from spoken to written text. They then wrote a personal reflection based on what they had learned from the content and through the interviewing and transcription processes. When Christine began teaching for a reservation-based school (where close to 100% of students identify as Indigenous), the Elder Interviews project became a centerpiece of her classes.

To study the project's effectiveness, Christine conducted observations of students as they discussed the interviewing and transcription processes. Transcriptions and reflection papers provided another layer of data. Results demonstrated that these Elder interviews not only served as supplements to the deficient textbooks, they also engaged students in discussions about deep listening, the differences between spoken and written histories, and the role of the researcher/historian. In particular, during the transcription phase, the students recognized the role of the writer in the transfer of spoken story to written text, since they had to make decisions related to which information to include or exclude.

Museum Exhibits

In the Museum Exhibits project, Brad, a social studies teacher at a high school on a reservation, asked his students (all of whom identify as Indigenous) to interview tribal members regarding artifacts recently repatriated from museums to the tribe. The Museum Exhibits project was one of four major projects for Indigenous students enrolled in a US History course. Each of these projects, including the Museum Exhibits project, was designed to connect dominant-culture historical concepts to contemporary and relevant knowledges held within the community. Significant items included a warbonnet, a war club, and other items dating to the turn of the twentieth century, which were donated to the school because the tribal historical preservation office lacked space in the repository to store them. Brad had been museum trained at the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian, where cultural artifacts from throughout the Americas are kept in a cultural resource center for study and preparation for museum exhibits.

Brad's students were tasked with creating an exhibit of localized (i.e. tribally specific) cultural artifacts, by using common museum practices for storing/cataloging, examining, repairing, and researching the significance of items from a community/cultural perspective. Although students were strictly held to the formalized process as well as the use of academic resources (e.g. technology for research and presentation), the project emphasized the role of community-based knowledges. In some cases, students added their own family's artifacts to the exhibit or discovered others that became permanent additions to the school-based collection, as a result of their community-based research. To integrate cultural understanding with curator skills, the students were challenged to describe the cultural significance of items in no more than 150 words, provide information (characteristics), and cite community/published sources in a text label for the school exhibit. To study the effectiveness of this project, Brad observed his students, reviewed the text labels and other documents students developed for the exhibits, and visited with community members.

Piikani Digital Histories

Five years ago, Christine attended a presentation about Brad's Museum Exhibits project, and afterward she and Brad discussed ideas for future work. Brad noted that he wanted to do a digital histories project, where his students could learn about effective filmmaking techniques in order to preserve information shared during interviews and artifact inquiry. This brainstorming led to the Piikani Digital Histories project. Although the project initially began at Brad's high school, it was moved to the Blackfeet Community College (BCC) when Brad became the institutional researcher for that tribal college. Lucia joined the project team in 2014. The project synthesized Brad's expertise in Blackfeet (Piikani) leadership, Christine's expertise in community-centered participatory research and education, and Lucia's expertise in critical documentary film studies.

As part of an independent study in Piikani Studies at BCC, student participants, who all self-identify as Indigenous, selected topics of interest and used digital filmmaking technology (cameras, lighting and sound equipment, and computer editing software) to create short documentaries to share in a community showcase. During a series of intensive workshops, students from the Montana State University (MSU) School of Film and Photography, who are predominantly White, provided technical and creative guidance. The MSU students enrolled in a semester-long seminar titled "Documentary Filmmaking and the Crisis of Eurocentric History" in order to learn about ways that documentary filmmakers have worked—both positively and negatively—with Indigenous communities. The first phase of the Piikani Digital Histories project concluded in September 2015. We are currently launching a second phase, which will partner BCC and MSU participants with high school youth.

Throughout the project, Christine, Brad, and Lucia collected and reviewed observation, interview, and artifact data. As a result of the collaboration, both BCC and MSU student groups gained skills in technical filmmaking and culturally sustaining research and education. For example, the BCC students developed a cultural framework for the project and guided all decisions related to subject matter, participants, and audiovisual representation. As a result, they learned how to mentor non-Indigenous peoples about knowledges that are part of the collective memory of the tribal community, in addition to gaining familiarity with the use of documentary filmmaking technology. At the same time, the MSU students learned about the complex challenges, as well as the perseverance and hope, inherent to the Piikani community. Significantly, they also learned about ways to apply their technical expertise to advance community-driven filmmaking efforts by taking a supportive instead of directive role in the process.

Illustrations and Discussion: Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Storywork in Action

As a result of the projects, participants acquired experiential awareness of tenets that are important to storywork content and process. Specifically, the three projects described in this chapter offer examples of how storywork can: (1) support student awareness of the dynamic and interpretive nature of history, (2) cultivate recognition of the broader community context and collectivity necessary for sharing and understanding history, (3) lead to outcomes that benefit participants, students, and communities, and

(4) generate engaged relationship-building during oral history education and research. For each of these themes, we offer descriptions from one or both of the earlier projects (i.e. Elder Interviews or Museum Exhibits) as well as an example from the Piikani Digital Histories project to demonstrate the evolution of our own thinking about oral history storywork with Native American (or Indigenous) communities.

History is Shaped by Perspectives: Storywork and Dynamism

The Elder Interviews project taught us about the importance of providing students with learning that expands their static, pre-existing views of "history" *and* how that history is shared. Since the project engaged students in recording counternarratives, participants quickly realized that the histories they had learned within conventional schooling contexts were incomplete, bounded, and often inaccurate. The project also provided an opportunity for students to explore the ethical implications for "preserving" Elder and community narratives through writing. The students found that making decisions about editing interviews independently made them uncomfortable, even if they had a strong bond with the Elders they interviewed. For example, students made remarks such as "I don't know if I should cut this part." This discomfort became an entry point to discuss the importance of collaborating throughout research and storytelling processes, as well as the challenges of transferring spoken language to written text. To encourage deeper thinking about these ethical issues, the students were asked to consider certain questions in their reflective writing (e.g. "Would the person you interviewed have told the story differently to someone he/she doesn't know well?" and "Does the written version of the story accurately represent the storyteller's intent? If so, how do you know?"). As a result, the students recognized challenges associated with statically preserving stories and sharing them without the Elder's direct guidance, as opposed to creating a space for dynamic, active, and collaborative story-sharing.

Through the Piikani Digital Histories project, we identified ways that Native community members can dynamically guide various aspects of the storywork process. For example, during the first Piikani Digital Histories workshop, Blackfeet participants were able to choose from a variety of documentary conventions to develop their stories. We first introduced them to Bill Nichols' documentary modes (i.e. expository, observational, participatory, reflexive, performative, and poetic).[31] To build understanding of these modes, we shared overviews and examples of each mode and then provided time for small group discussion and planning. As a result, the participants learned that while the expository mode claims a supposed objectivity of the camera, other modes allow more room for creative expression in order to convey the documentarian's personal and/or cultural experience. The participants, therefore, realized that the same historical knowledges could be shared in different ways—and, therefore, with different results—depending upon the filmmaker's decision-making.

Community Matters: Storywork and Collectivity

A key lesson that emerged from the Museum Exhibits project focused on becoming aware of how personal stories about the past can contribute to community-based, collective historical knowledges. The use of artifacts provided a unique opportunity to incorporate community knowledge into the curriculum of a mainstream school. Throughout the project, students engaged with community members as they developed the link between the artifacts and collective histories. For example, students initially did not know much about a warbonnet that was part of the collection. To research the artifact, students interviewed older family members who had been told about other warbonnets when they were young. As a result, the students learned that the materials used to create the cap (i.e. the foundation of the warbonnet) could provide insight to the historical and cultural contexts. In the case of the warbonnet under study, the students discovered that the cap was constructed with a woolen army blanket that could be dated to World War I. In this example, the students developed a new (to them) understanding of the artifact and were therefore able to revitalize cultural information through oral history storywork.

Within Indigenous communities, histories are both personal and collective, which underscores the need for community member participation in the identification of oral history research topics. While the Museum Exhibits project was founded upon community-identified needs related to preservation of cultural artifacts, the Elder Interviews project originated out of individual student interests. Although Indigenous students frequently included questions that addressed a collective need (e.g. "Do you regret not learning your language?"), non-Indigenous students often chose questions related to personal or family stories (e.g. "What was it like for you to go to school growing up?"). Similarly, during the Piikani Digital Histories project, participants and faculty leaders acknowledged the propensity for non-Indigenous documentary filmmakers to identify topics of personal relevance (e.g. individual stories about hobbies), while Indigenous filmmakers tended to focus on subjects of community relevance (e.g. the importance of Indigenous language within education). Throughout our projects, we learned that for non-Indigenous participants personal and collective histories are viewed as distinct yet interchangeable, while for Indigenous participants personal and collective histories are viewed as inextricably linked.

Outcomes for All: Storywork and Reciprocity

The Museum Exhibits project demonstrated the importance of generating outcomes that directly benefit the community. Throughout the project, students recognized that artifacts serve as vessels to store memories of experiences relayed by community sources of knowledge. To make the histories accessible to members of the community, the students crafted text labels to synthesize their community-centered research. In these labels, students prioritized local oral histories and drew upon written, external sources for secondary, supporting information. At the conclusion of the project, artifacts and text labels were displayed in cases in the high school. As a result, the artifacts were made accessible to the community in a way that honored the importance of collective histories, engaged youth in culturally sustaining/revitalizing learning, and recognized tribal sovereignty as related to control of and access to cultural artifacts.

In the Piikani Digital Histories project, one of the most important emerging lessons has also related to sovereignty and cultural control of content for the benefit of the community. In addition to creating access to oral history content through community viewings and distribution of copies of the audiovisual stories, participants have been asked to think carefully and critically about the potential for digital technology to address community needs in the future. How can the histories support personal, family, and tribal “healing”? Are there non-Blackfeet “allies” who could advocate for tribal needs if they learned about the histories, too? How can we ensure that sensitive personal and cultural content is protected? To date, participants have responded to these questions by both working closely with community leaders and sharing their films within the tribal community before making them publicly accessible through the Internet.

The Core Tenet: Storywork and Relationality

Throughout our work on the three projects, the importance of developing and sustaining meaningful relationships with community members became clear. In the Elder Interviews project, students were encouraged to work with an Elder with whom they had a pre-existing relationship. This was initially intended to increase student comfort with the interviewing process. It turned out to be one of the most important elements, as many of the participating Elders noted they especially appreciated the opportunity to engage in a one-on-one conversation with a young person they knew. In several cases, the Elders made it clear they were sharing personal or tribal historical information with the interviewer for the first time (e.g. "I've never told you this before"). Outside of the project, one of the Elders emphasized the importance of such efforts by noting that today's youth "are more drawn to the media and hip hop culture than their own culture." As a result, the project opened the door to future conversations between Elders and youth.

The Museum Exhibits project was founded upon a belief that relationships between students and community members are vital for depth of understanding about the history of cultural artifacts. Indeed, the project depended largely upon conversations between students and community knowledge keepers, since published materials related to the artifacts were difficult to find both in the high school library and through Internet searches. Additionally, the school was physically located outside of the community, which resulted in disconnect between the cultural and academic contexts. To counteract this challenge, every component of the Museum Exhibits project was designed to reflect community integration. Connections between Elders and youth were reinforced and revitalized through conversations surrounding the artifacts, countering the assumption that there is a generational gap and that such relationships have been lost.

Historically, oral historians and scholars have engaged with Indigenous communities for brief, bounded periods of time. The Piikani Digital Histories project demonstrates the importance of, and potential for, collaborative storywork that is ongoing, rather than that based upon brief or fragmented relationships. Furthermore, we have learned that agency is integral to development of sustainable, professional relationships where Indigenous partners are valued as experts. One of the main goals of the project is indeed to prepare Piikani community members to provide ongoing, comprehensive mentorship to filmmakers both within and beyond the community as a means to support more culturally responsive work across the film industry.

Resisting Commodification: Methodological and Pedagogical Recommendations

As illustrated above, the projects demonstrate the potential for oral history storywork with Indigenous communities, especially as related to validation of dynamism, collectivity, reciprocity, and relationality within oral history education and research. In addition to these lessons related to culturally sustaining/revitalizing storywork, we learned about methodological and pedagogical possibilities and challenges. Below, we offer an overview of each project's development as related to collaboration, institutional support, artistic vision, and access to histories. We also provide recommendations for scholars, project leaders, and educators interested in embarking upon similar efforts.

Engaging Participants as Co-Researchers

To advance the goals of culturally sustaining/revitalizing storywork, we have learned that project directors and participants should "share authority," which requires attention to issues of fidelity, translation, and social/cultural context.[32] "Sharing" authority does not necessarily mean dividing the decision-making evenly between participants. We believe that it is critical for Indigenous peoples to lead the interpretation, editing, and representation of Indigenous oral histories, especially when settler and Indigenous community members are in conflict or dialogue. To encourage culturally sustaining/revitalizing storywork, oral history project leaders can look to the diverse leadership within Indigenous communities. In this regard, it is important to note that such communities may value officially elected tribal leadership, but that they also respect the perspectives of informal leaders, including spiritual experts, Elders, teachers, and youth. Therefore, when designing and implementing projects, a variety of community members should participate. This is particularly important when tribal/collective oral histories are shared.

Another way project leaders can further encourage sharing of authority is to ask all participants—including those conducting interviews and serving as technical support personnel—to engage in self-reflective writing or video journaling. Multiple participatory narratives can enrich both the content and process by allowing space for dialogue and dynamism. Jo-Ann Archibald and Judy Iseke-Barnes—Indigenous leaders in terms of culturally sustaining/revitalizing storywork—reiterate the importance of including the narratives of filmmakers, scholars, and other participants who are typically behind the scenes in oral history work.[33]

As participants reflect during the planning and implementation phases of projects, the following questions could be considered: What is my role, or positionality, in this storywork?[34] What is my cultural heritage, and how might it affect how I experience the world and this project? How have my experiences and positionality shaped my agenda and decision-making? How does the positionality of the other participants in this project influence their participation, and how do I know? How will we, together, "attend to the tensions inherent in my and their convictions and beliefs about race and culture?"[35] How will different groups, including Indigenous peoples, non-Indigenous filmmakers and researchers, and members of the next generation, benefit or profit from the process(es) and product(s)? How can the histories be represented to avoid commodification of Indigenous knowledges and/or ways of knowing? Given the challenges raised when considering these questions, project leaders—especially those who are community outsiders—should be guided in terms of cultural etiquette. For example, in some tribal communities, it is appropriate—and expected—to give traditional gifts to participants, co-researchers, and interviewees.

Eurocentric Institutional Barriers

In our work, we have often found that the timeframe needed to effectively support culturally sustaining/revitalizing oral history storywork has been a substantial challenge in terms of institutional expectations. Of the three projects shared above, the Elder Interview project was the most minimally connected to the community. It was also the least supportive of culturally sustaining/revitalizing storywork. As the Museum Histories and the Piikani Digital Histories examples demonstrate, more responsive and meaningful storywork demands extensive time to develop relationships and to collaborate throughout the projects.

In addition, audiovisual history projects require substantial time for editing (a general guideline suggests that one hour of editing time results in one minute of final footage). We must also acknowledge the time needed to meet with participants to review/modify products and to plan and present community showcases. Unfortunately, most funding agencies and institutions have their own expectations in terms of timelines. We had planned to contain the first phase of the Piikani Digital Histories project to one semester, in order to align the project workshop with semester-length courses at the partner university and tribal college. However, we learned that the participants needed additional in-depth time to prepare the documentaries. Instead of rushing through the project or ending it with incomplete films, we obtained small grant funding to extend the first phase by several months. Throughout all of our projects, we have become accustomed to requesting extensions, resubmitting Institutional Review Board proposals for renewal, and becoming creative with academic schedules.

We have also encountered some resistance to participatory oral history storywork as both a pedagogy and a methodology, given the legacy of dominant-culture research and teaching approaches (e.g. researcher/teacher as sole expert, student as passive recipient of knowledge, researcher as supposedly neutral observer). The digital storytelling trend has further complicated matters, since such work tends to focus on contemporary, personal interest topics rather than historical experience, at least in terms of stories shared by members of the dominant culture. For example, in their introductory seminar, White participants in the Piikani Digital Histories project created films on topics like skiing and relationships with roommates, while Blackfeet participants focused on language revitalization, the influence of historical trauma on addiction, and life stories of Elders. While it is clear that popular culture topics have an important place within media, there is a difference between such stories and contextualized, complex histories. The commingling of "digital story" and "oral history" within mainstream society has expanded distrust of oral history research and education as rigorous research and teaching practice. According to Frisch, "oral history is of such self-evident importance and interest that it has proven difficult for people to take seriously."[36]

Finally, Institutional Review Boards and funding agencies are sometimes reluctant to approve work that depends upon the ongoing, organic decision-making of community members, and that therefore cannot be clearly detailed in advance. We have learned that combining efforts, working across disciplines, and building upon earlier successful projects has helped bolster the credibility of oral history storywork and participatory research. Such efforts can contribute to and support institutional change.

For example, at Montana State University, the Institutional Review Board now requires researchers to apply Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)[37] practices when working with Native communities.

Artistic Vision and Culturally Appropriate Representation

Dynamic collaboration raises issues of artistic vision, accuracy, and objectivity. What if, in the process of writing or editing an oral history, non-Indigenous participants modify the original story to make it more believable or visually appealing to a broader audience? What if Indigenous participants alter accounts to make them more acceptable to leaders in their community? As Frisch explains, "doing something *with* oral history materials, beyond collecting and cataloging them, necessarily involves substantial editorial intervention."[38] Participants in our projects concurred with Frisch, noting that culturally sustaining/revitalizing storywork requires frequent and consistent decision-making related to the representation of content. However, within many Indigenous communities, people are expected to make such decisions only after considering cultural protocol carefully, as guided by Elders and other community leaders.

With regard to the editing process, we suggested participants include information regarding who was responsible for decision-making and how the editing process unfolded in the final product. We also encouraged them to meet with the storytellers prior to any editing and use respectful questioning (e.g. "How can I most effectively represent your original story about X?" or "Since we have to shorten the film, what are the parts of this story that you think we should keep, and why?"). When oral historians and researchers are not from the Indigenous community, it is quite possible that they will interpret oral histories in ways different from community insiders, and their interpretations may affect editorial interventions. In several of our projects, we entered into the initial conversation regarding editing thinking, "I like this part of the story—it is clearly the most important," only to have the storyteller say, "Actually, that isn't what matters. This other part is much more important." Therefore, we highly recommend sharing both complete and edited versions of histories with community members and allowing community members time to provide feedback.

The matter becomes even more problematic when project participants and/or leaders begin projects with visions and interests that do not align with those of the community. Non-Indigenous filmmakers and scholars may begin work in tribal communities with romantic or stereotypical imagery in mind, since their own experience with contemporary Indigenous communities is likely limited and/or inaccurate. Additionally, non-Indigenous filmmakers, photographers, and authors have tended to commodify Indigenous challenges for personal or professional gain and represent Indigenous experiences in overly narrow ways (e.g. creating a film that includes only powwow imagery or that focuses exclusively on poverty).

Project leaders can support community member storytellers by being *hearers* first. Such hearing is vital for storywork, for it honors the relationality and dynamism central to storytelling in many Indigenous communities. Genuine hearing also requires project directors to set their own visions aside, and often to step outside of the conventional methodological and pedagogical oral history boxes.

Access and Responsibility

A final area of challenge relates to responsible access to finished storywork products. As Frisch explains, "the audience, ironically enough, is perhaps the most consistently overlooked and most poorly understood element in contemporary discussions of public history and interpretive strategy."[39] Given the call for relationality and reciprocity within Indigenous research contexts, this is an area that demands greater attention in oral history storywork.

Indigenous scholars are increasingly recognizing the potential for "contemporary technologies to sustain and share cultural knowledge."[40] Digital technology has expanded access to audio and video recording tools to better support traditional values of dynamism and relationality than written text. Internet-based platforms, tablets, and smartphones make it possible to capture, modify, and distribute media widely, quickly, and inexpensively, instead of relying on gatekeepers within the elite publishing, academic, and/or archivist industries. As Lucia Ricciardelli explains, broad dissemination of digital oral histories more effectively supports authenticity and reciprocity than traditional, limited publishing of written records or archived audiotapes:

> By encouraging active participation of a vast public in the construction of historical knowledge, digital means (e.g. computer technology; the world

> wide web) have played an important role in challenging overarching, official interpretations of the past. … Grounding their truth claims in the supposed objectivity of the camera and the archive, traditional historians have turned their interpretations of the past into all-encompassing middleclass perspectives, discarding the experience of the common person. Digital equipment, on the other hand, has provided computer users with a powerful tool to rethink the past by offering them the possibility to select historical records from a given database and combine such data into idiosyncratic narratives.[41]

Although sharing storywork with wide audiences can help confront misunderstandings and/or preserve endangered cultural knowledges, there are challenges related to open access to certain content. According to Frisch, the expanding interest in "public history"—or histories shared with broad audiences as opposed to narrow, academic audiences—has been both validating for oral history work and problematic given the "casual way in which the public history impulse has been discussed."[42] Such casualness diminishes the complexities of the historical narrative, including attention to the what, the how, *and* the why regarding the sharing of certain histories, thereby jeopardizing culturally sensitive content. Since some Indigenous stories should only be told by certain people (e.g. Elders) in certain contexts (e.g. only in the winter) or with certain audiences (e.g. only with young women), using a format that can be circulated globally at any time of the year and to a diverse audience may not be appropriate. If final products are to be shared openly through the Internet, care should be taken to ensure appropriate representations for diverse audience members, including those who are not members of the specific Indigenous community and/or those who do not have guidance from members of the specific community, given the legacy of colonization and commodification of Indigenous arts.[43]

To further complicate matters, technology-based "storytelling" often mingles collective history and individual memory.[44] For traditional Indigenous peoples—who, historically, valued tribal or community interests over individual desires—this trend is particularly dangerous, since it ignores the broader contexts of colonization, racism, and oppression that continue to affect Indigenous communities today. While all stories should be carefully represented, shared, and disseminated, project directors may need to take extra steps, such as discussing representations with multiple community members or limiting the circulation or access to tribal members through agreed-upon methods, to protect collective stories. Histories or perspectives that are individual should emphasize that they do not reflect communal experiences. Therefore, explaining the importance and context of all stories, individual and/or collective, is essential.

Conclusion: Storywork for Sovereignty

Around the world, Indigenous peoples have long encouraged collaboration, orality, and dynamism in the sharing of histories, and today storytelling continues to be inseparable from place and culture in many Indigenous communities.[45] However, within today's dominant-culture institutions, collaboration with Indigenous peoples remains limited, research and teaching paradigms typically focus on static or snapshot—instead of dynamic and holistic—content preservation, and teachers and scholars strive for an "objective" stance through use of written documentation, as opposed to using oral storytelling to honor the experiential contexts of the teller and hearer. Such a disconnected approach falls short in terms of promoting culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy and quality learning, since, as Bryan Brayboy and Angelina Castagno note, education in Indigenous communities "must be both immediately relevant to and mirror students' lives *and* provide entrée into the core subject areas" in order to advance self-determination.[46]

As Margaret Kovach recommends, it is important to "center" an Indigenous community's knowledges *and* ways of knowing, instead of simply applying dominant-culture methodologies to community topics and content.[47] Through our various projects, we have learned that participatory storywork—through its attention to the *centering* of community—can support a re-visioning of Indigenous leadership, sovereignty, and self-determination efforts, as well as a connection between contemporary sociopolitical issues and historical events. Across the examples shared throughout this chapter, the messages for project leaders, participants, filmmakers, educators, and scholars are clear. Culturally sustaining/revitalizing storywork begins with relationality, values the dynamic and collective nature of Indigenous histories, and confronts challenging questions related to reciprocity and responsible access. Oral history projects that honor these processes support Indigenous leadership, self-determination, and historical thinking for cultural sustainability and revitalization.

NOTES

1. This citation is from an Indigenous student speaking about their experiences during a Eurocentric history course.
2. This is a Blackfeet student speaking about their participatory digital history project.
3. While specific tribal names are preferable to overgeneralizing terms such as "Indigenous" or "Native American," Indigenous communities are small, so we have selected not to use tribal affiliations in order to protect the identities of participants.
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19. Ibid., 103.
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39. Frisch, *A Shared Authority,* 215.
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CHAPTER 12

Remembrance as a Digitally Mediated Practice of Pedagogy

Avril Aitken

INTRODUCTION

Several years ago I was invited to participate in a project initiated by the Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach entitled *Going Back Home*. It involved the return of a group of Elders to the site of Fort McKenzie, a remote Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) post in northern Quebec where they and their families had participated in trade commerce in the first half of the twentieth century. The project involved a partnership with the community school, such that students would be involved in documenting the experience for a larger audience. The resulting process brought together Elders, high school students, their Naskapi language teacher, and three members of the school's Naskapi language team. Given my experience with digital narrative production,[1] the team established that filmmaking would be central to how the project was carried out. We conceived of a process that would involve Grade 8 students producing "historical documentaries" that would draw directly on the Elders' accounts.[2] As such, oral tradition—"the history that lives and is alive"[3]—would be the heart of the films. Thus, the project would have the potential to deepen understanding

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of history as well as contribute to language revitalization in the community.[4] This chapter looks at the dilemmas and challenges of using digital tools for oral history in schools. It considers the potential of such practices to facilitate engagements with difficult knowledge, particularly at a site where normative representations persist.

I have collaborated with colleagues from the Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach for two decades on initiatives to increase the place and prominence of Naskapi language in the school.[5] As an academic, I have access to resources and particular skills that are useful to the school-based team; however, what I bring is complicated by the fact that I am a Euro-Canadian settler, with privilege that is tied up with such heritage. I am conscious of the many ways that settler normativity persists in shaping schools and curricula. As Celia Haig-Brown writes, this demands "engage[ment] with the historical relations underpinning all of what we do."[6] Such reflexivity requires a willingness to continuously interrogate who we are and what we understand. This is not a straightforward process, as this chapter reveals. Careful listening is essential and this has become most evident to me through the generous teachings of my Naskapi colleagues, Elders, and leaders in the community. These teachers have also demonstrated the significance of moving forward together. Such was the case with this undertaking, which began with conversations about the benefits of oral history for students,[7] and examples of school-based projects with Elders.[8] With these ideas as inspiration, the *Going Back Home* digital project took shape.

Work with still images and film is not new to history pedagogy, and guidelines for the use of different media can easily be found in curriculum guides.[9] Photographs and video clips have long been used to foster discussion, stimulate new connections, and provoke new interpretations of events. However, the use of such resources is changing in light of the development of new programs and platforms. Digital tools are not only transforming the ways that people tell the stories of their lives, they have also been found to have an impact on "how we understand, represent, and interpret the past."[10] Further, they move practices of inquiring into our histories further into the social realm. That is, "[r]emembering through digitally mediated platforms is a lived social practice that puts people in relation as they express and remake their connections to specific historical events and each other."[11]

When students have opportunities to shape *new* digital products through the juxtaposition of multimodal elements, such as still shots, video footage, spoken texts, and so on, there is even more to be gained.

Leander and de Haan capture the significance of playing with multimodal elements, pointing to how, through digital literacies and digital networks, “individuals and groups take up knowledge and identity resources and use such resources or change as a result of them … [such that a] person comes together with work, image, artefact and place in a way that learning is made available, is supported, and is made meaningful.”[12] Additionally, with digital projects that result in the production of films, screening events are possible. As Meika Loe writes, the step of “screening short digital stories for the larger community moves [a] project from self-discovery to community engagement in the broad scale.”[13]

This chapter traces the implementation of the *Going Back Home* project, which resulted in the creation of new digital products that were shared at a screening event for the community. In what follows, I begin with the context for the project by sketching out some details of the lives of Naskapi people in the last century.

A Context for Remembering

If you are looking for written historical referents, what can be found about the lives of Naskapi people around or before the 1950s is fragmentary, and appears to be dependent on the work of a few anthropologists, ethnobotanists, and surveyors, and on the records of the HBC.[14] Most sources describe a nomadic existence in small family groupings and a lifestyle of subsistence hunting. Also noted is that until the twentieth century, Naskapis had infrequent contact with the traders who had established posts in northern Quebec.[15] While enterprises such as the HBC had been established in the remote areas of Canada as early as the seventeenth century, the HBC did not turn their attention to what is now north-central Quebec until the 1830s.

Many of the written representations of the lives of Naskapis during that period were drafted in journals kept by employees of the HBC who worked at the different posts. Their comments privilege western, Eurocentric values, and generally degrade the people, reflecting a desire to dominate for commercial gain.[16] This is well captured in trader John McLean’s 1838 journal entry regarding the resistance of Naskapi people to his efforts to make them more industrious: “Fear and a thorough conviction of their dependence upon us, in conjunction with kind treatment judiciously applied might have some effect in producing a change for the better.”[17]

In the decades that followed McLean's comment, Naskapi people shifted their patterns of movement in ways that increasingly corresponded to the interests of the company. In so doing, they augmented their traditional hunting practices with the trapping of small fur-bearing animals for pelts, which they exchanged for European goods.[18] Between 1830 and 1956, the HBC closed and reopened three trading posts in northern Quebec. As Paul Wilkinson and Denise Geoffroy write, such decisions were "purely for its own commercial purposes and without any concern as to whether the areas where these posts were situated offered Naskapis the possibility of harvesting the fish and game that they required for food."[19] In relation to this, there were periods of significant starvation exacerbated by company practices.[20] While this signals the kind of hardships the people faced over time, the material conditions changed significantly for members of the Naskapi Nation in the latter part of the twentieth century. Most notably, self-government was secured through participation in the first contemporary comprehensive land claims agreement in 1978,[21] and the subsequent Cree-Naskapi Act of 1984.[22]

Recently, there have been systematic efforts to reconstruct the early history of Naskapi people, and provide, as Jean-Sébastien Boutet writes, a "counterbalance" to give "consideration to the local and cultural particularity of historical events, and to the meanings that individuals and communities attach to them."[23] An example of this is a project from the 1990s that collected first-hand accounts of Elders who experienced life at Fort McKenzie, before the first government intervention in the late 1940s and the subsequent closure of the last trading post.[24] The latter resulted in the displacement of the people to the edge of a newly constructed subarctic mining town in 1956. This period, in the mid-twentieth century, was one of dramatic changes, of a magnitude that will perhaps now be matched by the new wave of mining exploration evident across northern Quebec.[25] Among current perspectives in the community, there are heightened concerns over the impact on traditional hunting grounds, concerns that are intensified by the progressive loss of Elders who experienced a life of hunting caribou for subsistence and trapping furbearers for trade.[26] As Brian Calliou notes, the losses of such Elders can be likened to the irrevocable loss of a body of knowledge.[27] Thoughts such as this were among the considerations when the proposal for the project, entitled *Going Back Home*, was drafted by members of the Nation.

An Invitation to Remake Connections to History

The project proposal was submitted for funding to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC, now Employment and Social Development Canada), through their New Horizons for Seniors Program.[28] The proposal was framed through the template for funding for community-based projects, which promoted Elder mentoring and volunteerism. The original text submitted to HRSDC reads: "During their one-week stay in Fort McKenzie, Elders' experiences relating to their displacement from Fort McKenzie to the current location of the community, Kawawachikamach, will be documented through text, photographs and video. … [Y]outh will travel with the Elders to Fort McKenzie. In addition to documenting the Elders' stories in writing, the youth will be responsible for taking photos and videos. The material obtained during the trip to Fort McKenzie will then be presented during a community workshop, in collaboration with the Elders."[29]

As the school team anticipated, the Elders fulfilled a dual role. They modeled a richness of Naskapi language, less impacted by language shift,[30] and they provided first-hand, detailed accounts of life at Fort McKenzie. The latter was contextualized through the use of still photography and video footage taken at the site. Once students returned from Fort McKenzie with the digital material, the school team reviewed the video files and organized them into shorter clips, to which they attached identifying titles. They also selected possible themes for new film products based on ideas from the Elders' discussions at the site.

The curriculum team produced a five-minute sample movie: ᑲ ᑯᐢᐸᐅᑕᓱᓇᓄᒃ: ᐸ̈ᑦ ᒪᑭᓐᓯᔅ (Work at Fort McKenzie). It included video footage, still images from the trip, archival images from around Fort McKenzie taken up to 70 years ago, audio from a follow-up interview with one of the Elders, titles, credits, and music. This initial film was used to illustrate the production process for the Grade 8 students in their Naskapi Language class, as it provided an example of the how the different elements might be brought together. The movie production began in November 2012 and ran to mid-January. At the request of the Nation, the films were premiered on January 31, 2013, which was the 35th anniversary of the signing of the Northeastern Quebec Agreement (NEQA).[31] On the day of the viewing, Elders, community members, students, and a few teachers were seated together at tables at the Community Center. The short films, which were between three and 12 minutes in length, were screened; between each film, there was time for comments and discussion. Following a meal, the Elders asked to view the movies a second time, which allowed for starting and stopping, further comments, and questions raised by those who attended the screening. This event was filmed by the language team, and provoked one Elder to remark that he had been interviewed and filmed previously, but this was the first occasion at which he had seen how the material was used.

Pedagogical Considerations

The proposal for the *Going Back Home* project seemed to suggest that there would be an uncomplicated movement between the bounded acts of "collection" of digital and written information, and "delivery" of that information in a workshop. This "collect and deliver" scenario appeared to overlook the possibility that the historical memories would include remembrances that are linked to difficult knowledge, which would demand a particular pedagogical response. While there is little documentation of life prior to the mid-century displacement of the then 185 Naskapi people,[32] there are records of the conditions related to that event. These include several years of hardship faced as a result of the closure of the last trading post, high incidences of tuberculosis, and failed promises for health care, jobs, and schooling in the new site, which was wedged on a small tract of land beside a mining exploration road.[33] In the years that followed this relocation, youth experienced residential and homestay schooling in locations far from their family members.

Bronwen Low and Emmanuelle Sonntag,[34] Veerena Alberti,[35] and Laura Benadiba[36] make three separate cases for using oral history as a pedagogical tool to engage "difficult knowledge." All of the authors underline that such oral history work exposes students to multiple perspectives, or as Benadiba writes, "the unofficial stories." Drawing on their work with Montrealers' stories of displacement and violations of human rights, Low and Sonntag emphasize the importance of students becoming part of a "chain of testimony."[37] Benadiba proposes that such oral history in the classroom contributes to identity development and advances students' commitment to democracy and human rights. Additionally, Alberti suggests that such projects face students with "the possibility of thinking about the nature of historical knowledge."[38]

A.M.J. Hyatt indicates that it is possible that, in the case of oral history projects with students, the range of new factors to which students must attend, including the technical aspects, may result in historical dimensions being overlooked.[39] Like the authors mentioned in the previous paragraph, Hyatt feels that there should be a structured process to engage students meaningfully. However, unlike the approaches of the above authors, he proposes that students should carry out prior research and they should have access to a "sufficient" body of documentation to support their understanding. His position is that "[w]e cannot conduct interviews and do all kinds of socially beneficial and pedagogically positive projects without the presence of a body of written documents."[40] While some suggest that combining written texts with oral histories provides a "fuller account,"[41] Preston makes the point that the demand for both does not mean they are accorded equal weight. Instead, he suggests that the "positivistic ideals invested in written history" may lead the oral histories to be used in such a way that they are "judged by a system of norms and ideals that are foreign to how these traditions were created."[42] Despite the possibility of this, Boutet contends that oral stories work "to counterbalance more universal or ethnocentered accounts that give little or no consideration to the local and cultural particularity of historical events."[43] Ry Moran, Director of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, recently underlined the significance of the same point in reference to how testimony can change a country: "That oral history is so critically important to balance the documented history."[44]

In the case of the Naskapi Nation, working with limited written documentation is a given. Significantly, while other First Nations in Quebec have created local history courses taught in community schools, this has not taken place for Naskapi students despite provisions in the NEQA.[45] This absence of Naskapi history within the sanctioned curriculum is a point that has not escaped students in the school. Gabrielle Stanton describes working with senior students to analyze the Ministry-authorized history texts in response to their pressing questions about the omission of their own story in the provincial curriculum. Stanton's response was to engage students in writing a play—called "What About Us?"—which they subsequently performed at a provincial drama event. Significantly, the play "reverses the characters' roles, casting Naskapi students as knowledge-holders and the Southern teacher as that of learner."[46] This initiative captures what has been described as "culturally responsive pedagogy." That is, the teachers are repositioned so that they become the learners of the "community and its history of subordination."[47] While there are other verbatim reports of high school teachers attempting to work with events from the Naskapi Nation's past in ways that might be considered "culturally responsive," Dwayne Donald, Florence Glanfield, and Gladys Sterenberg make the point that such efforts may "too easily [be] reduced to essentializations, meaningless generalizations, or trivial anecdotes—none of which result in systemic, institutional, or lasting changes to schools."[49] In the case of the Grade 8 students involved in the *Going Back Home* project, they had limited, if any, exposure in the school setting to discussions of their history with members of their own community, and little attention to settler implications in that history and, in particular, the displacement.

Low and Sonntag explain that stories that involve traumatic events call for careful attention to pedagogy. "The processes of teaching and learning become complicated when these oral histories document stories of displacement, war and genocide. … It is much more likely that learning will be affectively charged in response to representations of social and individual crisis."[50] These authors call for a pedagogy of listening, which includes a multistep process of meaning making where students work in a sustained way with materials. They write, "As curators, students are charged with a responsibility to care for the testimonies and life stories, producing and sharing their narratives and readings in response to these, with the objective of stimulating and engaging the interest of others."[51]

The potential of digital practices for oral history work is promoted by websites such as Oral History in the Digital Age[52] and the Center for Oral History and Digital Storytelling.[53] Steven High, Director of the Center, champions the goal of contributing to public knowledge and engaging people through interdisciplinary methodologies for oral history and multimodal forms of representation. High promotes the use of the Center's free, downloadable Stories Matter software, which allows one "to clip, index and export audio and video recordings."[54] Like Michael Frisch,[55] who is known for promoting "shared authority" in oral history practices, High emphasizes that oral history requires us "to share interpretive power."[56] Open access to multiple digital forms facilitates such work.

High and David Sworn have identified a possible drawback of working with short clips of digital material in oral history projects; they write that "fragmenting the life stories [may occur] by removing individual clips, or stories, from their context."[57] While this is an important consideration, Frisch underlines that a benefit of working with digital material is that the reader has access to "affect, expression, gesture, body, space, context, whatever is recorded but nonlexical."[58] An example of the significance of these features was identified in the digital material from the site of Fort McKenzie: While the camera was fixed centrally on a speaker, only fleetingly on screen, another Elder (barely audible) had picked up on a point the speaker had made about remunerated labor. Pinching her fingers together to indicate a very small object, laughing throughout, and generating the appreciative chuckles of others, the Elder recounted the experience of receiving, as a young person, an extremely small coin as pay. The joke concerns the tightfistedness of the HBC representative. Had there been a transcription of the story of the primary speaker (who is held in the camera's gaze), the secondary story might have been neglected. Additionally, had the second Elder's comments been transcribed, the use of humor in her recounting might have been lost. The story led the language team members to inquire about HBC coins in a follow-up discussion back at the school with a third Elder. They located images of the coins, which ended up being used in a short but significant movie about remunerated work at Fort McKenzie. This episode illustrates the advantage of the digital for identifying nonlexical cues, and it underlines the benefits of having more than one Elder involved in sharing stories. It also gestures to what Joanne Archibald refers to as "the magic and power of the interpersonal interaction between the storyteller and listeners."[59]

A Reflection on Encounters with the Tension of Conflictual Cultural Terrain

In writing about Innu accounts of their experiences in the mid-twentieth century in the areas frequented by both Naskapi and Innu people, Boutet mentions that recollections may seem "surprisingly varied and can even appear contradictory at times, as they include diverse accounts of tension, conciliation, and the creative preservation and actualization of important ways of life amidst industrial colonization."[60] Boutet's observation aligns with Calliou's comments on working with Elders' accounts.[61] When I first noted the anecdote with the coin, mentioned above, I wondered if it would lead to further discussion of how trade privileged the commercial gain of the company, on the backs—literally—of Naskapis, who transported the goods for the HBC from Fort Chimo down to Fort McKenzie each spring.[62] It did not. Significantly, the stories that emerged through the *Going Back Home* project focused on the rhythms of life at and away from Fort McKenzie; they addressed the ecological and geographic advantages of the site, the significance of remunerated labor, practices around traditional medicines, participation in the trade economy, testimonies to individuals who played significant roles at the time/location (both Naskapi and non-Naskapi), stories told to the Elders when they were children, experiences of work and play, observations of relative strength and health, reflections on poverty, and remembrances of losses of family members to illness or tragic events. I was struck by how the recollections revealed the complexity and depth of the relations lived out, in and around the Fort McKenzie area. Over the course of the project, I recognized how unexpectedly limited and restrictive my perspective had been as the project began. This is illustrated by the following entry from my notebook, written after the films had been produced:

> When I was first contacted regarding the project, I troubled over what felt like a misnomer of a title, "Going Back Home." Not only did it hearken nostalgically to the past, it suggested that Fort McKenzie would be "home." These notions complicated what I had understood about the imbalances of power in the relationship between Naskapis and the Hudson's Bay Company.[63]
>
> When I arrived in Kawawachikamach, shortly after the Elders and students returned from their trip to the site of Fort McKenzie, and before the filmmaking began, I raised my questions about the title with Agnes McKenzie,[64] one of the Elders on the language curriculum team with whom I work. (She has allowed me to recount what she explained to me that day, and in the days that followed.) Agnes' first conscious understanding of home is connected with the experience of being sent to, and returning from, living with a family in LaTuque, where she attended the public high school following a year in a residential school. At the time of her departure for school, Agnes had lost both parents to tuberculosis and was being raised by her grandparents. They were living on the edge of newly constructed subarctic mining town, as a result of the government-driven process of displacement and relocation experienced by Naskapis in the mid 1950s. Agnes travelled about 1000 kilometers, as the crow flies, to and from the mining town to LaTuque for schooling. Significantly, it was as a result of her grandmother's regular written communication with her in Naskapi—while she was out at school—that she didn't lose her language. She attributes this letter writing, and her grandmother's persistence, to the role she now plays as an advocate for the language. From Agnes' perspective, home is about relationships, and she explained that her feelings about home extended to the family with whom she lived in LaTuque, as well as her grandparents.
>
> With this conversation lingering, Agnes suggested that we complement the material collected onsite with photographic images taken at Fort McKenzie over the last century, some of which she had stored on her com-

puter. As we began looking at the images from the archive, we lingered in particular over one photo taken at Fort McKenzie. It shows a woman seated in a tent beside a wood stove; this was Agnes' mother, who died when Agnes was two years old. That day our discussion moved back and forward through her limited recollections of life at Fort McKenzie, life with her great granddaughter and married life before the death of her husband. She had not joined the Elder's trip to Fort McKenzie; however, as we looked at the recent photos taken onsite by the students, she spoke of the familiarity of the shoreline (see Figure 12.1). With each memory, we looked further into the archival materials, where relatives were named and their ages worked out.

Later, in reviewing the video footage of the trip to Fort Mckenzie with Agnes, I discovered the great appreciation that people had for its location. It's at a point where the Koksoak River widens. The sandy beach foretells of ground amenable to campsites and the nearby ridge offers a view both up and down river, allowing for—as one Elder explained—a long view of the arrival of people from either direction. The fish and fur by Elders' accounts were generally adequate, and the river, despite some lengthy portages, provided a fairly direct route north to the barren lands where the migratory caribou might be found.

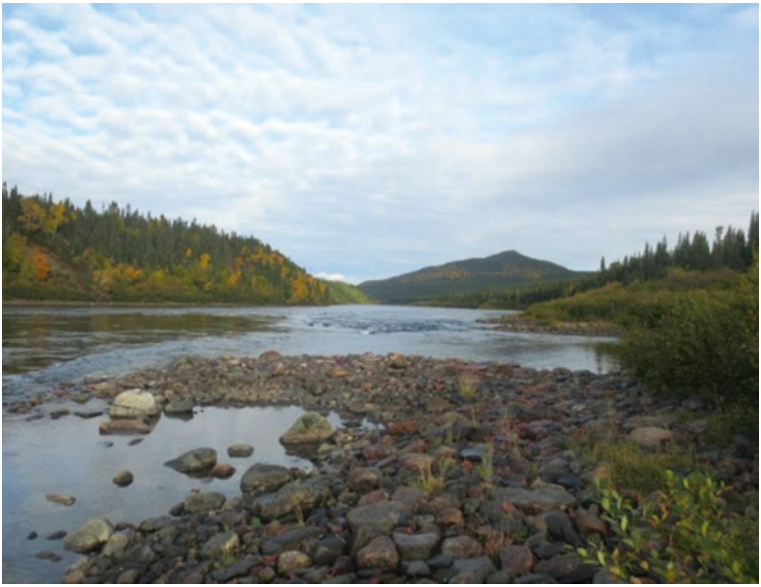

Fig. 12.1 Near Fort McKenzie. Photo: Tamia Chescappio[48]

Agnes's recollections and our digitally mediated conversations were instructive. I found my thinking shifting from a restrictive framing, captured by my concerns over the notion of "home." The movement backward and forward between the still shots and video in collaboration with an Elder resulted in new knowledge and self-awareness that extended beyond what might be learned through engaging with digital media alone, or with un-implicated others.

It is somewhat telling that the lessons I learned came about through a project linked to a site named "Fort" McKenzie. Dwayne Donald writes about how the notion of "the fort" operates in Canadian consciousness "As a mythic sign that signifies colonial frontier thinking—the spatial, metaphorical, literal, developmental and civilizational separateness of Aboriginal peoples and settlers."[65] My question about home reveals my expectations that the story of Fort McKenzie would be a naturalized tale of "winners and losers," as Donald writes, instead of an assemblage of tales of connections, relationships, convergences and divergences—as I discovered with Agnes, and others working on the project.

Donald underlines the need for settlers to understand the impacts and ongoing consequences colonialism has on First Nations in this country. However, he incites everyone "to resist the temptation to frame Aboriginal-Canadian relations according to colonial frontier logics."[66] Donald describes these as "epistemological assumptions and presuppositions, derived from the colonial project of dividing the world according to racial and cultural categorizations, which serve to naturalize assumed divides and thus contribute to their social and institutional perpetuation."[67] The asymmetrical and hierarchical binaries that result[68]—and such thinking and being—run counter to Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies, which recognize dynamic relations and interrelationships as fundamental.[69] I would propose that the latter are illustrated by the caring approach that Agnes took in guiding me to better understand my own question about the project title—as we moved back and forward through the digital material early on in the project. Agnes's approach captures what Donald would refer to as "ethical relationality." He describes such ethical grounding as "an ecological understanding of human relationality that doesn't deny difference but rather seeks to more deeply understand how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other."[70]

In becoming involved in the *Going Back Home* project, I felt the urgency of asking the following question: How might the school curriculum provoke us to remember "colonialism's narratives of forgetting?"[71] I had anticipated that the project would elicit some sort of rupture in the fluid formations of colonialism that remain evident in the everyday lived reality of the school,[72] making it a site of "conflictual cultural terrain."[73] I did not anticipate that I would be confronted very early on with the problems of my own rush to a totalizing representation of winners and losers, through which I was denying unique Indigenous ways of knowing and being.[74]

Concluding Thoughts

William Thomas notes that with access to multiple sources, "The reader can immerse him/herself in the past, surrounded with the evidence, and make new associations."[75] Such was the intention of the school-based dimension of the *Going Back Home* project, which gave students access to multiple files on their laptops. In planning, we took steps to assure that new digital products highlighting specific and local experiences would be shaped; we built in intergeneration interaction; and we scheduled a public screening event. However, we had not anticipated all of the questions that became evident. For example, were students adequately supported to carry out analysis of the historical context? Would the production process or resulting films contribute to challenging normative representations? Did a project such as this have the potential to foster systemic change to policy or practice?

Donald calls for imagining "curriculum and pedagogy together as a relational, interreferential, and hermeneutic endeavor."[76] As one of the project facilitators, retrospectively considering how we might have addressed the above questions, I would propose that the practice of "métissage" could be taken up in Elder–youth collaborative filmmaking. Narcisse Blood, Cynthia Chambers, Dwayne Donald, Erika Hasebe-Ludt, and Ramona Big Head describe métissage as a process by which "personal and family stories can be braided in with larger narratives of nation and nationality" drawing on "collaboration and collective authorship."[77] In the case of the *Going Back Home* project, there was no concurrent or prior work aimed at building understanding of how larger narratives of nationhood operate in and through the lives of Naskapis. Instead, the initiative was a somewhat decontextualized, "special" project in the Naskapi language class. On the other hand, as Archibald notes, Elders' contributions to language preservation and revitalization are invaluable, and may have been realized with this project.[78]

In my recent returns to the community, I have noted that neither filmmaking nor oral history practices have become commonplace in the school. However, the language team has been actively building an archive of digital material of Elder recollections, traditional practices modeled in and out of the classroom, and special events in the school and community. Naskapi language classes have been scheduled for levels beyond junior high school, where they stopped at the time of the film project. In relation to this, the Grade 8 students were asked to contribute to the design of the course with this question: "What would you like to see as part of your Naskapi classes?" A consensus emerged, "Our history." Efforts to make this a reality have begun. The *Going Back Home* project did not necessarily serve to decenter the Euro-Canadian referentials that are often privileged as "legitimate" accounts in school settings; however, actions taken by administrators and teachers in response to the students' request have resulted in new opportunities for youth to analyze the historical context with community members in the school. Among the repercussions of the *Going Back Home* project, this one is perhaps the most significant.

NOTES

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PART III

Programs and Practices

CHAPTER 13

Inspiring Pedagogy: Talking to Educators about Oral History in the Classroom

Julie Perrone

Introduction

In January 2014, I had the chance to start working as a postdoctoral fellow for the Great Unsolved Mysteries of Canadian History (GUMICH), a team of dedicated educators and scholars working to develop educational websites using a mystery-solving approach to history.[1] More specifically, I worked on the mystery that was the lost Franklin Expedition, a two-ship, 128-man expedition to the Arctic (now Nunavut, Canada) in 1846 and 1847, whose fate has yet to be fully understood more than 150 years later (this despite the recent discovery of one of its ships).[2] The ill-fated Franklin expedition is the 13th mystery examined by the team, and it was developed in close collaboration with the Nunavut Department of Education.[3] Nunavut educators and GUMICH team members worked together to develop educational components tailored to the Nunavut curriculum (which was being revised at the time) and adapted to Inuit culture and its particular method of knowledge acquisition and dissemination. Both teams thought about ways to integrate historical thinking concepts and oral history methodology into Inuit education. Based on my training in oral history, I was tasked with developing a tool kit in oral history for Nunavut teachers: identify books and online resources made by teachers, for teachers, and aggregate them into one document. At first, it was easy

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to find how-to books and instructional websites. However, I quickly realized that all these came from the United States and thus spoke to a different reality and different curricula. I also found very little reflective and analytical work on the value of oral history for education. Thankfully, it is the purpose of this book to provide insights, interrogations, and suggestions for approaches and methodology.

As I skimmed through educators' websites and teacher conference programs and awards, I realized that though not much had been formally written about using oral history in schools in Canada, in fact much had been and was being done in Canadian classrooms. I found that a growing number of teachers in Canada were indeed integrating oral history into their classrooms, whether it was inviting war veterans or Holocaust survivors to speak about their experiences, having students interview family members or community leaders, or sometimes even more ambitious projects. To understand how oral history was used in Canadian classrooms, and to provide other teachers with insight from colleagues who have developed an experience in the methodology, I interviewed six teachers during the course of a few months, teaching students at the elementary, high school, and junior college levels.

These fascinating conversations, in person, via Skype, or by telephone, allowed me to learn about very successful oral history initiatives that took place (and are still taking place) across Canada. All are very different projects, in different pedagogical contexts and at different educational levels, but I was struck by the fact that they all rested on at least three common teaching philosophies or approaches, which will be explored in the following pages. First, there is among them an innate interest in new ways to engage their students. Before doing oral history, oftentimes these teachers were already involved in experiential learning, be it inviting speakers to their class or going on school trips. A second connection identified was their particular vision of what teaching and learning should be; all six teachers saw education as more of an exchange, a collaboration. Finally, I found that skills acquisition was a markedly significant focus for these six long-time educators, who all suggested that oral history methodology was a tremendous pedagogical tool to help impart key skills to their students. In the end, and in line with some of the underlying objectives of this collection, this chapter aims to demonstrate the pedagogical value of oral history and to provide practical examples of how to "do" oral history in a classroom context. The oral history initiatives featured here are all Canadian, but the aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how oral history is used in educational settings more generally. It also highlights three common threads that may explain some teachers' propensity/interest in using (or not) oral history in the classroom. Before diving into this, however, it seems fitting to provide a quick overview of how oral history came to be a widely appreciated teaching method.

Oral History and Education

Oral history as an academic field of research has gone from being the unorganized collection of everyday stories to a credible historical source used for community-building, commemoration, and even legal precedent in just a few decades.[4] This was due not so much to oral history's level of credibility being "elevated" to that of written sources, but rather that postmodernism encouraged us to acknowledge that all historical sources are subjective, as are the actions or approaches of researchers whether they look at textual archives or interview individuals. Hence, what historians once reproached about oral history—its subjectivity, its shifting nature, its embedded bias—they now view as valuable assets. The reassessment of oral history's value as a subjective source has meant that oral traditions of Aboriginal peoples, passed down from one generation to the next, are increasingly viewed by the courts as sound records from the past, both for the courts[5] and for historical fact-checking. Let us refer again to the recent discovery of the ship belonging to the Franklin Expedition in Nunavut, which was found with the help of information from Inuit oral testimonies collected over almost 200 years. This is fantastic, of course, but, according to Bruce Miller, there is still much work to be done before oral history can be evaluated at par with other sources, especially in the legal system. Indeed, Miller states that while Aboriginal oral histories (which represent, he underlines, Aboriginal history per se) are being included in trials, their treatment as "any other source" is detrimental and will ultimately "over shadow the oral narratives themselves."[6] Hence, while oral history can provide much-needed details and perspectives to enrich historical narratives, special care still needs to be taken in terms of contextualizing and framing these narratives. For example, some Aboriginal oral histories are not to be shared with the public but instead are reserved for certain ceremonial occasions among and for their communities, where only certain selected keepers of such stories can share them.

Oral history in the educational world has experienced a similar, though perhaps more recent, progression. Oral history slowly took shape as an academic field in the 1940s, but it was only around the late 1960s that teachers became aware of the potential benefits of oral history, especially in the context of social studies education. The groundbreaking work of Eliot Wigginton with the Foxfire project in 1966 has been identified by many as one of the first times oral history was used as a pedagogical tool and has since become a far-reaching and multipronged program. Since then, oral history teaching has produced some lasting and fascinating results[7] and has demonstrated, in the process, that oral history can be a tremendously useful and engaging pedagogical endeavor.

Oral history certainly offers promise to Canadian teachers, who are increasingly asked to train their students to think critically and historically. To give them the tools to do so, as several other authors have noted in this collection, Peter Seixas developed what are now called the *Big Six,*[8] the six historical thinking concepts: (1) establish historical significance, (2) use primary source evidence, (3) identify continuity and change, (4) analyze cause and consequence, (5) take historical perspectives, and (6) understand the ethical dimension of historical interpretations.[9] These have been integrated in one form or another into several curricula, in Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia officially,[10] and are certainly more and more present in other provincial curricula as well.[11] What is surprising though is how relatively little oral history has been called upon by curriculum designers to develop these skills.

Oral History Initiatives in Canadian Classrooms

To find Canadian teachers who had or were using oral history in their classrooms, I searched the web for any oral history initiative based in Canada, looked over past teacher conference programs, sent calls via teachers' associations and via Twitter, searched teachers' awards, and used my network and word-of-mouth. By far the most successful search has been with Governor General's and Prime Minister's teaching awards, where I found most of my interviewees. One could wonder whether there is a link between such valued recognition and the openness toward and/or use of oral history in the classroom.

Jennifer Janzen, a finalist for the Governor General's Award in 2013,[12] teaches high school history and geography at University of Winnipeg Collegiate, an on-campus university high school in Manitoba. Across the street from her school is Lyon's Place, a seniors residence whose director allows her to organize oral history interviewing sessions with her Grade 11 and 12 students. Her students devised questions in class having to do with immigration, the point of entry for Jennifer's oral history component. She organized sessions where students were paired up with a resident (the same one each time) and they were tasked with asking the questions they devised in class as well as follow-up questions of their own. Her students were then required to transcribe the interview, and then edit down and reorganize the transcript into a shorter narrative. This shorter story was presented to the interviewee and revised again with his/her help. Jennifer evaluated each of the steps (interviewing skills, transcription, and story creation).

A 2002 Governor General's Award winner[13] and contributor to this book, Barbara Brockmann teaches at Glashan Public School in Ottawa, Ontario. She has been conducting her "Collecting Oral History Project" for close to 20 years in her Grade 7 social studies/integrated studies course. Her classroom project is conceived of as a research and writing assignment using family stories as a main source of information and spread over the better part of the academic year. The stories students collect from family members (and stories about themselves as well) are eventually "published" together in a handmade book. Parents are invited to attend a "book launch" event during which students read excerpts from their oral history book. Barbara invited me to the book launch, where I had the chance to see her students present their final products, speak to them and their parents, and interview Barbara as well.

A 2011 Prime Minister's Award Certificate of Achievement winner, Scott Masters[14] teaches Grades 9–12 history at Crestwood Preparatory College in Toronto, Ontario. His students are required to do an interview with someone who lived during World War II, whether a family member or someone else, whether about the war itself or life during the period, and not limited to life in Canada. The first part of the project is the interview itself, so they work out the questions together in December and January in order to be ready for interviews scheduled in February and March. To simplify the logistics surrounding these visits, they send four to five students to do interviews at once. A senior student is assigned to a more junior student in order to assist students with the interview. As for the assignments related to the interview, the students have to edit an hour-long recording into a 30-minute clip and provide a transcript, and they also have to digitize any material given by their interviewee (photos, documents, and the like). The digital material is featured on Crestwood's "Oral History Project" page,[15] along with digitized photos, documents, and other materials collected by the students.

Annie Girard teaches Grade 11 history at École internationale, a Montreal high school. In collaboration with five university students representing four universities,[16] Annie's class of 40 students took part in a project using oral history to learn and talk about Chile at the time of the Pinochet dictatorship.[17] Since this was an ambitious project including the collection of oral history interviews, the making of a documentary and an exhibit, as well as presentations to various groups, her class was divided into teams, each responsible for one aspect of the project. A team collected life-story-type oral history interviews with members of the Chilean community, and transcribed and edited them. Another worked on putting together a short documentary based on the interviews and peppered with visual materials. The documentary was shown to the entire school but also at a *vernissage* where the exhibit was shown.

Mark Beauchamp teaches a research methods course at Dawson College in Montreal (equivalent to Grades 12 and 13). Along with another colleague, he decided to frame the entire course as an oral history project. His students are required to do two interviews, a first one with someone close to them, usually a parent or a close relative, and another, later on, related to a main topic which changes each year. The students do the first interview early in the semester, write a summary, and contribute (on an online forum) a reflection on the interview itself. After the completion of their second interview, focused on a specific theme, students are called upon to evaluate their colleagues' interviews, with the help of an evaluation sheet they devised previously. They also have to transcribe parts of it and share their transcriptions with each other, along with the summaries. Finally, they are required to write a paper based on all these components, including a literature review, a methodology section, an argument section, and a closing reflection on the advantages of the methodology and about the future directions this research could take.

Megan Webster, who received a Prime Minister's Award Certificate for Achievement in 2011,[18] teaches English and Ethics at St. George School in Westmount, Quebec. Her main project was *Life in the Open Prison*, a documentary based on oral history interviews of survivors of the Cambodian genocide. Her students were responsible for interviewing the survivors, editing the interviews, and creating a documentary. In the process, her students learned about the difficult history of the Cambodian genocide and the troubled memories of its survivors. Not only did her class create a full-length documentary, a feat in itself, but Megan and her students won the 2009 Martha Ross prize in teaching from the Oral History Association in the United States.

Why Do Oral History?

These are all very different projects at very different scales, and headed by teachers of different grade levels teaching different subjects. Nevertheless, there are common philosophies and approaches that can be easily extracted from my conversations with these six teachers: prior involvement in some form of experiential learning, a vision of teaching that consists of knowledge-sharing, and a deliberate focus on teaching useful skills.

Teaching Lived History

The first common characteristic which emerged during my discussions with educators was their natural penchant for experiential leaning—what educational theorists Colin Beard and John Wilson define as “the sense-making process of active engagement between the inner world of the person and the outer world of the environment.”[19] To begin with, this interest seems to have been mainly motivated by the need to do something different. For Megan, the decision to start organizing field trips was based partly on her own need for change: “I think field trips were also beneficial for me. You get bored of teaching in the classroom, and I learned as much or more as my students.”[20] The same is true for Annie: “For my part, I believe that adopting this approach to teaching was a matter of survival. At this age, it is difficult to get young people’s attention; if we can find a way to do that, it allows us teachers to enjoy our work too.”[21]

Educators have often started with some form of lived history, through class speakers or field trips for example, in their search for more meaningful student learning. The Learning Pyramid, even though it may oversimplify and overgeneralize learning, points to much higher retention rates if students practice by doing (75%) in comparison with traditional lecturing (5%). David Boud and his colleague agree. In *Using Experience for Learning*, they argue that “learning builds on and flows from experience: no matter what external prompts to learning there might be—teachers, materials, interesting opportunities—learning can only occur if the experience of the learner is engaged, at least at some level.”[22]

Oral history projects for Annie and Scott seemed to be the next logical step in their classroom activities. Annie had started by assigning a cartoon on the Holocaust as a reading assignment to her 15- and 16-year-old students, a way to bring the story in a medium they could engage with. The enthusiastic response led her to invite a Holocaust survivor to come speak to her class. She thought the experience was a worthwhile learning opportunity, though she felt her students would learn more if they could play a greater role in the interaction, hence the move toward having students interviewing people themselves. For Scott, it all started by having speakers come to class to talk about the war or the Holocaust. At some point, Scott realized that these 10–12 speakers who came to see his students were getting older, and it was becoming increasingly difficult for them to come, due to growing health issues. He figured he could send his students to them instead, whether in nursing homes or hospitals, not only for the learning experience but also in an effort to safeguard these speakers' memories. Hence, the introduction of a relatively passive form oral history in the classroom led these teachers to the realization that students themselves could be active participants in oral history projects and in their own learning experiences.

Teachers and the Role of Teaching

The educators I interviewed all live by George Bernard Shaw's well-known and oft-quoted words of wisdom: "I'm not a teacher: only a fellow traveler of whom you asked the way. I pointed ahead—ahead of myself as well as you."[23] The idea that teaching is not just about knowledge transfer is something that these educators all have in common. At the root of Megan's interest in oral history is her own vision of what teaching is all about. She says, "Education is not about teachers accumulating knowledge and then transferring that knowledge to a passive child. It's about providing opportunities for kids to learn the big ideas of the discipline through authentic experience."[24] It is also about recognizing that people learn differently so they should be left with enough space to shape their own learning experience and tailor it to their needs and capacities. As Mark explains, "When I was a student, I learned by attending lectures and it went very well for me. … Now I'm in that position of authority. Do I want to create a space where only the people who do well are the people that think exactly like me? There are millions of ways to learn and for me to focus on only one way is a problem."[25]

Inevitably, giving students the space to shape their own learning experience creates a very different teaching environment. It means that educators must have the capacity to let go of the traditional teacher-student relationship, something that may prove difficult for some. Those who can manage the "chaos" find in its midst a flexibility that they would not have otherwise. It may seem like a daunting task but, for these educators, changing the relationship they have with their students is key. This is something Eliot Wigginton reflected upon in the 1970s: "One of the key ingredients in our work with students is the collaboration we create instead of the teacher-directed, teacher-dominated traditional talk-down situation, which does not resemble the way people learn in the real world."[26] But as Megan argues, the switch to a collaborative relationship can be difficult, maybe even unnatural: "We learn that we need to be in control at all times, that we need to know everything about everything. We think that learning only takes place in a specific setting: in a classroom, sitting upright, once everyone is quiet. That's simply not true and it's counterproductive."[27] Oral history projects change the classroom dynamics completely, from the traditional teacher "doling out information in bite-size pieces,"[28] to a teacher who guides his/her students on the path to a meaningful learning experience. This is what Jennifer did in her class, and it was a wholly positive experience: "I just shut up … I didn't control anything, I didn't try to intervene. And it was great for everyone."[29] In his oral history guidebook for American educators, Glenn Whitman mused that "Educators must have the courage to realize that students learn best by uncovering and creating material on their own, rather than simply covering it."[30] And this is exactly what these teachers have accomplished by using oral history.

Intra/Extra-Personal Skills

Beyond reinvigorating the relationship between teacher and student, the educators I interviewed see oral history as a means for students to acquire useful and usable skills. Educators report that their students have thanked them specifically for teaching them skills that they could actually use. As Megan argues, having the students acquire skills is the first step to learning: "Skills are very important … learning should focus on process more than content, on skills acquisition more than knowledge acquisition."[31] Because the skills acquired enable the students to acquire knowledge in a more meaningful manner. By teaching communication skills like interviewing, listening, writing, editing, and the like, students become more aware of what they should be retaining and why. Mark agrees:

> I feel like those are skills that are just as important as the other kinds of communicative and content based knowledge that students get through traditional pedagogies. I mean, you get invited to the job interview because you have the necessary credentials. But you get the job because you're a nice person or a person who has good listening and communicative skills. Communication skills are tremendously important to get ahead in life, and they're not really focused upon. My students are taking eight courses each semester, seven of them will teach them to do logic and linguistic; I don't need to do this too.[32]

Indeed for Mark, oral history projects are an opportunity to teach skills that he finds are not very well covered elsewhere in the educational system.

Students acquire valuable writing skills as a result of using meaningful content-like oral history interviews in the writing process. Students also come to learn more about themselves during the course of oral history projects. More specifically, educators report noticing some changes in their students' self-worth and confidence. According to Sitton, "Classroom oral history taps a personal motivation for the study of history by involving students in valid research within their own family, ethnic and community heritage. In so doing, the oral history project builds students' sense of identification with this heritage and their feelings of self-worth."[33] Hence, oral history projects can become an opportunity for students to get a better grasp of their place in history, perhaps, but also what they are capable of and how interesting their lives and their families' lives are. Suzie Boss agrees: "the natural progression of historical interest moves outward from this personal life experience, not inward from the remote and grandiose frameworks of national and international events … we commonly teach our history backward, largely failing to tap the relevance of the discipline for our students for self-identity."[34] Using oral history in the classroom thus brings big history back to a more personal (and relatable) level, where students can readily make connections and, in turn, situate themselves within a larger, more global, narrative.

Not only are students becoming more self-aware through oral history projects, they also develop a greater awareness of the world around them: their classmates, their family, their community. This in turn allows them to become more open and empathetic. As Italian oral historian

Alessandro Portelli said, “Oral history conveys the sense that history does happen to people like us in every day places and contexts.”[35] And that realization makes history more relevant and makes the students more conscious of the people around them. Megan noticed that both her field trips and the documentary project created a bond among her students, which she thinks would have been unlikely to develop in a “normal” classroom setting. Students collaborated with colleagues that were not part of their usual group of friends and got to know them along the way. Given that most of the oral history projects discussed here focused on interviewing family members, it goes without saying that the intergenerational connections these projects encouraged are quite valuable. For Barbara, and as she illustrates in this collection, family connections are strengthened and developed, right at the time when students become aware of the wider world and are preparing to head out into it. Through the listening and interviewing that take place, students develop valuable listening skills and they come to see their families as a source of expertise and experience. Many students have expressed utter surprise upon realizing that their parents had some very interesting things to say. As one of Barbara’s students told her, “I learned my family wasn’t boring after all.”[36]

Oral history projects often call for a meaningful outreach effort to the community, something that is not often replicated in other school projects. Jennifer argues that giving back to the community by telling their stories is an integral part of oral history projects: “This is something I learned is very important in oral history, you never take without giving back.”[37] Scott developed strong relationships throughout the years with the community around his school, especially legions, nearby hospitals, and veterans participating in Historica Canada’s Memory Project.[38] In this sense, oral history projects validate students’ work beyond the classroom and family setting and also encourage them to be more involved in their community.

From these interviews with educators, we can gather that oral history projects contribute in a meaningful way to students’ self-awareness and self-worth. By encouraging connections with class colleagues, family, and community members, the projects also become opportunities for students to situate themselves in a larger context. Greater self-awareness leads to a greater awareness of the world around us and our position in it. The pedagogical use of oral history interviews certainly helps in this regard.

Critical/Historical Thinking Skills

Ultimately, oral history teaches students a sense of history, understanding why history matters and understanding their own role in it. It also contributes to the development of key historical thinking skills, the *Big Six*, as elaborated by Peter Seixas.[39] In her chapter in this anthology, Karel Nieuwenhuyse also found that oral history, especially family oral history, does help foster an understanding of historical thinking. First and foremost, students learn to examine primary source evidence in the form of oral history interviews. As Annie's students found, "history became real" (*l'histoire devenait réelle*), because they spoke to real people. One of Megan's students, who cowrote an article with her about their project, stated that "I became aware of the crucial role the interviewer plays in the narrative and I worried about the extent to which my questions and omissions had shaped [the] story."[40] Oral history students discover that history happens to people in different ways and that there are many layers to history. They also learn to evaluate evidence and think about bias, purpose, and context in a concrete manner. This in turn shows students the need to evaluate all sources in the same way.

Such practical use of primary sources also trains students in establishing historical significance. From an hour-long interview, they have to identify what stories are the most significant and which ones will be kept for the final product. The interviewing itself (the primary source collection) has students think about their role in influencing the course of the interview. Paul Thompson sees tremendous value in this: "Any school project in oral history should assist children towards a much sharper appreciation of the nature of evidence, because they will be directly involved in its collection."[41] In the projects examined, students were all required to edit oral history interviews, a practical exercise in establishing historical significance. In each case, students had to make choices as to what exactly was significant for the project itself. It made them more aware of similar choices made when historians write textbooks or when the media reports the news.

Students also come to understand cause and consequences. As explained by the Baylor Institute, "Oral history helps us understand how individuals and communities experienced the forces of history."[42] Jennifer says that every year she'll have what she calls a "Come to Jesus" moment where she tells her students, "do you realize people have lived and died so you can live here?"[43] Educators focus on specific themes which need to be covered—immigration, war, the Holocaust—and have students interview people who lived through these otherwise distant and historical events. They learn how the war impacted their grandmother's shopping and cooking, how events taking place in Europe became so central to Canadian life in the 1940s. Students can see firsthand how the idea of immigration, so central to the Canadian identity, translates into individuals' lives, how the history of another country becomes relevant to explain why their family moved to Canada.

Students also come to understand how some things evolve over time and how others remain the same. Scott remembers that his students once asked a navy veteran if his uniform had helped him get girls; the veteran said "yes" and they went on talking about dating for a while, finding unlikely similarities between generations. In Barbara's class, one student learned about change over time in a vivid manner. During the course of interviewing her grandmother, she learned that her cottage had been moved three times, for different reasons. After the interview, whenever she visited her cottage she noticed traces of that history like old foundations and objects left here and there. She would have never noticed these without this project. These learning experiences take students away from the presentist space they so often occupy.

Oral history also allows students to take a historical perspective and reduce the foreignness of the past by encouraging them to walk in other people's shoes. Mark's project required students to think of a representative sample of the Quebec population and identify potential interviewees who would represent each of the main groups involved in the student strike debates. In doing so, it gave students a breadth of perspectives on one singular event. Sometimes this confronted them with opinions with which they wholly disagreed, but the interaction itself forced them to try and understand where that opinion came from and what context informed it. Scott invited a former German soldier to speak to his class, in an effort to show another side of World War II. The interviewee was not part of the *Schutzstaffel* (better known as the SS); he had been drafted when he was very young. Though Scott found this experience a little disturbing (he cut the event short because the speaker started to make slightly anti-Semitic remarks), he did want to give students the opportunity to hear different perspectives.

Finally, oral history projects sometimes require students to think about ethics. Megan mentions that her students' ethical thinking was more acute than she thought. She recounts, "I was amazed at how ethically they were thinking, all the time. In the 'Life in the Open Prison' project, students were uncomfortable with editing an interview because they felt they were changing the story. It felt weird to students to appropriate someone's story, to be the ones telling that story."[44] Mark involves his students in the ethical side of oral history right from the outset, for example in the design of consent forms. As he explains, "They suggest different things and although it is usually the same consent form that ends up getting out there, students came up with some valuable points that we incorporated in the standard form."[45] Mark found that students were more rapidly attuned to the ethical dimensions of keeping records when it came to giving public access to a family member's memory.

In the end, what these educators are training students for is, in essence, to act like historians. It is the craft of thinking like a historian that is learned through oral history projects. The historical thinking skills acquired through oral history projects allow students to think and act like historians, to understand how the knowledge they are acquiring is itself constructed. As Stéphane Lévesque argues, "Students cannot practise history, or even think critically about its content, if they have no understanding of how one constructs and shares historical knowledge."[46]

When students acquire historical thinking skills and when they themselves play the investigative historian's role, they come to care about the knowledge they acquire that way. One of the interviewees in Jennifer's class passed away shortly after the interview and her students became acutely aware of the fact that they were now the keepers of his memory, that they were responsible for keeping this man's stories for the present and the future. Big history is explained by narratives that are much closer to their realities and thus more understandable and more relevant. As Scott argues, "Oral history allows students to occupy the direct role of historian. These interviews represent the microcosm of a big event. And make history immediate: history does indeed happen to people. It is a way to bring history into contemporary issues students care about."[47] Oral history links together school and life in a meaningful way by "bring[ing] history home by linking the world of textbooks and classroom with the face-to-face social world of the student's home community."[48]

Conclusion

Though there are many pedagogical advantages to using oral history in the classroom, there exist perhaps just as many reasons not to do so. As Patricia Filer states in her how-to guide, oral history projects are still the exception rather than the norm because of several factors: "(1) teacher education or experience; (2) relevance to today's curriculum demands; and/or, (3) time and budget."[49] Filer's points are well taken. The teachers I interviewed were all seasoned educators with many years of teaching under their belts, specifically in social studies. For example, Barbara is an award-winning teacher with 25 years of experience, and Scott, also an award-winner, has been teaching for over 15 years. A recent graduate might not be as comfortable with organizing a complex oral history project or with managing "chaos," however flexible it might be.

Trying to make place in the curriculum for oral history is another significant concern. These are significant pedagogical undertakings, and it can be difficult to integrate them into an already fully packed curriculum. Jennifer says she is lucky because the provincial end-of-year requirements are such that it leaves her enough leeway to organize oral history projects throughout the year. For Mark, it is another story. Because he teaches a research methods class at college level, he was able to frame the entire course as an oral history project, integrating within it quantitative research, sampling, interviews, legal training, and so on. In Scott's class, the projects focus on World War II and are intimately tied to the course on World War II. But since Crestwood is a private school, it is expected that his students complete this project over and above the curriculum. All this is to say that finding a place in the curriculum for oral history requires some creativity indeed.

Finally, there is the question of time and money. Starting an oral history project seems like a daunting and time-consuming task for the teacher, especially given that results will be individualized and will thus complexify the grading process. As with project-based learning, oral history represents significant front-ended work for the teachers, before they can "shift control to students."[50] Both Megan and Annie told me about the heavy planning that goes into an oral history project. Megan said, "Finding a great speaker or a great field trip is not difficult, it's everything around it: booking a bus, getting consent from parents, negotiate time off from other classes."[51] Though one must keep in mind that there are certainly different "levels" of projects, ranging from Mark's elaborate research methods project and Barbara's year-long book project, to something as simple as bringing a family recipe to class and contextualizing it, or collecting a short story from a parent and presenting a summary in class.

Nonetheless, the pedagogical advantages of doing oral history in the classroom greatly outweigh the essentially logistical and curricular disadvantages. Doing oral history does not have to be complicated. Sure, the projects examined here are elaborate and medium-to-large scale. But, as mentioned before, something as simple as bringing a family recipe to class and explaining who makes it and for what occasion is a form of storytelling. Followed by a discussion of culture and food, for example, it is a way to get students to share something personal in a classroom setting, to learn more about their classmates, and to situate their story within a larger narrative. When students are given the opportunity to shape and take ownership of their own learning experience, only good things can happen.

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NOTES

1. To learn more about the fantastic work of the GUMICH team, visit their website at http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/en/index.php.
2. Though one of the Franklin ships, the *Erebus*, was found in fall 2014, many mysteries remain such as what happened to the more than 100 men who accompanied Franklin on his mission, where Sir John Franklin himself is buried, and, of course, where the second ship is, the Terror. Hence, when the announcement of the discovery of the ship was made, the GUMICH team had to revisit some of its material but it did not require a complete revision of the website. The discovery of the ship represented instead an opportunity to demonstrate how history is alive and continues to evolve.
3. The thirteenth GUMICH website on the Franklin Expedition was launched in June 2015.
4. Though there is of course much progress needed. When the ship from the ill-fated Franklin expedition was discovered, the headlines unwittingly illustrated the still uneasy relationship many have with oral history. Indeed, what made the news besides Prime Minister

Harper's interest in this expedition was how fantastic this story was to demonstrate the reliability of Inuit oral testimony. The *Erebus* was "hailed as a validation" for Inuit oral history in 2014, which tells us that despite considerable work on oral history for decades, many still doubt its usefulness and reliability. (See CBC's http://www.cbc.ca/day6/blog/2014/09/11/franklin-expedition-why-native-oral-history-was-right-all-along/ for an example.)

5. See Bruce Granville Miller, *Oral History on Trial. Recognizing Aboriginal Narratives in the Courts* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011).
6. Ibid., 173.
7. See, for example, Glenn Whitman's American Century Project (americancenturyproject.org), Telling Their Stories by students of San Francisco's Urban School (tellingstories.org), Bland County Archives by county high school students (blancountyarchives.org/gap.html), and 1968: The Whole World Was Watching and What did you do in the War Grandma?, both by students in Rhode Island (cds.library.brown.edu/projects/1968 and cds.library.brown.edu/projects/WWII_Women/tocCS.html).
8. Peter Seixas, *The Big Six Historical Concepts* (Nelson College Indigenous, 2012).
9. See the Historical Thinking Project website at http://historicalthinking.ca/historical-thinking-concepts.
10. See the 2013 revised *Ontario Curriculum for Grade 9 and 10 Canadian and World Studies*, specifically pages 103–105; the BC social studies curriculum, available at https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/Social%20Studies; and Alberta's *Canadian History Knowledge, Understanding and Historical Thinking Skills Outcomes from the Alberta K–12 Social Studies Program of Studies*, available at http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/socialstudies/programs.aspx.
11. For example, at the time of writing this piece, the Department of Education of the Government of Nunavut was working on integrating historical thinking concepts into its new curriculum.
12. See her profile on Canada's History at http://www.canadashistory.ca/Awards/Teaching/Articles/2013-Finalists/Jennifer-Janzen, accessed February 12 2015.
13. Barbara also won the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario 2014 Writer's award for her book of five Remembrance plays.

See this latest news at: http://www.etfo.ca/MediaRoom/MediaReleases/Pages/Ottawa-Carleton%20Teacher%20Barbara%20Brockmann%20Wins%20ETFO%20Writers%20Award.aspx, accessed February 12 2015.

14. See Scott's profile on the Government of Canada website at http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/pmate-ppmee.nsf/eng/wz01759.html, accessed February 12 2015.
15. See the Crestwood Oral History Project website at http://www.crestwood.on.ca/ohp/.
16. Two of these university students, Vanaka Chhem-Kieth and Manuel Abellan, won a Forces Avenir Award in 2010 for the project.
17. To learn more about Regard sur le Chili, visit the following website: http://histoiresdevie-chili.blogspot.ca/, accessed February 12 2015.
18. See Megan's profile on the Government of Canada website at: http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/pmate-ppmee.nsf/eng/wz01808.html, accessed February 12 2015.
19. Colin Beard and John P. Wilson, *Experiential Learning: A Best Practice Handbook for Educators and Trainers* (London, UK: Kogan Page Limited, 2006), 2.
20. Megan Webster, interview in person conducted on June 6, 2014.
21. Annie Girard, interview in person conducted on June 9, 2014. Translated from the French: "De mon côté, je crois que d'adopter une telle approche à l'enseignement c'était une question de survie. En effet, à cet âge les jeunes sont très difficile à accrocher: si on peut trouver une façon de le faire, ça nous permet à nous, enseignants, d'apprécier notre travail aussi."
22. David Boud, Ruth Cohen and David Walker, *Using Experience for Learning* (London, UK: Open University Press, 1993), 8.
23. George Bernard Shaw, Getting Married (play), 1908.
24. Megan Webster, interview in person conducted on June 6, 2014.
25. Mark Beauchamp, interview in person conducted on May 8, 2014.
26. Ann Meek, "On 25 years of Foxfire: A Conversation with Eliot Wigginton," *Educational Leadership* (March 1990): 32.
27. Megan Webster, interview in person conducted on June 6, 2014.
28. Suzie Boss and Jane Krauss, *Your Field Guide to Real-World Projects in the Digital Age* (Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education, 2007), 11.
29. Jennifer Janzen, interview by phone conducted on June 2, 2014.

30. Glenn Whitman, *Dialogue with the Past: Engaging Students & Meeting Standards through Oral History* (Walnut Creek, CA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 15.
31. Megan Webster, interview in person conducted on June 6, 2014.
32. Mark Beauchamp, interview in person conducted on May 8, 2014.
33. Thad Sitton, George L. Mehaffy and O.L. Davis Jr., *Oral History. A Guide for Teachers and Others* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1983), 15.
34. David Boud, Ruth Cohen and David Walker, *Using Experience for Learning*, 8.
35. Alessandro Portelli, "Foreword," in Barry Lanman, *Preparing the Next Generation of Oral Historians* (Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006), xiv.
36. Student quoted in a PowerPoint presentation prepared by Barbara titled, "Collecting Oral History: an integrated historical thinking and language arts research project."
37. Jennifer Janzen, interview by phone conducted on June 2, 2014.
38. See the Memory Project website at http://www.thememoryproject.com/, accessed October 8, 2014.
39. See the Historical Thinking project website at http://historicalthinking.ca/about-historical-thinking-project, accessed October 8 2014.
40. Noella Gravotta, in Megan Webster and Noella Gravotta, "Co-Creating Our Story: Making a Documentary Film," in *Remembering Mass Violence: Oral History, Media and Performance* eds. Steven High, Edward Little and Thi Ry Duong (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 163.
41. Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past. Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 59.
42. Baylor Institute for Oral History. *Introduction to Oral History Manual* (Baylor University Institute for Oral History: Waco, TX, 2014), 2.
43. Jennifer Janzen, interview by phone conducted on June 2, 2014.
44. Megan Webster, interview in person conducted on June 6, 2014.
45. Mark Beauchamp, interview in person conducted on May 8, 2014.
46. Stéphane Lévesque, "What it Means to Think Historically," in Penney Clark, ed., *New Possibilities for the Past: Shaping History Education in Canada* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2011), 117.

47. Scott Masters, interview by phone conducted on May 14, 2014.
48. Thad Sitton et al., *Oral History. A Guide for Teachers (and Others*), 12
49. Patricia Filer, *Oral Histories in the Classroom: A Curriculum and Project Guide for Secondary School Students* (2008), 5. 2008. Available at http://www.historylink.org/_content/education/downloads/Oral%20History%20Curriculum.pdf.
50. Suzie Boss and Jane Krauss, *Your Field Guide to Real-World Projects in the Digital Age* (Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education, 2014), 20.
51. Megan Webster, interview in person conducted on June 6, 2014.

CHAPTER 14

Collecting Family Oral Histories in an Elementary Classroom: Shaping Stories as They Shape Us

Barbara Brockmann

> *"If this is your land," he asked, "where are your stories?"*
>
> *(Recounted by a Tsimshian Elder to Government Officials)*[1]

Introduction

Collecting family oral history in the elementary classroom is an integrated historical thinking and language arts inquiry approach that originates with the stories families tell each other around the dinner table, on a long drive, or in response to a query whenever a family gathers. Like the Tsimshian Elder alludes, stories ask us to reconsider our connections and relations to a particular place and time. While the story itself points toward such relational evidence, storytellers reinforce their connections through the

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selection of the kinds of stories being told or not told. Both of these have the power to influence the way we view our place in the world. And, whenever we hear and understand a story that somehow includes us through a family member's experience, we can find ourselves, as I have witnessed in my classroom, informed, connected, and empowered in unexpected ways.

One challenge in teaching young citizens is how to help them find this important connection to the stories put forth within the school curriculum, when the curriculum itself does not know who they are. I have observed students at risk of contemporary colonization by the heavy influence of American values put forth in the media, by classrooms where Canadian culture is narrowly addressed only in the history and social studies curricula, and by the hegemonic "old stock" Canadian settler historical narratives students continue to read and hear in certain classrooms. The result is that one's own place and story are often muffled. This is apparent, for example, whenever students historically or geographically situate an imaginative piece of work that is situated within American locations, institutions, or events without a clear purpose: New York instead of Montreal, Toronto, or Vancouver; Harvard University instead of McGill University; the Federal Bureau of Investigation instead of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. When students lack a relational connection to the places they inhabit, they are ultimately in danger of becoming ahistorical and apathetic citizens who cannot be informed agents of social action on behalf of their communities' interest.

I first experienced the power of finding *ourselves* reflected in a high school Canadian literature course curriculum. I was aware that the city of my upbringing—London, Ontario—was on Indigenous *Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee* lands, settled by refugee Loyalists, and connected to the Underground Railroad. At the same time, the multiple perspectives found in my family histories contributed to a sense that our past experiences have value and are, in effect, the grist that feeds our understanding of world events. My parents had wildly different childhood experiences which they shared with their 12 children who were born during the tail end of the baby boom. My father Anthony Brockmann[2] was the 6th child of 12 from a Saskatchewan homestead in Treaty Six. My mother Erika Schlotmann[3] spent the formative years of her childhood under Nazi dictatorship and in wartime. The interwoven tapestry of such stories, here and there, then and now, resonated for me.

Teachers can shape classroom cultures by what they teach or do not teach. Family oral history is one way to create a classroom culture that validates individual voice through family stories connected to the curriculum, while enriching that curriculum by considering multiple perspectives. Teachers and students can do oral history as a singular assignment where they add a human dimension and a personal connection to a *big idea*[4] under study, or as an integrated project culminating in a curated collection of family stories. In both cases, collecting family oral histories is a *best practice* for a host of important educational outcomes: encouraging inquiry processes related to historical thinking, engaging in complex language use around listening and writing, and fostering inter-generational and community bonds.

My grades five to eight students have collected family oral histories since 1994. Their reflections, which are sprinkled throughout this chapter, illustrate remarkable consistency about what students throughout the years have learned by doing the project.[5] My observations confirm that learning—whether in the realm of historical thinking and inquiry, using complex language skills, or developing a deeper and connected sense of family, community, culture, and self—takes place on all fronts simultaneously. This chapter examines the evolution of a theoretical framework for doing oral history in an elementary classroom, describes the methodological steps to collect and shape family stories, and concludes with how such stories shape the lives of students.

Evolution of the Theoretical Framework of Doing Family Oral History

The rationale for engaging in family oral history the first time (1993–1994) was twofold: to develop literacy skills and to situate family experience as a source of knowledge, thereby validating and strengthening family bonds in the largely refugee, immigrant, and working-class neighborhood where I was teaching. My focus in combining literacy and lived experience predates the project and originates from my training and experience in teaching writing, beginning literacy, and English as a Second Language (ESL). Early in my career, I used the “Language Experience Approach”[6] with a diverse range of learners, from primary students in Mississauga, Ontario, and bilingual (Maori-English) elementary students in the Cook Islands, to refugee adolescents in Ottawa, Ontario. This flexible whole language strategy uses students’ prior experiences and their existing language expression as the basis of readable, predictable text. The teacher writes out exactly what the student dictates, and that provides the recorded language which is then used as a reading text. I came to appreciate how validating the lived experience by writing it down and using it to learn from was an important way to develop literacy skills, knowledge, and critical perspectives for different types of learners.

I was influenced by Carole Edelsky[7] who suggested that shared community knowledge could be a powerful curricular focus. She drew on seminal examples like the Firefox Project that made the life knowledge of Southern Appalachian Elders the focus of school-based investigation. The key features of such projects included investigating answers that could not be found in a textbook, grappling with the categorization and interpretation of historical evidence, and attending to topics that were somewhat familiar yet tantalizingly unknown. Other requirements were that the information collected was communally valued, required participants to use a variety of language modes, and was then shared with the public.

Serendipitously, I had seen the value of these types of activities also expressed in the Family Treasures Project which was initiated by Jean Bruce, a curator at the Canadian Museum of History (formerly Civilization).[8] It was a seemingly simple project that nonetheless had a broad impact within the wider community. Students inquired at home about family treasure, which were important objects for personal, not monetary, reasons. The interview of parents, oral presentation in class, and questions by classmates (prompting further research) all acted as the “idea gathering stage” of the writing process. Students composed their non-fiction reports with a deep and comfortable knowledge of their subject matter, and were able to independently organize their data around the description, uses, making, and history of the object—complex and important steps for literacy students. The final result was a family treasure poster or class book with informational text and visuals. I vividly remember one morning after the project was assigned, when Nejat D. exclaimed: “Geez Ms. Brockmann, my mother took me on a two hour tour around the house. I had no idea all those things were treasures!”[9] For my class of largely refugee students who required ESL and academic support, literacy, oracy, family culture, and classroom community bonds were developed and strengthened while students engaged in this historical and cultural inquiry about primary source objects.

The following year, I was challenged with a grade eight class who had already participated with success in the Family Treasures Project. The students needed similarly motivating topics that would make the struggle involved in writing worthwhile. They were already using a writers workshop approach[10] but their writing resonated with plots from sitcom television, American historical figures, or events, partly the result of having imbibed too much American-dominated media, and partly due to not knowing or valuing one's *own* stories. While I wanted my students to write from a place of *here* in order to validate the lived experiences of their *now*, I didn't want to make their confessional lives as 12-year-olds the entire topic focus of an authentic writing program. And in that overlap of theories, ideas, and needs, collecting family oral history was conceived.

Although this oral history education project has evolved since its inception, it has retained the following core civic principle: that the stories families tell each other are a source of valuable personal, historical, cultural, and geographical information necessary to inform our sense of who we are as citizens, while facilitating a powerful sense of individual agency. In this era of scattered extended families, competing time demands, and conversations interrupted by social media, these stories are even more urgent. While the inquiry and writing process aspects of the project have remained the same over the years, the recent and fortuitous addition of historical thinking as a process for teaching and doing history has enlarged and deepened the pedagogical strengths and outcomes of the project.[11]

Family stories implicitly included "history" since by their very nature they were based on events which occurred in the recent or far past. Students were also exhorted to elicit details about names, locations, and dates, and to do further research to understand their stories in context. The result was that I could identify historical thinking in their writing when I saw it, but I couldn't consistently bring it forth in our ensuing conversations. Karel Van Nieuwenhuyse, within this collection, argues that oral history serves the dual purpose of contributing to meaningful history and toward fostering students' historical thinking skills.[12] The systematic application of historical thinking as described in *The Big Six: Historical Thinking Concepts*[13] has actualized this development, at least here in Canada, within the several provincial curriculum policy documents. The authors refer to six distinct but closely interrelated concepts that encourage students to inquire into the past at a deeper level. As Seixas and Morton explain:

> History … takes shape neither as the result of the historian's free-floating imagination, nor as the past presenting itself fully formed in an already coherent and meaningful story, ready to be "discovered" by the historian. Rather, history emerges from the tension between the historian's creativity and the fragmentary traces of the past that anchor it. Historical thinking is

> the creative process that historians go through to interpret the evidence of the past and generate the stories of history.[14]

Framed as explicit questions that students *applied* to their content, they now had a historical lens through which to view their stories. Therefore, instead of simply retelling a family narrative, they were asked to wrestle with the different historical thinking concepts in relation to the sharing of their constructed historical narratives. This led them to make different choices and interpretations in how they viewed and wrote up the account. In effect, they learned to read and write their family stories as oral historians. It is with such learning in mind that I take up the steps for doing family oral history in an elementary classroom in the next section.

Shaping the Stories: *Doing* Family Oral History in the Elementary Classroom

Step 1: Choosing the Way in

Doing oral history can be integrated into elementary curriculum in three flexible ways. While students themselves indicate individual preferences for collecting the stories, all of the following three ways have proven effective. The most direct is as a non-fiction Language Arts research and writing unit where students are encouraged to collect a range of stories from family members. Generally, four to six stories can be worked through the historical thinking and writing process in five to seven weeks. The final product of an illustrated book is shared with the wider community. Another approach uses the *big ideas* within History or Geography units to make connections to personal family experiences. For example, a curriculum covering immigration eras lends itself to exploring a family's experiences with migration and colonization. Human and physical geography afford curricular opportunities for inquiring into experiences with earth-changing forces and extreme weather conditions, while focusing on science and technology can generate interview questions about the social and cultural changes caused by the emergence of new technologies.

A cumulative approach incorporates *both* of the above throughout the school year in order to publish a collection of stories in the final term. This way, stories can be gathered at times when extended families meet during holidays. Also, topics connected to notable days of the calendar year can be explored as classes prepare for the upcoming event. For example, preparation for Remembrance Day commemoration can include asking about experiences during times of war or other conflicts. Or, those new to middle school can inquire into the social history of their parents' or grandparents' middle school years. Students like Marissa indicated that "you should do the project all at once." Whereas others, like Nina, stressed, "You should spread it out over the year." The point is that where you might call upon students' prior knowledge to uncover what they know about a topic, you might similarly call upon their oral histories to discover how they might have lived historical events within their family histories.

Step 2: Introducing Oral History

Students usually love to tell stories to their friends about the recent past of the weekend or their previous sports success. I built on this storytelling impulse by using it as part of the introductory *getting to know each other* activities at the start of the school year and then situating it within the context of family and community storytelling practices. Students developed a meta-awareness by reflecting on the type of stories they shared with family and friends, including when and where the stories were told. This provided a point of comparison at the end of the project as students examined how their conversational and storytelling habits evolved. Fati, for example, acknowledges the immediate difference it made in her family upon initiation of the project: "Sure I love to tell stories with my friends. But stories with my parents? We just talk about our daily plans. At least we did until we started the project." And Rica Q. articulated the change over time in regard to family habits which many students experienced: "While storytelling wasn't a big concept in my family because everyone has busy schedules, extracurricular activities, and work to do, I now wonder … how come I've never heard these stories before? Because of this project, my grandparents now tell me one of their stories every day."[15] Other students, like Sean G., noticed a more individual change: "Before this project I generally listened to my family's stories without comment, but for research purposes, I have begun to ask more in depth questions, trying to squeeze out as much detail as possible."[16]

Students were introduced to the different categories of oral history (see Fig. 14.1) early in the process. I developed this classification tree in order to break up the long narrative that is a "life story" into more manageable units for thinking, research, and writing. As Karel Van Nieuwenhuyse observed, inquiry is important but students don't know which questions to

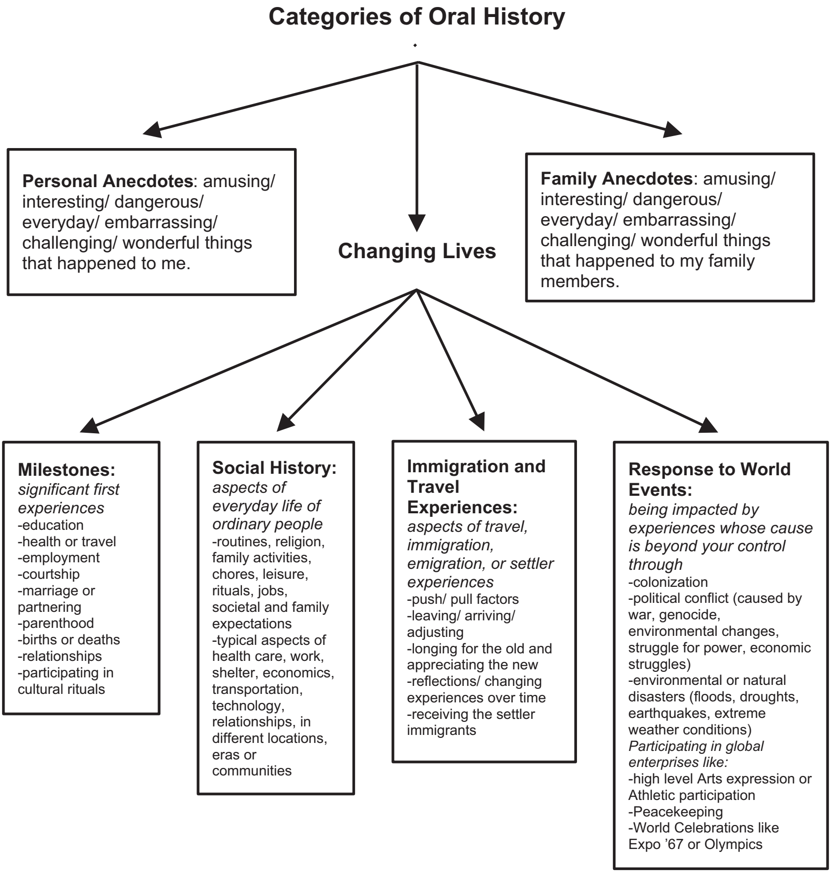

Categories of Oral History
Personal Anecdotes: amusing/ interesting/ dangerous/ everyday/ embarrassing/ challenging/ wonderful things that happened to me.
Changing Lives
Family Anecdotes: amusing/ interesting/ dangerous/ everyday/ embarrassing/ challenging/ wonderful things that happened to my family members.
Milestones:
significant first experiences
-education
-health or travel
-employment
-courtship
-marriage or partnering
-parenthood
-births or deaths
-relationships
-participating in cultural rituals
Social History:
aspects of everyday life of ordinary people
-routines, religion, family activities, chores, leisure, rituals, jobs, societal and family expectations
-typical aspects of health care, work, shelter, economics, transportation, technology, relationships, in different locations, eras or communities
Immigration and Travel Experiences:
aspects of travel, immigration, emigration, or settler experiences
-push/ pull factors
-leaving/ arriving/ adjusting
-longing for the old and appreciating the new
-reflections/ changing experiences over time
-receiving the settler immigrants
Response to World Events:
being impacted by experiences whose cause is beyond your control through
-colonization
-political conflict (caused by war, genocide, environmental changes, struggle for power, economic struggles)
-environmental or natural disasters (floods, droughts, earthquakes, extreme weather conditions)
Participating in global enterprises like:
-high level Arts expression or Athletic participation
-Peacekeeping
-World Celebrations like Expo '67 or Olympics

Fig. 14.1 Categories of oral history

ask.[17] This classification tree provided a starting point for developing questions when peering into the vast unknown of the past, a way of thinking about experience they might not have considered, and an organizing reference for the stories their family tells. Moreover, students were exhorted to ask questions across the range of categories from a variety of relatives, thereby collecting different knowledge from a variety of sources.

When doing the oral history project, teachers are encouraged to share their own family history where appropriate, carefully selecting an anecdote which will allow them to model the ways in which a story can reveal more than expected. I usually begin with a seemingly simple, lighthearted anecdote about my two-year-old brother Greg being accidentally left behind at a grocery store while on our first family vacation at a rented beach cottage. We recount this story because it allows us to fondly tease a brother. I tell the story in the classroom because it includes a humorous moment as we drive by the store after gassing the car when one sibling curiously noted, “Hey, there’s a lady with a kid who looks like Greg.” A moment’s silence ensues as all 11 people in the car swivel their heads and stare. “Hey, it IS Greg!” The story as I tell it reveals many details: the excitement of a working-class family on their first cottage vacation, the chaotic reality of a large family during the baby boom era, the fact that we traveled en masse in a station wagon without seat belts, the only mild concern expressed about temporarily misplacing a child! As students became familiar with the categories of oral history we returned to the anecdote and analyzed it again. Students then were able to identify evidence of a working-class family holiday *milestone*, the *social history* of safety standards, and *a response to the world event* that was the baby boom.

Relevant examples of oral history as they are revealed through literature or current events were identified and incorporated into the curriculum. Two recent Canadian examples I have used in the classroom include the testimony of the Indian Residential Schooling system’s survivors as part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and the discovery of the Franklin expedition through the knowledge held in Inuit oral traditions.[18] Oral history as a literary genre was also shared through the work of Canadian journalist and oral history pioneer Barry Broadfoot, and Belarusian winner of the 2015 Nobel Prize for Literature Svetlana Alexievich who used oral history to explore experiences in the former Soviet Union. Additional text sources were found in sophisticated picture books which illustrate personal experiences that are historically significant.[19] Guest speakers or Elders from the community or Historica Canada programs like the Memory Project (war) or Passages to Canada (immigration and identity) are of course live examples of oral history testimony.

Parents needed to be informed in advance about the project for several reasons. As the primary sources and gatekeepers of unexplored knowledge, they needed “think time” in order to dredge up their memories from the past. Most families were delighted by the opportunity afforded by the assignment as indeed was Hannah B., who remarked that her parents’ enthusiasm for sharing was her favorite part of the project overall.[20] However, as families are complicated entities, collecting stories sometimes proved challenging in instances where the story itself contained difficult knowledge. The first concern was around the emotions expressed by the adult subject and observed by the student interviewer. As Anastasia P. noted, “Uncovering stories came along with a lot of old feelings or problems which made everything so much more real and made me realize that there was a time when these weren’t memories.”[21] Students were encouraged to empathetically acknowledge the emotional difficulty and let the interviewee decide where to take the conversation, if necessary providing an alternative selection of topics. A second concern was around the ability of the youth interviewer to handle difficult knowledge. A positive consideration was that due to the relationship between the subject and interviewee, one could assume the adult family member would be able to gauge the youth’s ability to understand. The end result is that students *did* hear about difficult things, with examples ranging from genocide experiences during the Khmer Rouge reign in Cambodia and the Nazis in Europe, to more individual challenges like divorces or the death of a loved parent in early childhood. In every case, *all* participants needed to know that editorial control about what gets shared to a wider audience rested with them. Not everything told needed to be recorded or shared to a wider audience.

Step 3: Interviewing

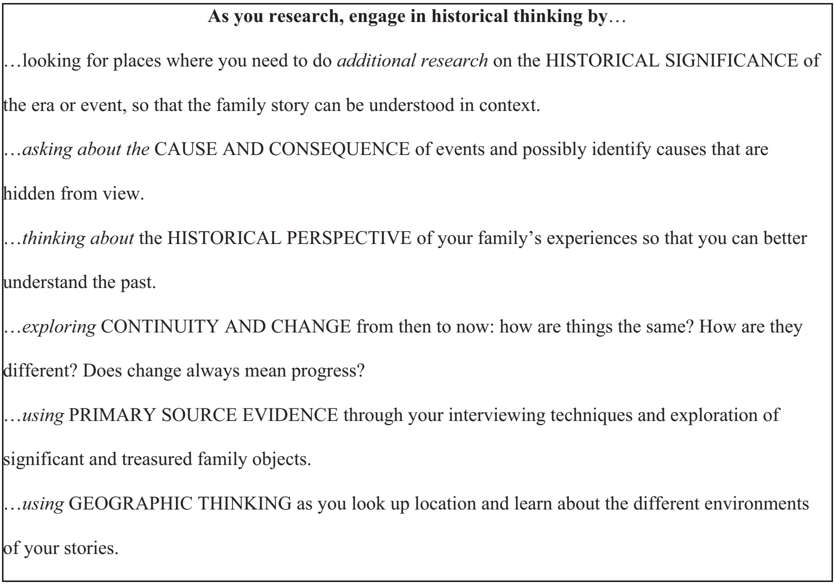
When experiencing the stages of the inquiry, writing, and historical thinking processes for the very first time, class discussion was facilitated if I chose the general category of the story in order to allow for a common point of comparison in the classroom. I often began with a social history of the middle school years. Students generated questions collaboratively, or were given a list from which they selected the ones they were most interested in. For example, Kennedy shared the following: *My first thoughts … my parents don’t really know anything about this topic, but already as I ask more questions I am finding they have answers.*[22] Since the dynamic of asking questions and listening comes into play, students needed to be explicitly taught interviewing procedures, skills, and possibilities. This included setting up a formal time in advance for the interview and going to lengths to make the interviewee comfortable, perhaps by providing a warm drink or performing a chore so the subject would be relaxed. Students typically reported surprise at the revelation of unexpected knowledge, as well as a sense of novelty and switched roles in this aspect of interviewing an adult family member. Interview skills included using recording devices and jotting notes, drawing on visuals or treasured objects as prompts, and managing silent processing time. The possibility existed that an interview might go off topic, which was permissible, for it could open toward additional avenues of information. Students were reminded to thank the participant and share the final product with them once the project was complete. Immediately after the interview students were instructed to note additional details, observations of tone or emotion, and notable phrases.

Step 4: Working with the Story Through the Lens of Writing Process and Historical Thinking

Using their notes or oral recording for support, students next wrote a first draft of the information. This was not a transcript, but a narrative of the story shared with them. The goal was ultimately to develop an informative yet personal writing voice for non-fiction text which makes historical and critical connections. Only after writing the first draft did the work of thinking like a historian and shaping the story like an author begin. In their reflections students like Colin expressed, "I was surprised by the things I was capable of writing when I used the writing process."[23] Or Maddy, who stressed, "I learned to look at the stories through a historical lens that made me think differently. For example, it allowed me to compare the past to the present and see how the past affects both the present and the future."[24] Revisiting the first draft, students engaged in classroom exercises to help them develop and expand the literary quality and historical effectiveness of their pieces. Brief teacher-led lessons (or mini-lessons) at this point were responsive to student needs as presented by their work. Example needs included aspects of written language (or writing traits) like ideas, overall organization, compelling introductory and concluding sentences, or descriptive and precise language use. The historical aspect was also included as it falls under "ideas."

Students also learned from each other as texts were shared in conferences or as class examples to discuss and analyze. The sharing of work in peer conferences, which I refer to as a "walkabout," played an important role in providing examples, spurring historical thinking, developing criteria, and ultimately shaping the stories. Desktops were cleared except for the draft and a "Walkabout Conference Form," which was a T-shaped chart with the two headings: *Strengths* and *Goals*. Referring to traits the class collaboratively identified as important, readers identified the strengths of the draft and then made suggestions for text revision or further historical inquiry under goals. Moving around the classroom (hence the "walkabout"), students typically read and responded to three or four drafts in 20 minutes. Such activities often concluded with a class discussion and read-aloud of exemplary pieces. Growth in literary quality was addressed in this way through the different stages of the writing process. By examining peer drafts and mentor texts, students developed and applied the criteria of what made good storytelling.

Specific attention to historical thinking skills occurred at different times in the process. Each encounter added another layer of knowledge and developed the text further. Initially, the interview itself exposed students to primary source evidence. Also, students often returned to the interview subject for clarification and elaboration, or conducted further research through traditional secondary sources to understand more about the context of an event or era. Then, students selected one or more questions from the historical thinking questions chart to help them think through the information so they would better understand, analyze, and shape the



As you research, engage in historical thinking by…

…looking for places where you need to do *additional research* on the HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE of the era or event, so that the family story can be understood in context.

…*asking about the* CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE of events and possibly identify causes that are hidden from view.

…*thinking about* the HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE of your family's experiences so that you can better understand the past.

…*exploring* CONTINUITY AND CHANGE from then to now: how are things the same? How are they different? Does change always mean progress?

…*using* PRIMARY SOURCE EVIDENCE through your interviewing techniques and exploration of significant and treasured family objects.

…*using* GEOGRAPHIC THINKING as you look up location and learn about the different environments of your stories.

Fig. 14.2 Historical thinking

story they were telling (see Fig. 14.2). This could be seen in the shape of the narrative which often developed from a simple retelling into a more complex text which included evidence of the thinking.

Step 5: Publishing and Celebrating

The publication and celebration of the stories in *any* format fulfilled the obligation to share this "new knowledge" with the community. However, I consistently chose bookmaking because it added additional layers of creative complexity and curriculum integration as students organized, interpreted, and visualized their collection. This also gave their work permanence and respected the importance of the stories collected. For example, Cynthia reminds us that all her "research and writing deserve to have a permanent place. They deserve to be in a book … My book!"[25] In the preparation for publication, students curated their collected works, developed a theme, and selected a title which reflected the metaphor of their perspective. Stories were then elucidated by visuals like photos, maps, drawings, or book borders. "Bilingual bonus points" were gained by

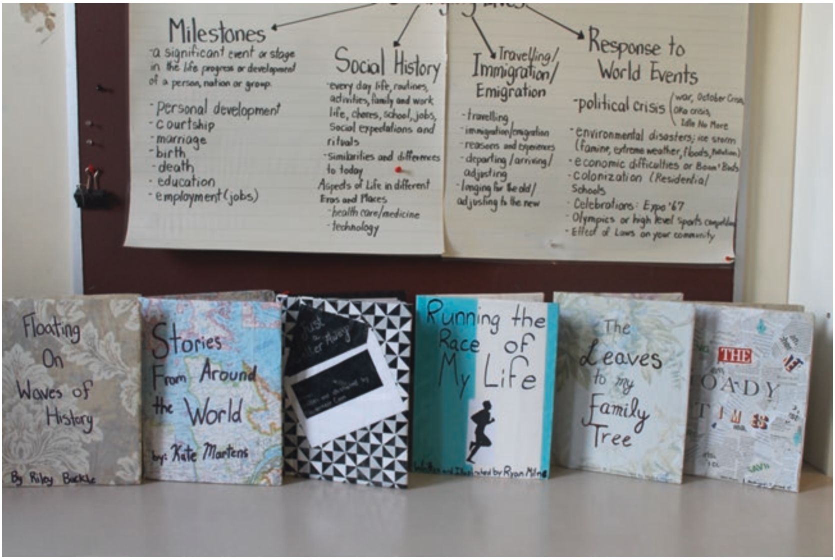

Milestones
-a significant event or stage in the life progress or development of a person, nation or group.
-Personal development
-courtship
-marriage
-birth
-death
-education
-employment (jobs)
Social History
-every day life, routines, activities, family and work life, chores, school, jobs, Social expectations and rituals
-Similarities and differences to today
Aspects of Life in different Eras and Places
-health care/medicine
-technology
Travelling/ Immigration/ Emigration
-travelling
-immigration/emigration
-reasons and experiences
-departing/arriving/ adjusting
-longing for the old/ adjusting to the new
Response to World Events
-political crisis (war, October Crisis, Oka crisis, Idle No More
-environmental disasters; ice storm (famine, extreme weather, floods, pollution)
-economic difficulties or Boom' Busts
-Colonization (Residential Schools
-Celebrations: Expo '67
-Olympics or high level sports competition
-Effect of Laws on your community
Floating On Waves of History
By Riley Buckle
Stories From Around the World
by: Kate Martens
Running the Race of My Life
The Leaves to my Family Tree
THE

Fig. 14.3 Sample book cover

publishing stories in additional languages. The media aspect of the book project included: well-thought-out titles, touching dedications, tables of contents, historians' biographies, and comments pages for readers to write responses. The collection was hand sewn and bound into hardcover books made of wallpaper, cardboard, and white glue (see Fig. 14.3 for a sample of book covers). The front cover was finished off with a gold sticker announcing (self-chosen) awards like the *Governor General's Award for Historical Nonfiction* or the *Globe and Mail Best Books*. These books were proudly celebrated at a class book launch that included parents as guests. At this event the author-historians were visually arranged in groups, which in turn reflected a certain oral history category. Each author then read his or her favorite paragraph aloud. This was their opportunity to perform their communication skills, demonstrate their historical understandings, and share their family histories. Of course, the celebration included food, applause, and book signing—not necessarily only for the author but also by the audience who left a permanent record of their reflections on the "comments pages" of the books they enjoyed.

Step 6: Self- and Teacher Evaluation

Students were involved in self-assessment throughout this multidimensional process. From generating questions to sharing oral stories and written drafts, students co-constructed success criteria which they applied to their own work. This often led to students developing a deep sense of their own learning, as illustrated by Kathleen: "I'm not concerned about my final mark like I usually am. That's because I'm satisfied and confident about the learning I already did."[26] By the end of the project, criteria on the summative assessment rubric included: learning and research skills, writing traits, historical thinking, and media literacy or visual communication. An equally important part was student reflection on the process and the product, which in turn shaped the successive year's' project. These comments have confirmed the value of doing oral history and provide the basis for the concluding section.

HOW STORIES SHAPE US: OBSERVED OUTCOMES

Doing family oral history is a powerful practice for teachers enthusiastic about effective ways to engage students while addressing curriculum expectations. Combining an inquiry approach with the writing process through the lens of historical thinking optimizes learning opportunities offered by the stories that the students collect; but the way the stories shape the culture of the family, the classroom community, and ultimately the young citizen is as compelling. The observed outcomes of doing oral history based upon student reflections are as follows.

Historical Thinking and Inquiry

Evidence of historical thinking and the inquiry process is embedded in different aspects of the texts which students produce. For example, Anastasia stated, "I always knew what the consequences of things in my family were, because I lived them. But now I understand what the causes of those consequences were."[27] Whereas others students like Kathleen began to ask the following historical thinking questions: "Did you know that in the 1950s society had different expectations for girls? I learned that from my mother's story. They were not encouraged to try and live their dreams. Why was society like that?"[28] Or, like Graham who began to question the concept of continuity and change: "After researching I understood the story in context of the Eritrean war. I also realized that change doesn't always mean progress because after they got independence, the fighting still continued."[29] The story initially provided the substantive content that led and directed the inquiry process. Then, students selected and shaped data according to the criteria they considered most significant, in light of the historical thinking question they asked themselves. Leo H. illuminated this process when he identified that "I made the most (learning) progress … in thinking like a historian by making decisions about where the emphasis should lay as I put what I heard into story form. I realized it wasn't just facts, it was the perspective behind the facts. That's what history is, I guess."[30] Avery D. commented, "I was surprised by how simple it was to even deepen my understanding by practicing different methods of historical thinking."[31] An example of deepened understanding of historical perspective can be found in Regan's text when she wrote, "I feel that I can better understand what the past was like. For example, when my grandmother immigrated from Holland after World War II I always thought it would have been comfortable but now I realize that it was completely different."[32] While all students had the opportunity to practice historical thinking in relation to the construction of their family stories, their grasp of the complexities or subtleties involved with their historical literacy competencies requires further study.

Nonetheless, as their teacher, I witnessed a transformation in their comprehension of the different dimensions we ascribe to historical literacy as the students were exposed to the historiographies, global and local events, and people taken up in each other's stories. A random selection from last year's publications reveals that students learned about: the continuity and change of disciplinary methods in Canadian schools; the social history of a rural Chinese, urban Jamaican, and small-town Manitoban education; the causes and consequences of Indian Residential School experiences in Northern Ontario; and the historical perspective of families in Canada and Romania during World War I and II. Through reading texts from previous classes, my students were also likely to learn about: causes and consequences of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and the Somalian civil war, the historical perspective of being on the original "Schindler's List," or the continuity and change of attitudes toward wild animals in captivity as experienced through working at the Toronto Zoo in the 1970s. As a class community it made us feel intimately connected to the historically significant past to know we had among us the descendants of those who: were nursing sisters in World War I; convinced Lord Simcoe to change the name of the proposed Upper Canadian settlement of "Dublin" to "York" because "I would never live in a place named that"[33]; were Loyalist outlaws against the American rebels[34]; "captured" the young Winston Churchill in the Boer War[35]; had been a lover of Catherine the Great and owned a pearl earring given as a gift[36]; and survived labor hardships in the Canadian mines, prairies, and on Great Lake ships. Nevertheless, stories that were historically significant were juxtaposed with stories that revealed a more intimate family history and were equally relished without judgment by both the writers and readers. As Student C. wrote, "When I learned about how my parents met, I could better understand their divorce."[37] The point is, when you collect family oral history you can never be sure what will be revealed and unearthed, although it is all fodder for deepening different kinds of understanding.

Developing Complex Language Skills

Overall, as the student comments infer, complex language skills developed as students engaged in a variety of stages and language modes, inspired by the deep motivation of telling their own family stories. Students noted a variety of changes in the listening and speaking habits of their family over the course of the project. This concerned a change in the type of things they talked about, moving from the practical aspects of daily life, to more abstract and emotional subject matter. As Shirley Z. noted in her introduction, "Before this assignment, recounting stories … was usually treated as a casual pastime and consisted of a quick summary of our day over a steaming dinner. As I delved deeper into the project, storytelling habits in my family unconsciously began to modify."[38]

The interview process was an unfamiliar structure for students. After their initial discomfort, however, they reported an increased confidence in their facility to conduct one. Shirley Z. explained, "The first couple of interviews and questions were stiff, but as I gained more practice searching for what I needed to know, it became comfortable between my hands."[39] Students experienced a variety of responses from their subjects. While some students were surprised that their subjects "remembered it [the past] as if it had happened the previous day,"[40] others needed prodding and the use of prompts like photographs to regain memories, but all were ultimately successful. Tudor L. described a common experience: "At the start, they said they didn't have interesting stories to tell. After some thought, they remembered some. While I was interviewing them, they uncovered parts of it they had long forgotten and it was sort of like they were rediscovering their childhood. So I guess that this ended up being a great experience for me and my parents."[41]

Students acquired valuable writing skills through the writing process using meaningful content like the oral histories. They were required to think through the data they had orally gathered, organize the ideas effectively, turn the factual aspects into interesting non-fiction, and conduct additional research to provide answers to further questions. By learning to write with their own data, students struggled through expressing complicated ideas while avoiding the issues of plagiarism that are endemic for the "click on and copy" generation who tend to write directly from Internet-accessible research. Adele elaborated, "I enjoyed writing down the stories and seeing myself improve. I was surprised at the necessity of drafts to shape the stories. I made the most progress in using the writing process because now I realize that editing my work really helps me achieve what I'm aiming for."[42] Additionally, the practice in writing engaging non-fiction provides practical lessons for the students in preparation for the next level of education, where English Language Arts is just one class of many and yet non-fiction writing is a bigger part of every subject. As Jasmine L. explained, "The most valuable lesson I learned was that nonfiction does not mean dull, if written effectively."[43]

Physically making the book by sewing the pages and binding it to the cardboard cover was a crafting skill the students relished and preceded the “maker movement”[44] which is just now developing in schools. The accompanying experience of publishing the book as a conceptual whole gave participants practice in finding metaphors to communicate ideas about their work. The metaphor of a family tree or references to the passing of time have been a common choice. “A Family Tree Twisted” and “Time Warp” are two 2014 examples. Other students pulled a theme out of their stories, and hence “The Power of Knowledge.”[45] Alexander K. called his book “Touching the Surface: A Collection of Extraordinary Family Stories” and his title page included an image of a drop of water rippling a smooth surface. His introduction alluded to this: “Every family has their own special touch, their own signature style. Sometimes it is something forged by generations long past, and sometimes it is a new tradition from brand new personalities. … These stories are examples of my own, allowing you to touch the surface of the history and traditions of my family.”[46]

The opportunity to communicate visually and artistically built additional communication skills. For example, each story in the English–Chinese bilingual edition of “Searching for the Past” by James C. included illustrations of a map, clock, and magnifying glass, and a “Time Window” illustration captioned with the date, location, and event underneath. Striking illustrations included: a granduncle’s bloody ear sent to his mother in a box after it had been cut off by Chinese communists, and “Henry’s Cafe,” the restaurant opened by his other granduncle in Perth, Ontario, after laying track on the Canadian Railroad.[47]

Family, Community, Culture, and Self

Engaging in conversations around family experiences appeared to strengthen individual connections and, in some cases, allowed the parent to be observed in a new light. This is an important yet difficult to foster perspective in these preteen youth who are developmentally readying themselves to “launch.” Discovering certain stories of the past frequently surprised the student and made the parent and family an intriguing source of unexpected information. As Julie B. observed, “For my mother, the way I know her, you wouldn’t really expect a story like this out of a forty-year-old. I think of my mom as boring, she just does normal things, but this story was totally unexpected.”[48] This sentiment was echoed 20 years later by Calan B. who emphasized that: “The whole project was about primary source evidence. I never considered my parents as having information worth knowing. I think differently now."[49] In other cases, the project opened up lines of communication that had been closed. Sotha S. knew her parents had lived through difficult times in Cambodia; she felt the project gave them permission to talk about the details of their tragic experiences under the Khmer Rouge.[50]

Extended family relations were also broadened. Whether by snail mail, e-mail, phone call, or Skype, it was not the type of technology but the project itself which provided the opportunity for deep personal connection. John H. wrote, "My grandfather was really happy to talk to me (on the phone and by email) about working in the mines. This was also special for me because we hardly see each other since my parents are divorced and my dad (his son) lives in another country."[51] Parents also expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share their family stories which the project fortuitously necessitated. Jennifer Robson identified how her daughter Morgan made a clear and deliberate use of the project to make her own statement about her sense of family: "Her final book was surprising and deeply moving as an evolving outward expression of what family means to her. … There is the family we are born to and the family that we chose for ourselves (but not always for every child). … Finding ways to claim them as our own is important. The oral history project let her do this."[52]

The need for diverse Canadian cultural voices in the classroom was a contributing factor to the project's inception. "Cultures" were conceived as both content *about* Canada and the relationship of one's self to the *here* of Canada. For students whose national identity is either limited or, to be more positive, in formation, the content about Canada from any angle came as a delightful surprise. The oral history stories placed the self on the map, as Deni S. makes clear: "I included a map of Canada to illustrate all the places that my family has been touched by Canada."[53] Kirk B. was surprised to learn that his settler ancestors "were special individuals who helped, in their own small ways, to shape this nation. In fact, you could even say they slightly changed the world."[54]

Sometimes the stories can disrupt the grand narrative of progress, when they talked about colonization, racism, or class. Residential schools, forced name-changing, and making the best of limited opportunities were family stories shared in this case. Adele W. observed unspoken privilege: "Throughout my research (of my grandmother's experiences) I noticed that her family owned many possessions that the average family did not, making them very wealthy. I was also incredibly surprised that she didn't notice it herself."[55] Ultimately, time spent uncovering the past of the *here* allowed for connections of the *now* to be made. Many students articulated similar versions of what Amanda expressed: “I never knew my family was that connected to Canada. It makes me feel different about our country.”[56] At the same time, our global links are reaffirmed *not* necessarily always as colonizing narratives, but also as active contributors toward the global and ethical enterprise of being human.

A subtle but critical outcome is the sense of agency that students develop as they each express surprise that their family had interesting stories to relate which revealed unknown connections to the world. Pride is expressed as students identify qualities they had not thought of their ancestors possessing. They see authentic connections to history, and that *they*—in the past of their families and in the present of themselves—are potential history-makers, as Rachel implies in her dedication when she writes, “I dedicate this book to my ancestors, in whose footsteps I step as I go on to make my own mark on the world.”[57] In some instances they see who they are, now, validated. The personal anecdote of student Bob D. explains how he was teased on the Canadian schoolyard so much about the pronunciation of his Vietnamese name—Quyen, pronounced “Wing”—that he set about changing it to an Anglicized name, Bob. His selection of “Bob,” after the host of the television show “The Price is Right,” stuck, so much so that his parents even sometimes called him Bob. While his story reflects a complex community response to the Vietnamese boat people in 1987, it also reflects a boy of resilient and creative spirit, determined to adapt in difficult conditions. I remember the oral reading of this anecdote, and the difficult knowledge this brought to some in the classroom when they realized what their actions some years earlier meant to their friend. But after telling this story and others in the oral history project, Bob asked to have both his names embedded in his graduation certificate: Bob Quyen D.[58] I like to think the project gave him the power to reclaim both his story and his name.

Shaping the Stories as They Shape Us

The story of doing family oral history as chronicled in this chapter, like the opening question posed by the Tsimshian Elder, invites educators to work collaboratively with students to discover and reconsider their family connections and relations to particular times and places. For the student, the family stories shared and then constructed can inform and enrich their historical and contemporary knowledge of who they are as national and global citizens, while encouraging a bourgeoning sense of individual agency, family relationship, and community connection. For the teacher, the integrated nature of the inquiry, writing, and historical thinking processes involved as students collect and shape the stories makes doing family oral history a rich pedagogy which will simultaneously address many curricular outcomes in a meaningful and joyful way.

The community of the classroom that is ultimately shaped by doing family oral history contains seeming contradictions and complexities, much like the stories unveiled and constructed. The project validates individual experience through a process that is highly collaborative. It builds a sense of common citizenship that is paradoxically differentiated by connections and perspectives from across the globe, making it culturally responsive[59] to all learners. It is very creative yet requires disciplined work as students think critically, and select and shape data according to the criteria they consider most significant. There is room in the project for additional layering that is sometimes implicit but has so far remained dormant, that of an activist pedagogy. Since doing family oral history allows participants to engage with complexity on a personal level, it is my hope that it also provides an opportunity to practice a growth mindset that will make them more able to embrace contradictions put forth in stories about their country's past and present, in order to shape it for the future. This year, as activist oral historians, we will continue to collect stories of immigration and take them a step further into reconciliation. We will do this by listening to the oral histories of Elders and exploring the historic and contemporary experiences of the Indigenous Nations from the land on which we settled, and the consequences of the treaties, which enabled our settlement. This affords us a unique opportunity to recognize that *this* is the land where we live collectively, now, and *these are our stories*, being revealed, enmeshed, connected, and validated.

NOTES

1. Edward J. Chamberlin, *If This Is Your Land, Where Are Your Stories?: Finding Common Ground* (Canada: Random House, 2004), 1.
2. Anthony Brockmann's sister, my aunt, is the namesake of the Sister Annata Brockman Elementary/Junior High School in Edmonton, Alberta. You'll notice that my branch of the eastern Brockmanns have two "n"s, while she is representative of most of the western

Brockmans who only have one. You'll have to get the oral history of the reason behind it from one of my teaching relatives across the continent.

3. Members of Erika (Schlotmann) Brockmann's maternal family—Knaden—were the headmasters and teachers for over 230 consecutive years at a school in Ostinghausen, Germany, until the lineage was broken in 1927. It is to these educators, my "Auntie Sister" Annata Brockman and my parents—both teachers for parts of their lives—that I dedicate this work.
4. A "*Big Idea*" is an enduring understanding and is usually presented as a broad statement. It offers a conceptual framework which allows the learner to explore answers to essential questions involving a unit of study in any body of knowledge. The idea was conceptualized by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe in *Understanding by Design* (Alexandria VA: ASCD, 2005) and is part of curriculum design for the Ontario Ministry of Education.
5. Student commentaries are drawn from book introductions and from oral and written reflections which have been a systematic part of the self and teacher assessment throughout the years. Along with formative discussions, students completed a written reflection which asked what they enjoyed, found challenging, or were surprised about in regard to each aspect of the project. Contributors were identified by as much data as they included on their sheet: first name, last initial, and the year of the project.
6. Pat Rigg, "Language Experience Approach: Reading Naturally," in *When They Don't All Speak English: Integrating the ESL Student into the Regular Classroom,* eds. Pat Rigg and Virginia G. Allen (Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1989), 30.
7. Carole Edelsky, "Putting Language Variation to Work" in *When They Don't All Speak English: Integrating the ESL Student into the Regular Classroom*, eds. Pat Rigg and Virginia G. Allen (Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1989), 105.
8. The Family Treasures Project was briefly a local, then a national project as class books were put on display in the Great Hall at the Canadian Museum of History (formerly Civilization). W.E. Gowling Public School also organized a whole school Family Treasures Fair in the gym where each student "curated" their own display. It was a powerful literacy, historical, and cultural event.
9. Nejat Daud, personal conversation, 1990.

10. Lucy McCormick Calkins, *The Art of Teaching Writing* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1986).
11. Inquiry-based learning is a pedagogy which puts student questions, ideas, and observations as central to the learning experience. Educators are responsive to students' learning needs and have an active role as they question, guide, and help move students through the nonlinear stages of the inquiry. "Capacity Building Series #32: Inquiry Based Learning," May 2013, Ontario Ministry of Education, accessed March 27, 2016, https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/.../inspire/.../CBS_InquiryBased.pdf.
12. Karel Van Nieuwenhuyse, "Where Macro and Micro Histories Meet: On the Position, Trumps and Pitfalls of Oral Family History in Secondary School History Education," in *Oral History and Education*, eds. Nicholas Ng-A-Fook and Kristina Llewellyn (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, in press).
13. Peter Seixas and Tom Morton, *The Big Six: Historical Thinking Concepts* (Toronto: Nelson Educational, 2013).
14. Ibid., 2.
15. Rica Q., from Introduction to *Walking Down Memory Lane*, 2015.
16. Sean G., from Introduction to *A Treasure In Our Minds*, 2015.
17. Karel Van Nieuwenhuyse, "Where Macro and Micro Histories Meet."
18. Julie Perrone includes a discussion of this in her chapter in this collection.
19. Some of my favourite examples of sophisticated children's book include: Jan Andrews, *The Auction* (Toronto ON: Groundwood Books, 1990) Focus: farming experiences and traditions, generational change. Adwoa Badoe, *Nana's Cold Days* (Toronto ON: Groundwood Books, 2009) Focus: personal immigration anecdote of adapting to a cold climate. Nicola Campbell, *Shin-Chi's Canoe* (Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2008) Focus: Colonization, residential school experience, family traditions. John Cech and Sharon McGinley-Nally, *My Grandmother's Journey* (Toronto ON: Scholastic, 1991) Focus: Grandmother's life in turbulent Russia between WWI and WWII, refugee flight across Europe and emigration to North America. Sherry Garland, *The Lotus Seed* (New York: Harcourt Children's Books, 1997) Focus: refugee family, Vietnamese boat people experience, immigration to North America, family traditions. Andrea Spalding and Alfred

Scow, *The Secret of the Dance* (Vancouver BC: Orca Press, 2009) Focus: colonization, legal denial of the potlach, family traditions and renewal.

20. Hannah B., student reflection, 2015.
21. Anastasia P., student reflection, 2013.
22. Kennedy L., student reflection during the project, 2015.
23. Colin D., student reflection, 2013.
24. Maddy W., student reflection, 2013.
25. Cynthia R., student reflection, 2010.
26. Kathleen O'K, in discussion, 2011.
27. Anastasia P., student reflection, 2013.
28. Kathleen O'K., from Introduction to *My Family's Stories*, 2011.
29. Graham, student reflection, 2013.
30. Leo H., student reflection, 2013.
31. Avery D., student reflection, 2015.
32. Regan, in story text, 2013.
33. Denison Saunders, in "Denison" from *The Inside Scoop on Deni Saunders and His Family*, 2003.
34. Alexander K., family story, 2013.
35. Wilana H., family story, 2004.
36. Lara, family story, 2004.
37. Student C., student reflection, 2013.
38. Shirley Z., student reflection, 2014.
39. Ibid.
40. Aidan O'B., student reflection, 2015.
41. Tudor L, from Introduction in his family oral history book, 2015.
42. Adele W., student reflection, 2013.
43. Jasmine L., student reflection, 2015.
44. Maker movement, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brit-morin/what-is-the-maker-movemen_b_3201977.html, accessed September 22, 2016.
45. Matija S., *Power of Knowledge*, 2013.
46. Alexander K., from Introduction in *Touching the Surface: A Collection of Extraordinary Family Stories*. 2014.
47. James C., *Searching for the Past,* 1995.
48. Julie B., from "Nature Challenge" in, *World Adventures from the Boan Family*, 1994.
49. Calan B., student reflection, 2013.
50. Sotha S., in class discussion and private conversation, 1997.

51. John H., student reflection, 2012.
52. Jennifer Robson, parent email correspondence, June 25, 2015.
53. Denison Saunders, class discussion, 2003.
54. Kirk B., from Introduction in *Seven People Who Slightly Changed the World and Me*!, 2001.
55. Adele W., student reflection, 2013.
56. Amanda, student reflection, 2010.
57. Rachel., from Dedication in *Ticking while Talking Through Time: My Family's Oral History*, *2001.*
58. Bob Quyen D., *A Stroll Down Memory Lane on Canadian and Vietnamese Roads*, 1994.
59. Culturally responsive pedagogy recognizes how important it is to acknowledge students' multiple social identities. Students' home culture, prior knowledge, and community experiences are seen as a resource for the teacher which should be integrated into the curriculum. See "Capacity Building Series #35: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy," November 2013, Ontario Ministry of Education, accessed March 26, 2016, https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_ResponsivePedagogy.pdf.

CHAPTER 15

Developing Student Teachers' Historical Thinking: Oral History in Teacher Education

Amy von Heyking

Introduction

Social Studies and History programs in K–12 schools across Canada have been transformed in recent years by the expectation that students will learn to think historically.[1] Seixas and Morton explain, "Historical thinking is the creative process that historians go through to interpret the evidence of the past and generate the stories of history."[2] While generations of Canadian school children have read and heard the historical accounts created by others, curricular requirements now stress the skills of interpreting, assessing, and creating historical narratives. This means that teachers must spend less time transmitting historical information and more time cultivating students' ways of thinking in the discipline. This is a challenging pedagogical shift for many school teachers, who will only be able to meet required curricular outcomes if they engage their students in historical inquiries, in the doing of history.

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The History of Canadian Education course I teach in the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge offered an opportunity to explore and model teaching for historical thinking through historical inquiry. In the fall of 2014, I designed the course around an overarching critical inquiry question: To what extent has contemporary schooling been shaped by its history? Over the term, the students investigated related inquiry questions that explored change and continuity in curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment; children's experience of schooling; the schooling of ethnic, linguistic, and racial minorities; and the nature of teachers' work. Integrating an oral history interview into the course offered students unique and powerful opportunities to engage in their own historical inquiries and develop the historical thinking skills they will be expected to foster in their own classrooms as teachers. I also hoped it would challenge them to consider the impact of their emerging historical perspectives on their understanding of public schooling and their responsibilities as teachers. For Roger Simon, historical investigation is less about cultivating disciplinary reasoning than a moral encounter with the people of the past, and an orientation toward future action. He asserts, "remembrance might enact possibilities for an ethical learning that impels us into a confrontation and 'reckoning' not only with stories of the past but also with ourselves as we are (historically, existentially, ethically) in the present."[3] The goal of the course then was to cultivate my student teachers' ability to challenge schooling conventions and conformity, and nurture insights that would contribute to their sense of professional identity and responsibility.

The course was a seminar where classes primarily consisted of my providing some information to set the context for our inquiry, and then students critically reading and discussing historical accounts related to our inquiry questions.[4] Students frequently worked with primary sources of many kinds such as Department of Education reports, programs of study, textbooks, excerpts from memoirs, articles from teacher association magazines, magazine and newspaper articles from the periods under examination, and so on. They analyzed and interrogated these sources, identifying each author's purpose, argument, and assumptions, and considered how the sources supported or challenged the interpretations in the accounts we had read.

I decided early in my course planning that I wanted to offer students the opportunity to conduct an oral history interview with a retired teacher because "Through oral history projects, students and teachers engage in an undertaking that reveals what historians do in their own work."[5] The interviews would provide students with the experience of grappling with a unique kind of historical evidence, thereby doing the work of historians. Oral histories can also provide information missing from our written historical accounts, and can raise counter-narratives or differing interpretations. I felt that an oral history interview would encourage the students to connect the information they had learned in the class to the lived experiences of teachers and students in their communities. Gardner and Cunningham argue that "oral history has the power to initiate substantive historical questions which, though they are amenable in part to investigation through documentary analysis, could be raised in the first place by no other technique."[6] So I hoped that the interviews might offer new and unexpected avenues for the students' historical inquiries in their final projects.

In preparation for their oral history interviews, we watched an episode about schooling from *Growing Up Canadian*, a six-part documentary series in which famous and not so famous Canadians reminisce about their experiences of school.[7] This prompted an initial discussion about the nature of oral history as a source of evidence for historians, and the challenges that would arise in gathering and interpreting that evidence, and in weaving the evidence together in ways that would present a compelling narrative. Course readings afforded us opportunities to analyze and synthesize these themes in more depth and detail.[8] In these readings, the historians became real people who, like the students, struggled through the challenges of their historical investigations; their historical reasoning became apparent to the students.

I had no difficulty locating retired teachers who were willing to participate in oral history interviews. Prior to the course starting, I defined the parameters of the interview project and crafted sample questions in order to fulfill the requirements of our university's Human Subject Research Committee, which reviews course assignments as well as research projects to ensure the ethical treatment of participants. In order to prepare the students for the project, scholars from our university's Centre for Oral History and Tradition provided a workshop on theories, policies, and procedures of oral history. Nine students chose to complete an interview. Each was matched with a retired teacher. The students contacted their narrators to arrange a convenient time and place for the interview. The shortest interview was one hour in length, the longest two hours. Interviews were recorded and students completed transcriptions. Though they had a list of open-ended questions intended to provide some structure for the interview, students were encouraged to be flexible in their questioning and conversation, and to allow their narrators to tell the story of their professional lives. After they had completed their interviews and transcriptions, students spent time sharing their findings, comparing and contrasting the nature and results of their interviews, and bringing the insights they had gained into class discussions about the course's historical inquiry questions. Eight of the students who completed oral history interviews made use of the experience in their final course projects.[9]

Fostering Students' Historical Thinking

Throughout the course I was interested in exploring the opportunities offered by the oral history interviews to nurture and extend students' historical thinking. I explicitly structured discussions, their final course assignments, and written reflections around questions and issues that would require them to address the elements or concepts of historical thinking defined by Peter Seixas. The six concepts are significance, evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence, historical perspectives, and the ethical dimension.[10] Seixas, writing with Tom Morton, explains that "the ideas that we refer to as 'the big six' historical thinking *concepts* reveal *problems* inherent to constructing history."[11] They shape the current historical method taught across Canada and in turn "give us a vocabulary to use while talking with students about how histories are put together and what counts as a valid historical argument."[12] These six concepts provided the framework through which I explored and extended the students' historical reasoning.

Evidence

Foundational to the historical method is an understanding of how historians come to know about the past, the concept Seixas and Morton call evidence. Sophisticated historical thinkers understand that "history is interpretation based on inferences made from primary sources," that those sources must be interrogated and understood within the context of their creation, and that our inferences must be corroborated.[13] Throughout the course, the students had engaged in the analysis of primary sources that were mostly textual documents produced at the time under investigation. The oral history interview provided an opportunity for students to consider a unique kind of evidence. They quickly discovered the accuracy of scholar Lynn Abrams' assertion that "one is confronted by the oral history interview as an event of communication which demands that we find ways of comprehending not just what is said, but also how it is said, why it is said, and what it means."[14] The students explored the three elements that Abrams argues make oral history a unique source of historical evidence: subjectivity and intersubjectivity, narrative, and memory.

While all historical sources are subjective in the sense that they embody a particular, historically situated perspective, oral histories are unique in that "the narrator is responding to questions posed by the interviewer, and hence the story is a product of communication between two individuals, both of whom bring something of themselves to the process."[15] Abrams calls this intersubjectivity. The students in the course considered how their identities as student teachers, the identities of their narrators, and the context of the interview (a course assignment in a teacher education program) might impact the nature of the interview and their narrators' stories. Before their interviews, the students predicted that their narrators would communicate positive teaching experiences, and would be reassuring or encouraging about teaching as a profession. After all, the retired teachers who had volunteered to participate had spent many years in the profession and so presumably enjoyed it and were successful. Moreover, they were still active in the retired teachers' association or involved in teacher education as mentors, things a disappointed or embittered former teacher would be unlikely to do. They predicted that their narrators would identify both positive and negative trends in schooling over the course of their careers. The students decided that they would invite their narrators to bring memorabilia (yearbooks, photo albums, and plan books) to the interview that might generate conversation or spark a memory. They also felt that this would set an open and inviting tone for the interview.

After the interviews, the students revisited their predictions and shared their insights about how they felt the interviewer–narrator relationship had shaped their interviews. The students acknowledged that their narrators had cast themselves in the role of mentor, anxious to communicate wisdom gained through experience and the value of teaching to those just embarking on teaching careers. The narrators often contrasted their professional education to current practices, generally reassuring the students that they are far better prepared to begin their work as classroom teachers. But the students were also very surprised that their narrators had been remarkably frank about the appeal of teaching: most became teachers because they were confident they could get a job, or because it was the most convenient and appealing option at the time. The students noticed that their narrators shared lengthy anecdotes in answer to questions posed but did not really have rehearsed stories of their professional lives to share. All the narrators expressed a concern that they were sharing "helpful" information with the students. It is perhaps unsurprising that narrators who had spent their lives as professional teachers should express concern that the students "got the information they needed" in what was, after all, a course assignment. In raising these issues in discussions after they completed the interviews, the students certainly grasped the intersubjectivity of oral history.

Abrams stresses that "Oral history sources are also narrative sources," so that interviewers must "take notice of and interpret not just the words said but also the language employed, the ways of telling and the structures of explanation."[16] The students had tried to attend to the caution that their interviewees' narratives could only emerge if the interview was conversational and open. They avoided an interview format that more closely resembled an interrogation than oral history. Afterward, several students analyzed the narrative constructed by their interviewee. These students, Jared, Michelle, and Alan,[17] characterized the narratives they heard as "heroic." Jared's narrator, William, spent many years of his career as a school principal. Jared noticed that William stressed the time and emotional commitment he had made to teaching and administration, and contrasted that to what he felt was a lower level of professional commitment among young teachers he hired near the end of his career. Michelle's narrator, Catherine, spent 30 years teaching elementary school and working with what were then called "special needs" students. In her interview, Catherine described the barriers to her efforts, the special resources she designed, how she advocated for the inclusion of these children in regular classes, and the research she undertook in order to better meet the needs of these students. Michelle stated that Catherine "mentioned that at times, she felt like she was the only one attempting to focus on the learner during her teaching career before the shift towards learner-centered education was more widely accepted." The heroic "against all odds" narrative was also evident in Alan's interview with Abigail. Alan interviewed the oldest of the retired teachers. Abigail began teaching at the age of 17 in 1945. He felt Abigail had told many of the anecdotes she shared with him many times before. They had the quality of rehearsed reminiscences that conformed to the pattern Coulter described as a "narrative of the brave but long-suffering female teacher good-heartedly managing the one-roomed rural school under less than ideal conditions."[18]

The oral history interviews forced the students to confront the reliability of memory as a source of historical evidence. The students appreciated Abrams' insight that "memory is about the relationship between material facts and personal subjectivity, and it is precisely that interplay between what we remember, how we remember and why we remember that is of such interest to oral historians."[19] Matthew noted that his narrator, Byron, remembered very little of what he called "the nitty gritty" of teaching, and seemed to be unable to put many of his anecdotes about his teaching career in chronological order. The students were surprised that the teachers had to be prompted to remember details about the curriculum they taught or changes in instructional practices, the topics of most interest to them. Instead, their narrators shared lengthy anecdotes about specific students, often memorable because of the demands they placed on the teachers or because they were involved in notorious events in or out of school. Rachel's and Chelsea's narrators had explicit memories of students they had worried about and of those that had died. These observations confirmed Abrams' assertion that "the quality, vividness and depth of an individual's memory of a specific event or experience will be dependent upon the encoding that happened at the time and the circumstances in which the remembering is taking place."[20] In class discussion, as students compared and contrasted the information they gathered, they realized that the six female teachers they interviewed seemed to remember more about their students, and the three male teachers more about their colleagues and the community. They speculated that this was because the male teachers had spent more time as school administrators, but acknowledged that it might also be a function of gendered socialization, a relatively sophisticated insight for students conducting their first oral history interviews. The oral history interviews provided the opportunity for the students to confront many challenging elements of oral histories as a source of evidence and thereby demonstrate relatively sophisticated historical thinking in this regard.

Significance

Seixas and Morton explain that historians use the concept of historical significance when they make decisions about the questions they ask about the past. When I introduced the students to the specific inquiries that I had chosen for the course, I made my own considerations of historical significance explicit. I told the students that I strove to craft historical inquiry questions that would help them explore issues most relevant for them as beginning teachers and understand the historical context of current issues and practices in schools: questions related to the history of classroom instruction, to the work lives of teachers, to the experiences of children in schools. For example, schools in Alberta are currently grappling with a major learner-centered curriculum revision initiative. In response, I included an exploration of previous attempts to introduce progressive education in the province. Hence, in designing the course, I chose themes that would give a "classroom" view of the history of schooling, a perspective most significant for these student teachers.

The students' oral history interviews added another layer to their understanding of historical significance, largely because the teachers they interviewed had few insights to offer about the trends or issues the students thought were very significant in the history of schooling. For example, most of the retired teachers the students interviewed began teaching during the 1970s, an era we had characterized as a time of significant new thinking about pedagogy and student diversity. Most of the teachers dismissed changes in curriculum as relatively unimportant, or having little impact on their teaching practice. Abigail, who taught from 1945 to the 1980s, told Alan about a range of curriculum initiatives that were eventually abandoned, saying, "Things just seemed to go on more or less the same way and didn't change much." None of the narrators spoke to the ethnic, linguistic, or racial diversity of the students in their classrooms, or to their attempts to shift instruction in order to accommodate student diversity.

Instead, when asked to identify significant changes in teaching over the course of their careers, one teacher, Adrienne, identified technological changes. This response sparked her interviewer, Laura, to focus her final project around an inquiry into changes in classroom technologies. Because Byron, a retired teacher and principal, said that children with special needs were sent to special schools and identified inclusion as a major change, Matthew, his interviewer, decided to focus his final project on the history of schooling of the hearing and visually impaired. In contrast, Jared decided to explore changing notions of teacher professionalism in his final project because this emerged as a major theme in his interview with William, a retired school principal. These students took up the shifts their narrators had identified as significant and made those the focus of their historical inquiries.

Alan interviewed Abigail, the teacher whose career spanned the 1940s to the 1980s. He demonstrated a nuanced understanding of historical significance in his final project in which he told the story of Abigail's professional life. He clearly found her story personally interesting, but realized that his narrative had to link her story to a broader story about revealing changes and current issues in schooling and the teaching profession: the shift from formalist to more child-centered, progressive schooling; changes in teacher education that required her to return to university after years of teaching; and changes in expectations regarding teacher professionalism. In doing this, he demonstrated his understanding of another criterion Seixas and Morton identify for historical significance, that a person "can be significant for what he or she 'reveals' to us about issues and concerns that are compelling to us today."[21]

Change and Continuity

Their oral history interviews provided opportunities for the students to address change and continuity in the history of education. The retired teachers' relative lack of insights regarding curriculum change helped them understand that "change is a process, with varying paces and patterns."[22] Ray, a retired science teacher, told Wallace that shifts in curriculum and instructional practice were very incremental, that he would try a few new things every year, so that change was not so noticeable in the short term, but perhaps quite profound if he simply contrasted his teaching style at the beginning and at the end of his career. In their final reflections, the students commented on the complexity of initiating change in schooling; they noted that some reforms, like child-centered pedagogy, have been attempted several times and that changes have been episodic and incremental.

Instead, the students noted that the oral history interviews provided evidence for the continuity of trends they had read about in the secondary accounts. For example, they were surprised that the female teachers they interviewed chose teaching as a career in the 1970s for the same reasons as the women of earlier generations: there were limited career options available to them, they were encouraged by teachers in the small communities they grew up in, and they saw it as a relatively quick way to earn a decent living. They were surprised by how long school administration was dominated by men. The students were also surprised that even recent retirees from teaching were subject to gender bias or gendered expectations in terms of their working responsibilities.

The oral history interviews raised other themes that demonstrated the continuities in the working lives of teachers over many decades and into recent years. The retired teachers spoke about elements of their work lives that closely resembled descriptions of teachers' lives in the 1930s and 1940s. Jared said that his narrator, William, who started teaching in rural Alberta in 1975, spoke of the physical isolation of the community in which he taught. Byron and Adrienne also taught in small rural communities and stressed how much they missed having teaching colleagues. Jessie told Rachel, her interviewer, about the social pressures on her as a female teacher in a small town, and how she socialized with friends in neighboring communities to avoid the prying eyes of her students and their parents. These reminiscences were quite shocking for the students, who had imagined that these attitudes they had read about were long gone by the 1970s.

Related to the concepts of change and continuity, Seixas and Morton explain that "progress and decline are broad evaluations of change over time. Depending on the impacts of change, progress for one people may be decline for another."[23] Themes of progress and decline were prominent in the teachers' interviews and became a major focus of the students' discussions about their interviews and of their writing. The students identified trends that all the retired teachers characterized as progress: increased acknowledgment of students' learning needs, more relevant curriculum, and more authentic assessment of children's learning. They were not surprised by the trends their narrators had seen as making teaching increasingly challenging: family breakdown, a lack of respect for education in society generally, and the increased bureaucratization of school systems. For some of the students, themes of progress and decline became the focus of their own historical inquiries. For example, Laura, in her final project, drew on evidence from her interview with Adrienne to identify the benefits and drawbacks of the impact of technology on teaching. She wrote about the benefits of more efficient communication and more relevant teaching resources but also quoted Adrienne as saying, "Technology means you're able to do that much more, and so we are doing more. I'll tell you when you hand wrote a lesson plan, it was pretty bare bones … your grading was simple and so on, and it's all become far more complicated because we're able to make it more complicated."

The students were probably most surprised by the fact that what some narrators saw as marks of progress in the profession were seen as steps backwards for others. Some of the narrators talked about improvements in teacher education, but Ray and Tillie both argued that programs had become too long, too theoretical, and too expensive. Meg and Jessie both told their interviewers that they would not become teachers if they were starting their careers today because "it's much more complex now, it's too vague and too open," and "teachers are expected to be so creative." These were qualities that other narrators had characterized as positive trends that make schooling more relevant for students. Exploring change and continuity from the perspective of their narrators challenged the students' assumptions that developments in the history of schooling were always improvements.

Cause and Consequence

Seixas and Morton describe the concepts of cause and consequence as helping students to understand why trends emerge and change occurs, and to consider the impacts of those events.[24] The course readings emphasized the social, political, economic, and cultural conditions for changes in school policies, curriculum, and pedagogical practices.[25] We also explored the specific individuals who initiated significant changes in Alberta's school system in the 1930s and 1940s in order to better understand the role of historical actors within those contexts.[26] The students learned that policy and curriculum changes were rarely implemented in the ways intended by those who initiated them, illustrating Seixas and Morton's insight that "historical actors cannot always predict the effect of conditions, opposing actions, and unforeseen reactions."[27] The oral history interviews provoked two important insights for the students regarding the causes and consequences of changes in schooling: first, that teachers were not consulted about major change initiatives, and second, that many significant policy and curriculum changes had little impact on teachers' work in their classrooms. For example, Laura's narrator, Adrienne, shared her perspective of the whole language initiative of the 1980s:

> Another bug bear I have with so many wonderful innovations that come in, but they're kind of brought down on high and forced on teachers, they come down in the curriculum and they almost come down religiously to be honest with you, where if you speak, if you criticize or ask a question, you

> know, you're a Luddite, you're afraid of change. I felt that over the years all the time whenever you question, because I think had there been a greater debate over Whole Language, for example, amongst the profession, an open honest debate with respect for one another, I think it would have actually hung on, caught on much better than it did, because it made perfect sense.[28]

Adrienne's comments provoked a class discussion about the nature of educational reforms in the past. The students recognized that reforms developed without teacher input were unlikely to be implemented in meaningful or enduring ways.

While the oral history interviews helped students understand the limited role of teachers in initiating changes in the past, they also helped them appreciate the agency of teachers in responding to those changes. The narrators all spoke about their relative autonomy in their classrooms. They stressed that their teaching had changed over the course of their careers, not because of externally imposed requirements but because of their efforts to learn and grow. While the teacher narrators did not see themselves as important historical actors within systems or bureaucracies of schooling, they did appreciate the relationships they had developed and the lasting impact they were able to have on some of the students they had taught. For the student teachers, this raised a new appreciation for the professional and ethical commitments of teachers.

Perspectives and the Ethical Dimension of History

For the student teachers, the most challenging elements of historical thinking were what Seixas and Morton call historical perspectives and the ethical dimension of history. They say that "taking perspective means attempting to see through the eyes of people who lived in times and circumstances sometimes far removed from our present-day lives."[29] Throughout the course, the students struggled to bring their understandings of historical perspective, and their sense of how the people of the past thought differently, to bear on issues and events in the history of Canadian schooling that they found troubling or simply unethical: the treatment of Indigenous people in residential schools, the marginalization of children of ethnic and racial minorities, and children with learning challenges. Seixas and Morton explain that when students consider the ethical dimension of history, they are considering how history can help us live in the present. They stress: "students tend to judge the ethics of past actions according to the standards and mores of the present day. By introducing students to historical thinking, we help them learn to judge the past fairly."[30] This is not to suggest that students should accept past actions or attitudes as simply reflective of the time. Indeed, we should expect students to use their knowledge to inform their understanding of present issues and future responsibilities. Seixas argues: "historical knowledge that does not lead to moral orientation and moral judgments is useless history: why would we undertake the historical project at all, if not to orient ourselves morally?"[31]

To some extent, the oral history interviews gave students the opportunity to grapple with several issues in the history of schooling they found troubling, and challenged them to develop more sophisticated historical perspectives on those issues, and to consider the moral implications of those perspectives for their own practice. Essential to this was that students identify the ethical stance taken by the historians in the accounts they were reading. They needed to understand that the ethical dimension is inherent in historical interpretation and the construction of narratives. For example, Alan led our class discussion on a chapter from Neil Sutherland's *Growing Up: Children in English Canada from the Great War to the Age of Television*. He quickly identified Sutherland's critical stance toward formalist schooling as reflected in passages like this: "[the] system was based on teachers talking and pupils listening, a system that discouraged independent thought, a system that provided little opportunity to be creative, a system that blamed rather than praised, a system that made no direct or purposed effort to build a sense of self-worth."[32] In his interview with Abigail, Alan explored whether this was a fair characterization of schools in the past. They discussed the benefits and drawbacks of teacher- and child-centered pedagogies, and the challenges of implementing progressive instructional strategies in the late 1940s when she started teaching. Her insights helped Alan better understand the efficacy and endurance of teacher-centered instruction. In his final project, Alan strove to present Abigail's strict, teacher-centered approach fairly, considering the context of the time, and refrained from judging her practice by contemporary standards. His ability to seek explanations rather than rush to judgment demonstrated a relatively sophisticated historical perspective on past practices.

The oral history interviews forced student teachers to confront the legacies of the past and the responsibilities of the present, when their narrators spoke about their regrets, or their sense of inadequacy. Jared was surprised to discover that the biggest regret of William's career was that he had failed students. He admitted that students he had held back were never motivated by that failure; they simply dropped out. As a result, William supported current "no fail" or "no zero" policies as more appropriately directed toward assisting students in their learning. William's moment of reflection provoked a lively class discussion during which the students grappled with teachers' ethical obligations to their students; they used their historical understandings to inform their judgments on current issues like fair assessment. In this way, they demonstrated Seixas and Morton's assertion that "the ethical dimension opens students' eyes to a crucial way in which past experiences can shed light on present-day issues."[33] It helped them acknowledge an important principle for their future practice.

Matthew's narrator Byron, in looking back on his career, spoke to his relative inability and perhaps unwillingness to appreciate the diversity of his students. This prompted Matthew to examine change and continuity in schooling for the hearing and visually impaired in his final project. He traced policy and practice through "the three I's: isolation, integration and inclusion." In a written reflection, he insisted that "improper practices have resulted in major damages to individuals and communities," and argued that these need to be appropriately addressed. At the same time, he acknowledged that school systems face enormous challenges in meeting the needs of all students. He wondered what could reasonably be expected of teachers under a current policy of inclusion that means they are "expected to offer services that were previously provided by trained specialists and specific institutions" and result only in frustration with their increasing responsibilities and lack of support. This frustration was echoed by Tillie, the retired teacher interviewed by Chelsea, whose assessment of the efficacy of policies around inclusion became a catchphrase for the students: "One size fits none."

The teacher narrators' regrets and honest reflections about the students they felt they failed forced the student teachers to confront difficult realities associated with teaching: that teachers cannot always meet the needs of all of their students, that "best practices" may only work in some circumstances for some learners, and that effective teaching strategies are always context-dependent. The interviews allowed the student teachers to explore unfamiliar contexts and perspectives, but also challenged them to see teachers as professionals making judgments about how best to respond to policies and practices imposed by bureaucracies and do what is right for their students. They were not offered easy prescriptions for future action. Instead, the teacher narrators stressed the importance of relationships, of continued professional learning, and of the complex and contingent nature of the pedagogical judgments teachers make. In this way, the oral history interviews were essential in introducing historical perspectives on schooling that will help the student teachers confront the ethical dimension of teaching and its implications for their practice and identity as teachers.

Conclusion

The course's focus on nurturing historical thinking meant that students came to understand and appreciate the legacy of the history of education for today's schools and for themselves as future teachers. The students enjoyed their conversations with the retired educators, made important personal connections, and became engaged in their own historical inquiries. By examining change and continuity in teaching, exploring the causes and consequences of educational change, and seeking to understand historical perspectives, the oral history projects empowered the students to question past policies, contemporary values, and easy generalizations about "best practices" in teaching. In their final course reflections, all the students commented on the extent to which their historical understandings would inform their thinking on current educational issues. Laura wrote, "My historical knowledge can help me understand future changes and view them with a critical/informed eye." Alan stated that the course had "prepared me for future changes, to understand their roots, and to acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses." But there were some significant and enduring issues in Canadian schooling that the student teachers were not forced to confront. In some ways the oral history interviews presented the student teachers with an idealized past that allowed them to avoid the moral complexities of considering fundamental changes to the current structures of public schooling.

For example, there were issues we had learned about in our readings that their narrators did not speak to. Despite the fact that all lived and taught in rural districts in southern Alberta, they did not address the schooling of Indigenous students. They did not speak to the ethnic, racial, linguistic, or religious diversity of their students. In his work with preservice Social Studies teachers, Kent den Heyer stresses the importance of challenging the grand narrative of Canadian history that the student teachers bring into their teaching. He argues that most have been successful in, and rewarded for, learning stories that celebrate that nation-building project and the progress of "civilization." As a result, those narratives are never problematized; they are simply passed on.[34] The oral history interviews in some way passed on a "grand narrative" of teaching. The narrators offered some insights into a counter-narrative of difficulty, of guilt, of an acknowledgment of the complexity of teaching, but they largely reinforced a heroic tale of service to students and perseverance in the face of changing bureaucratic demands.

In many ways this experience with oral history interviews resembled Rebecca Coulter's, who studied the working lives of female teachers in twentieth-century Ontario. Instead of the hardship narrative of "oppression and gender discrimination" embodied in secondary accounts and that she expected to hear, her narrators talked about their joys, their adventures, and their appreciation of the financial rewards of teaching.[35] Clearly, challenges remain in ensuring that oral history interviews with retired teachers do not just consist of happy talk about the joys of teaching. The history of schooling cannot just be a celebration of the goals and commitments of those who came before; it also has to critically engage with harmful legacies, and with the role of schools and teachers in acknowledging obligations in the present. It must inform student teachers' commitment to a better future.

NOTES

1. Penney Clark, ed., *New Possibilities for the Past: Shaping History Education in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press), 12.
2. Peter Seixas and Tom Morton, *The Big Six: Historical Thinking Concepts* (Toronto: Nelson Education, 2013), 2.
3. Roger Simon, "The Pedagogical Insistence of Public Memory," in *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, ed. Peter Seixas (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 187.
4. I provided a structure for their reading that required students to analyze the reasoning of the accounts. This analysis was framed around eight elements of reasoning: purpose, key question at issue, information, key concepts, conclusions, assumptions, point of view, and implications and consequences. This structure was adapted from the "elements of reasoning" in Gerald Nosich, *Learning to Think Things Through: A Guide to Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum, 4th ed*. (Boston: Pearson, 2012), and the work of the Critical Thinking Foundation, criticalthinking.org.

5. Cliff Kuhn and Marjorie L. McLellan, "Voices of Experience: Oral History in the Classroom," in *The Oral History Reader, 2nd ed.*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London: Routledge, 2006), 475.
6. Philip Gardner and Peter Cunningham, "Oral History and Teachers' Professional Practice: A Wartime Turning Point?" *Cambridge Journal of Education* 27, no. 3 (1997): 332.
7. "School," *Growing Up Canadian*, directed by Sheila Petzold (2003; Ottawa: GAPC Entertainment and Telewerx, 2003), DVD.
8. We read the Introduction and Chapter Nine in Neil Sutherland, *Growing Up: Children in English Canada from the Great War to the Age of Television* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) and in, Rebecca Priegert Coulter, "'Girls Just Want to Have Fun': Women Teachers and the Pleasures of the Profession," in *History Is Hers: Women Educators in Twentieth Century Ontario*, eds. Rebecca Priegert Coulter and Helen Harper (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 2005), 211–229.
9. In the discussion that follows, I quote from the students' small group and class discussions, their final course projects, and their written reflections.
10. The concepts were originally developed by Peter Seixas and communicated through his Historical Thinking Project. More information is available at "The Historical Thinking Project," Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness, accessed April 13, 2015, http://historicalthinking.ca/.
11. Seixas and Morton, *The Big Six*, 3.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., 40.
14. Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010), 1.
15. Ibid., 16.
16. Ibid., 108.
17. The students and their narrators are all identified by pseudonyms.
18. Coulter, "'Girls Just Want to Have Fun,'" 212.
19. Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 81.
20. Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 86.
21. Seixas and Morton, *The Big Six*, 19.
22. Ibid., 74.
23. Ibid.
24. Seixas and Morton, *The Big Six*, 102.

25. Required readings included Terry Wotherspoon, “Chapter Three: Historical Dimensions of Canadian Education,” in *The Sociology of Education in Canada: Critical Perspectives, 4th ed.* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2013), 60–90; and George Tomkins, “Chapter Eighteen: Profiles of the Subject Areas, 1945 to 1980,” in *A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum, 2nd ed.* (Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press, 2008), 348–369.
26. To assist in this inquiry, we read Chapter Three in my *Creating Citizens: History and Identity in Alberta’s Schools, 1905 to 1980* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006), 55–90.
27. Seixas and Morton, *The Big Six*, 102.
28. Adrienne P. (retired teacher) in discussion with Laura R., November 12, 2014.
29. Not Ibid, but Seixas and Morton, *The Big Six*, 138.
30. Ibid., 170.
31. Peter Seixas, “Historical Consciousness: The Progress of Knowledge in a Postprogressive Age,” in *Narration, Identity, and Historical Consciousness*, ed. Jürgen Straub (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 144.
32. Sutherland, *Growing Up*, 192.
33. Seixas and Morton, *The Big Six*, 182.
34. Kent den Heyer, “Engaging Teacher Education through Rewriting That History We Have Already Learned,” in *Becoming a History Teacher: Sustaining Practices in Historical Thinking and Knowing*, eds. Ruth Sandwell and Amy von Heyking (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 183–184.
35. Coulter, “‘Girls Just Want to Have Fun,’” 213.

CHAPTER 16

Oral History Pedagogy in Situations of Conflict: Experiences from Colombia, 1996–2014

Guillermo Vodniza and Alexander Freund

Introduction

Oral history has played a growing role in education ever since the development of Foxfire and similar projects, often informed by the pedagogy of John Dewey and Paulo Freire and necessitated by the pressing needs of learners in dire economic and political straits.[1] In Latin America, oral history has been used both to recover a history of colonial oppression and dictatorial persecution—a history frequently erased from national archives—and to support teaching and learning in diverse educational settings.[2] This chapter describes the experiences of three teachers in Colombia who were faced with the effects of extreme conflict, state violence, and poverty in their schools and communities. All three teachers used innovative, participatory, student-centered approaches based on oral history and traditional storytelling to help their students and communities

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deal with experiences of violence, forced displacement, and discrimination as they were caught in the crossfire between guerrilla groups, paramilitary groups, the state army, and narco-traffickers.

Colombia is a democracy, but its society continues to reel from centuries of colonization and half a century of civil war.[3] Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the struggles between the ruling parties and landowners' and merchants' use of the army to suppress workers led to great violence. From 1946 to 1964, some 200,000 people lost their lives in a civil war called "La Violencia" that was characterized by its scope and extreme brutality. Left-wing guerrilla groups emerged in opposition to conservative governments and military juntas during the 1960s. Among them was the National Liberation Army (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*; ELN), led by students inspired by the Cuban revolution of 1959. Another guerrilla group was the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*; FARC), which had its origins in so-called resistance committees that emerged during La Violencia.

Despite instability and violence, the country became industrialized and urbanized during the twentieth century. Economic inequality, however, remained. During the 1970s, Colombian organized crime massively increased the production and trafficking of marijuana and cocaine. Guerrilla groups soon moved into coca production. In order to stem guerrilla opposition and narco-trafficking, the government initiated negotiations with FARC and other groups. At this time, paramilitary groups emerged. Trained and equipped by the army, these private troops were paid by landowners who sought protection from guerrillas. Paramilitaries soon killed more people than the guerrillas did. Drug cartels also increased their violence. In the 1990s, the government attempted to fight narco-trafficking and negotiate a peace agreement with ELN and FARC. Despite successes, violence continued unabated. Since 2011, the government has been in peace talks with FARC that continue despite intermittent kidnappings. The ongoing civil war in Colombia has uprooted much of the rural population. In 2013, there were up to 5.7 million internally displaced persons, growing at a rate of 300,000 annually since 2000. Many others have fled the country.

Guillermo Vodniza is among the many Colombians who had to flee his country in order to save his life and his family. He belongs to the Inga Indigenous culture. He learned this culture from his grandmother, with whom he lived in a small Indigenous village in the jungle. When he was older, his family moved to a city, where he learned Spanish and went to school. He encountered racial prejudice, and he was cut off from his heritage. This motivated him to become a teacher and learn more about his cultural identity. After receiving his bachelor of education, he moved to a remote village deep in the jungle that was only accessible by canoe and on foot. Like the teachers portrayed in this chapter, Vodniza was confronted with a lack of basic teaching materials such as books. But he soon learned to draw on the community's traditional knowledge that taught him as much as it did his students. Together with his students, he created small books about their traditional way of living and community learning activities. After four years, Vodniza began to work with students who had escaped from paramilitary and guerrilla groups. In order to help them develop trust in themselves and others, he asked them to record oral memories of community elders and leaders. For the students, this became a process of self-recognition. They learned to see and value the historical contributions that Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities made to the development of Colombia. Eventually, Vodniza was caught in the crossfire between paramilitaries and guerrillas and fled to Canada. He entered the education program of the Winnipeg Education Center (which is affiliated with the University of Winnipeg) in order to receive a Canadian bachelor of education degree that would allow him to teach in Manitoba. In 2011, he took a history course with Alexander Freund and began an oral history project on Colombian refugees in Winnipeg, which he has continued with Freund's support. He returned to Colombia several times, including in May 2014, when he traveled with a group of University of Winnipeg students and faculty. Vodniza conducted all of the primary research for this article, mostly in Spanish, translated interviews and correspondence, and then worked with Freund on writing this chapter. He received his education degree in 2015, worked as a teacher in rural Manitoba, and now in Winnipeg.

Learning About Nature Through Oral Storytelling in El Tigre

Sonia Maritza Riascos knew what it was like for her young students to be caught in the crossfire between FARC forces, paramilitary groups, narcotraffickers, and the Colombian army. Riascos was born in Pasto, Nariño in 1973. Inspired by her mother, a teacher, she studied to become an elementary school teacher at the Universidad Escuela Normal Superior de Pasto, the provincial teachers' college. Her first teaching position, from

1997 to 2004, was at a small school in the remote community of Campo Bello in the Department of Putumayo in the South of Colombia. The village had no electricity, potable water, or other public services and could only be accessed via trails made by community members. The territory was controlled by guerrilla groups and there were constant clashes with paramilitaries and the Colombian army: "I felt alone, but I wanted to be there for the children," Riascos told Vodniza during an interview in her home in Putumayo on 16 January 2013.[4] Vodniza had met Riascos through friends engaged in solidarity work with victims of the civil war and in support of the peace talks between FARC and the Colombian government. Riascos was proud of her accomplishments as a rural teacher. Before her arrival in Campo Bello, she explained, farming had shifted from traditional crops to coca plants, which yielded a higher profit. Many parents in the community took their children out of school early to get them to work in the coca fields. "Most of the children thought that the only way to survive was to plant coca, being a drug trafficker, or joining an armed group to become powerful."[5] Although she told of her experience in a calm voice, interspersed with laughter, as Vodniza recalls, Riascos became sad when she remembered the tragedies of the children she had worked with.

Shortly after Riascos barely escaped a firefight between the warring factions, she moved to the small, rural town of El Tigre, Putumayo. El Tigre was also controlled by FARC, and coca production and drug trafficking sustained the local economy. At the time Riascos settled in El Tigre, paramilitary groups began to fight with guerrillas for control of the territory and the drug trade. Her mother-in-law, who was sitting in on the interview for most of the time and who had also lived in El Tigre, quietly nodded in agreement as Riascos recalled that "many innocent people died" because they were "suspected of supporting the guerillas."[6] The situation escalated on 9 January 1999, when some 150 troops of the paramilitary group United Self-Defense of Colombia (AUC) attacked the community, murdered 28 people, tortured and kidnapped countless others, raped women, and burned houses and vehicles.[7] Violence only intensified afterwards as AUC occupied other regions throughout Putumayo between 2001 and 2006. The violence often came close to the children and teachers, when paramilitaries and guerrilla fighters were shooting at each other in the middle of the town and in front of the school. In one instance, children were out during sports class and had to run for cover. Fear and terror became part of everyday life.

Such massive violence and fatal conflict deeply affected the children with whom Riascos worked in El Tigre Rural School. School was not on the minds of the children, who lived with constant psychological terror, no stability, and low self-esteem. "The dignity—life was no longer worth anything. Children constantly came to me with the news that 'they [paramilitary or guerrilla groups] killed my dad, we need to bury him' or 'they killed my mom' or 'such a person is disappeared, they could not find him or her,' and 'these people are threatened and they must flee.'"[8] Children acted out the conflicts during recess, playing soldiers with weapons made from sticks, always expressing "the desire to grow up and become commanders of the guerrillas or the paramilitaries because they saw in them a form of power and authority."[9] Other children planned to become coca planters or narco-traffickers and become rich and powerful. "There was almost no vision of a future based on education."[10] Riascos saw many of her students join one of the military groups. "Working in this environment of violence motivated me to devote my energies to recover the children's dreams and imagination which are hidden and suppressed in a terrifying way by the reality of drug trafficking, terrorism, and vandalism."[11]

Riascos faced not only the physical and psychic impact of extreme violence and terror on her students but also a lack of adequate teaching resources. Unlike teachers in the big cities, she had no computers or other materials in her classroom. In a telephone interview with Vodniza in December 2014, Riascos recalled, "Our library was almost empty. I had a few books that described simple stories. Many of my students had already read these books."[12] But after moving to the countryside, Riascos had found another kind of resource: "I was curious listening to students about their own adventures and the adventures with their parents when they were hunting, fishing, or working together. Some parents also invited me for dinner at their homes, where I had the chance to hear these stories again. They told me meaningful stories of their lives related to their spiritual connections with their environment, their lives, and their traditional knowledge of medicinal plants."[13] Thus, Riascos turned to what lay outside of her school and inside of her students. "In rural areas, you have to be creative. You have nothing, but you do have the best laboratory that is nature, rivers, forests, mountains, and animals. Even though we were often scared to go outside, the children were happy when we went into the field. We learned a lot."[14] Walking through nature with her students allowed Riascos to discover the deep knowledge her students had of their natural environment. Unlike Riascos, who had grown up in a big city, the children knew and told her about medicinal plants, animal behavior, and relationships between the moon, animals, and plants.

As she listened to her students' stories about nature, Riascos developed educational projects based on oral stories. "We collected the plants, planted them in our own garden, made stories, described the benefits of the plants, and created small presentations. From there, I developed other teaching strategies such as theater, traditional dancing, drawing, and painting. This allowed me to explore each child's knowledge and skills and discover their talents."[15] From Indigenous community leaders, they learned how Indigenous people used regional plants; they also learned Indigenous dances. Similarly, Afro-Colombian dancers taught them to dance traditional Afro-Colombian dances. Other activities included remembering funny events and occurrences in their lives, sharing them in circles, and making a drawing of such memories. Students collected leaves, sticks, rocks, and other natural material and used them to create artwork of their funny memories. They collected stories of animals, shared them in class, crafted pictures, and reflected on them.

From the beginning, Riascos involved the parents and explained the project in a meeting with parents so that the parents could help their children collect stories. In the classroom, Riascos helped her students develop a list of questions and "a checklist of their parents' skills according to the perspective of their children." Since the parents knew about the project, they were not surprised when their children interviewed them. To build up confidence in her students when conducting the interviews, Riascos developed lesson plans and games: "One activity was to find more information about a classmate. One student asked another why they like to play soccer. What kind of activities do they enjoy on the weekend? We practiced a lot."[16]

The effects were not only educational. They also helped the children deal with their experiences of loss and violence. "Traditional dances and playful games allowed the children to get rid of many problems they had in their minds. It got them to smile, share, and compete in healthy ways by applying values of tolerance, friendship, cooperation, and collaboration." Public presentations and performances also affected the community. Riascos explained: "Children expressed their feelings and sent a message to others how to work through situations of shock."[17] Children also learned public rituals of cleansing. In one such ceremony, students received a stick that stood for a bad experience or a bad memory. In silence, the students then went outside and burned the stick in a large fire.

Family histories were more sensitive. Many of the students' parents had been killed or disappeared. Thus, Riascos did not want her students to interview their surviving parents to learn about their community's history. Instead, she told them to ask their grandparents about earlier times. She prepared her students, who knew little about their community history, by showing them pictures of their old community and suggesting questions they could ask. Talking to their elders and taking notes—there were no audio recorders in the community—they learned that there had been a time in the history of their community that was peaceful. They heard stories that were not shaped by violence and terror. Elders told them how they had built the school working together as a community and organized feasts with other communities to collect money. During these feasts, other communities came to play soccer, buy traditional food or liquor, or win small prizes. The money collected from the feasts was used to buy material for the schools, like chairs and desks for children, and teaching materials. These feasts were popular festivals. "When one community came to our school, we needed to go to their community. It was a way of supporting each school."[18] Elders also described the abundance of food they used to plant and the animals they hunted. Nobody was hungry at that time.

After collecting stories of a better past from their grandparents, students shared them with their teacher and in circles with other students. Riascos visited the grandparents and invited them to the classroom to tell their stories. Oral tradition of collaborative work introduced students to a new idea, because coca planting had replaced an economy based on sustainability, self-sufficiency, and collaboration with a cash economy. From her students' notes and the stories she heard, Riascos made little books that the students shared with community members during a big communal feast, thus reviving the earlier tradition of communal feasts they had heard about in elders' oral tradition.[19] It brought the community together: "Everybody was interested in their own stories and the stories of their neighbors. I believe this project increased the integration within the community. It was a way of better knowing our community. It was like a celebration of learning. I believe that all were proud of themselves."[20]

Recently, the political situation in Putumayo has abated; it is now a more peaceful place. The Colombian government has asked for forgiveness for the massacre of El Tigre.[21] Eventually, Riascos left El Tigre and moved to a large city in Putumayo, where she began teaching at a high school. She feels that her time in rural schools had a positive effect. Several of her students went on to college or university; others stayed, found work, and had families. At least some students were able to leave behind the spiral of violence and revenge they had initially acted out on the school ground. “I know that some of these young people had the thought of violence in themselves at one point and today they think differently, they managed to survive in such violence.”[22]

Knitting Dreams and Flavors of Peace in Mampuján

Juana Alicia Ruiz Hernandez grew up in San Pablo in the southern part of the Department of Bolivar in the North of Colombia. Poverty and unemployment forced her mother to move with her to Caracas, Venezuela. There, under conditions of great deprivation and poverty, she was raped.[23] Later, when she began studies at the University of Cartagena, she was raped again. “That was terrible and I began fighting so that other women do not remain silent.” At age 29, she married Alexander Villareal and moved to his hometown of Mampuján in the north of Bolivar. Mampuján was founded in 1982. Its economy was based on small-farm agriculture. Work was cooperative and based on mutual aid.[24] Violence invaded the small community of some 250 families in 1989, when a FARC guerrilla group kidnapped and was thought to have murdered Mr. Maza, a traditional doctor. Nine years later, on 8 November 1998, armed troops arrived in the community and killed seven members of a guerrilla group. Assassinations, torture, and disappearances steadily increased. Those living in Mampuján, Ruiz explained, were falsely accused of supporting the guerillas.[25] Soon, the “once-prosperous farming town near the Caribbean coast,” as William Neuman wrote in the *New York Times* in 2012, became “a symbol of Colombia’s descent into lawlessness.”[26]

On 10 March 2000, a paramilitary group called *Los Héroes de Maria* entered Mampuján and displaced the entire community within a matter of hours.[27] The families not only lost their houses and possessions but also their community and capacities to practice traditional ways of life. They moved to María la Baja, believing they would return within a few days. But they soon realized they would not go home. In the following months, the families faced many challenges and tragedies. According to Ruiz, “families lived in brothels, ten families in one room. We also experienced internal conflicts, women were raped, families became aggressive, and our peaceful way of life started to break down. We began to lose our peace.” Diseases spread rapidly and further decreased people’s resilience. A local priest came to their assistance and they began to build shacks of wood and plastic as temporary shelters. Eventually, they built a new town, Mampuján Nuevo, but they always wanted to return. Ruiz remembers: "I immediately started to fight together with them. We did not know our rights as victims. It took us three years until we started to teach ourselves and to demand our rights as displaced persons."[28] Ruiz led the community's efforts to heal and rebuild by making connections with human rights organizations, purchasing a community farm, and initiating projects for women and children.[29]

In the "Sembrando Paz" project, women met in quilting groups and, under Ruiz's guidance, "talk[ed] about their experiences and feelings while sewing their stories into quilts." This was no easy process. Ruiz told Vodniza that this kind of weaving "tells a painful story. You ask the person where it [an event or experience] happened, and if it was in a town we started to make trees and houses; you ask the person what skin color was the person: white or black and the person begins to tell the story. This work is accompanied by prayers and songs."[30] Soon, the women's group called itself "Mujeres Tejiendo Suenos y Sabores de Paz" (women knitting dreams and flavors of peace) and was invited to present their quilts and stories around the world.[31] The objective of weaving the blankets was not to forget but to "remember without pain and without hatred."[32] At the same time, it gave the women a new purpose in life and a new livelihood.

The group also created an after-school program for children. The initial idea was to teach children about their community's culture, but the women soon found that they needed to radically change their perspective in order to be successful. "Only then, when our kids felt that their own voices mattered to us, were they ready to learn about our culture—their culture—and about our beliefs as a community," Ruiz explained in a telephone conversation with Vodniza.[33] In order to get children and community members together to learn from each other and to do something meaningful together, they organized two to three weekly afternoon meetings in which children and elders collected mangos and other regional fruit and learned to make them into jam. They then sold the jam in the local market and eventually created small, local businesses. During those cooking sessions, they sang together and shared stories. "Cooking and singing are elements of our culture," Ruiz explained. She continued: "We taught our children how to plant our traditional food and work on the land, to feel again that feeling of belonging."[34] They also taught them cabinetry.

During that time, elders learned about and from the children of the community. Ruiz recalled: "We learned that our children have their own world. We started learning from and about them. We continued cooking and singing, but we started also to listen. We heard stories of their favorite soccer players, famous singers, traditional games, experiences, and dreams. So we decided to start from there." Once the children were more comfortable with their own stories, the elders helped them draw their stories using paint, glue, sticks, leaves, rocks, and other media and materials. The elders then helped the children to write their stories. Ruiz told Vodniza: "The projects were fundamental in learning how to write. Writing is more natural. They wanted to write about what they were open to learn."[35] Eventually, watching the women make quilts, the children too wished to make quilts. So the women taught them how to weave their stories in textile. Ruiz told Vodniza: "When we were weaving we also had the opportunity to continue building our relationships as teachers, parents, and community members."[36] Increasingly, the children's stories shifted from their immediate interests to their own memories of displacement. Ruiz gave one example: "Later, we heard deeper stories. One of them told us, 'I knew that we had to leave; I knew my mother was scared, and I was scared too. But it was still hard to leave my toys behind.'"[37]

As Ruiz recalls, time spent together was a process of healing, both for the students and for the parents. Ruiz and other women used traditional songs and invited storytellers. "Many elders came to our after-school project to tell stories and help us understand better who we are and where we are from." The project strengthened the children's self-understanding. As a result of these projects, Ruiz explained to Vodniza, "our students are interested in learning about the history of our culture and our town. These were real projects that created real connections."[38] The community, in Ruiz's words, could now "build historical memory from the perspective of a child living in a community in the process of reparation." Children along with Ruiz and other women leaders worked on recollecting the memories of elders about the history of Mampuján. Ruiz said, "We are working now on developing a research project on collecting memory. It means that we are going to find out about who were the first people of Mampuján? How Mampuján was built? Where did the first people of Mampuján come from? Along with this project, we are working on the process of healing and forgiveness. Students have a sense of success through the market projects that we are making to sell in the capital and other regions."[39]

The family and community-based processes of healing and reconciliation were strongly connected to the community's political work toward reparations from the national government. After several years of non-violent actions and dialoguing with the state, lawyers, non-governmental organizations, and perpetrators, Mampuján became the first community in Colombia to win a court settlement and receive collective reparations.[40] Ruiz's and the other women's ambitions for their children were great: "We hope that our children have a new mentality. They are able to rewrite history in order to be recognized as subjects of rights and to minimize the impact of violence and avoid the repetition of violence."[41] At the same time, the work was also practical. Through the creation of small businesses, children learned how to use the resources of the land to make a living.

Killers or Poets? Re-covering Indigenous Language and Culture with the Children of the Cauca

The Indigenous communities of Colombia have faced centuries of discrimination, forced displacement, forced dispossession of land, forced disappearance, forced recruitment into guerrilla and paramilitary groups, and other effects of the internal war in Colombia. They have struggled with identity loss, alcoholism, early pregnancy, and other social problems. Many Indigenous children have low self-esteem because the traditional school system did not allow them to explore their identity and speak their language. Instead, they were taught Christian and mainstream cultural values.[42] Indigenous communities have lost their languages and cultures. Yet, over the past decades, they have been working tirelessly to recover their roots and save their heritage.

Susana Piñacue is an Indigenous teacher who belongs to the Indigenous Paez (Nasa) community. The Paez community is located in the Department of the Cauca, which is the home of 200,000 Paez and Guambiano Indigenous people. The Paez language is spoken by 40,000 people.[43] Piñacue holds a Bachelor of Education from the University of Cauca. She has been working as a teacher in her community for 22 years. She also taught other teachers how to pass on their languages and customs, and she has helped develop Indigenous curriculum for the region.[44] The loss of language, culture, and identity has created grave problems. One result, says Piñacue, is that many Indigenous children "became members of the guerrilla groups, and they even fought against their own people."[45] Economic pressures have further aggravated the loss of cultural identity. The extraction of oil and minerals by foreign companies and the harmful aerial spraying with glyphosate to destroy coca crops have come at great cost to the environment and the people.[46]

Like many other teachers, Piñacue returned to her community to teach. She found an existing tradition and infrastructure of self-help. Traditional Indigenous working systems were based on cooperative meetings and work toward common goals such as completing the harvest or building a new school. Children were full participants in meetings and activities.[47] Furthermore, in 1971, Indigenous communities formed the *Congreso Regional Indigena del Cauca* (Regional Indigenous Council of the Cauca, CRIC); "Unity, Land, and Culture" was the motto of this grassroots organization.[48] Public CRIC meetings included Indigenous children, who attended together with their parents or teachers and were equal participants. Building on the Indigenous working system and CRIC, Piñacue supported a new pedagogical Indigenous project called Community Education Project (*Projecto Educativo Comunitario*, PEC). PEC emerged at the end of the 1970s as a means of resistance against the political extermination of Indigenous culture.[49]

PEC is an authentic learning pedagogy where students have the power to make sense of the world by using their own experiences and cultural knowledge. They investigate their own culture with the support of parents, community members, elders, and Indigenous authorities. Piñacue explained:

> The Community Education Project builds a school with Indigenous thought. It is a pedagogy based on practice. We have ways to build homes, to cultivate crops, and to make handicrafts. We do school in different spaces and times. We accompany the Regional Indigenous Congress, meet with communities, and learn about the territory, sacred sites, rivers, systems of Indigenous government, and Indigenous working systems. Schools are places where children and community come together.[50]

In the Community Education Project, Piñacue and other teachers used oral history to help students learn reading and writing, about Indigenous calendars and nature, and about community and family history. Piñacue explained: "Students are motivated to learn how to write when they can relate what they learn to their own cultural context. If a child comes from a place where handicrafts are valued, then, from the craft, we teach the child to read and write. If the child comes with experience in agriculture, then, through this system, we teach the child to read and write."[51] As a result of this child-centered approach, parents are drawn into the education. Oral history, interviewing, and storytelling are interactive research methods used to uncover, discover, document, and share Indigenous knowledge.

Piñacue explained: "Parents become a permanent teaching resource so that children make different research projects in their school. Students are collecting different traditional knowledge of their parents. This knowledge is collected by their teachers. For instance, the traditional agricultural calendar was developed by students based on the knowledge of their parents. Parents explained to their children when they are going to plant different products, when they are going to harvest, the connections between the process of planting and farming with the moon. Our work is to collect this knowledge and put this knowledge in text books for teaching purposes."[52] Oral history and other hands-on research methods help students learn about nature but also about family and community history. Piñacue explained: "We recover the historical memory of our Indigenous communities through interviews with the elders, parents of family and children. From this research, we develop books, stories, videos, and songs. We are creating artistic and written expressions through these processes."[53]

Piñacue always incorporated the voices of the parents and community into her teaching practice. For example, she developed a school calendar that was based on community activities throughout the year, including planting of crops such as corn, casaba, and plantain, and harvesting. Descriptions of such community activities were based on her interviews with parents and other community members that collected their traditional knowledge. She also invited a member of the community to talk about how they plant corn. With her students, she then visited the fields where families were working. Later, students gave oral presentations and developed stories about what they learned about their community.

Over the years, Piñacue and her colleagues and students have compiled more than 300 books of story collections that now serve as resources for other students. In Piñacue's experience, a curriculum based on the Indigenous students' own natural and cultural environments and on their active research, using oral history and other methods, has transformed communities: "When I started teaching, I did not imagine where we could go with this project. Through this educational project, we have been able to rebuild our identity, our sense of living together in unity, to live in community. Today, we do not hear any more ideas from our children to join guerrilla groups. Many Indigenous youth are leaders now. They research issues that we face today. I think that in twenty or thirty years, we will have writers, poets, painters."[54]

Conclusion

Over the past half century, teachers working in Colombia's countryside have worked in zones of conflict—violent, brutal, traumatizing civil war. They faced challenges difficult to imagine in the rich North: a lack of basic teaching materials and safe meeting spaces; students, parents, and communities forcibly displaced, traumatized by excessive and prolonged violence, and diminishing economic prospects. Courageous women like Sonia Maritza Riascos, Juana Alicia Ruiz Hernandez, and Susana Piñacue faced these challenges with energy and conviction and the belief that even in small, remote, and isolated villages, girls and boys, women and men had resources that could be uncovered through egalitarian communication. They used oral history and other research methods to help their students and communities discover and share their traditional knowledge of the land and the world. This allowed students to better understand their communities, their elders, and eventually themselves. They could now make better choices about their lives—lives they could envisage as beyond the confines of military groups and beyond the terror of permanent violence. Oral history was an important tool in creating participatory learning.

Vodniza knows the power of participatory learning from his own experience. He too found it necessary to develop educational approaches that supported the traditional knowledge of students and communities in order to address the needs of students. The first step was to break down stereotypes against those children who were breaking rules. As a result, the school setting became more democratic and inclusive of diverse student needs. Vodniza saw student misbehaviors and academic challenges as a positive way of creating relationships with students, parents, and the community. Vodniza, too, used oral history to explore traditional knowledge of students, parents, and communities, and to take public and educational actions against discrimination and violence. Students could bring themselves into the classroom and later into their communities. Students built a sense of belonging, supported each other, and gained a sense of solidarity.

In the pedagogy of Riascos, Ruiz, and Piñacue, oral history and traditional storytelling become an "official" curriculum that creates an inclusive learning environment; it invites students' experiences as well as their parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and the voices of the ancestors into the classroom. Such inclusion honors diversity and culture. It breaks down the barriers of inequality and marginalization and helps to build a community of trust. The history of their community emerges from listening to and learning from their own memories, stories, and voices and those of their communities. Thus, the pedagogy of Riascos, Ruiz, and Piñacue is a fundamental way of emphasizing the importance of individuals, their stories, and their rights in society.

There is much we can learn from Riascos, Ruiz, and Piñacue in the ways in which we teach in the Global North. The focus on the child as a bearer and discoverer of knowledge—listening carefully to the stories of our students—is perhaps what is missing the most from our pedagogies obsessed with academic standardization and testing and education ethics lost somewhere between the rigid intolerance of "zero tolerance" and the lack of positive guidance as a result of misguided political correctness. In Canada, as in other countries of the Global North, teachers, researchers, and policy makers continually debate whether and how to teach history and, in multicultural and settler societies, whose histories to teach.[55] For the past 20 years, Canadian educational research has focused on the concept of historical thinking that shifts the emphasis from content to method.[56] Kent den Heyer has criticized this framework for being too abstract and top-down, because whether students learn about the First World War or a critical reading of war diaries, it has little meaning for them if they cannot connect it with their own lives, families, and communities.[57] For the Colombian teachers, the lack of textbooks was a blessing in disguise: they were unencumbered by grand national narratives or grand sets of methods; instead they began their learning right where they stood with the tools they found there. If we need an ethics and social action-centered approach to teaching history in school, as den Heyer argues, oral history provides a bridge toward a participatory learning that connects students and history through both methodological rigor and imagination and emotion.[58] But this works only if the "interview your grandmother" assignment is more than yet another test to pass.

Oral history allows us to begin with what we already know so that we can discover what others can teach us. As the work of Riascos, Ruiz, and Piñacue shows, oral history provides a basis for community dialogue and, where necessary, healing. Oral history is not a panacea for the world's ills, but it can be more than a simple method of research or teaching. It can be a means to begin a conversation that stretches from the classroom into the community, from there into the world, and from there back into the classroom.

NOTES

1. Ongoing debates on oral history in the classroom are documented in *Oral History Review* 25 (1998) and 38 (2011); *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* 32 (2012) Special Issue "Making Educational Oral Histories in the twenty-first Century," guest edited by Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, Sharon Anne Cook, and Marie Ainsworth; on the Foxfire project, see Alexander Freund, "Student Choice in the Classroom: An Interview With David Forker, Hilton Smith, and Sara Alice Tucker About Foxfire," *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* 31 (2011): 1–2; Alexander Freund and Nolan Reilly, "Interview with David Forker, Hilton Smith, and Sara Alice Tucker, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, 18 August 2011," *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* 31 (2011). Online at www.oralhistoryforum.ca.
2. *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* 32 (2012) Special Issue/Edición Especial "Oral History in Latin America/Historia Oral en América Latina," guest edited by Pablo Pozzi, Alexander Freund, Gerardo Necoechea, and Robson Laverdi. Online at www.oralhistoryforum.ca.
3. The following paragraphs and this note are based on *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "Colombia," accessed 16 March 2015, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/126016/Colombia; Central Intelligence Agency, "Columbia," The World Fact Book, accessed 16 March 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/co.html.
4. Sonia Maritza Riascos, interview by Guillermo Vodniza, Putumayo, Colombia, 16 January 2013. All interviews were conducted in Spanish and translated into English by Guillermo Vodniza.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid. Further information on the massacre: Gonzalo Sánchez G. et al., *La Massacre de El Tigre 9 de Enero de 1999. Reconstrucción de la Memoria Histórica en el Valle del Guamuéz, Putumayo* (Bogotá: CNRR-Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2011). Online at http://www.banrepcultural.org/sites/default/files/89818/informe_el_tigre.pdf, accessed 6 April 2015. On the historical roots of such extreme violence, see Forrest Hylton, *Evil Hour in Colombia* (New York: Verso, 2006), Chap. 4.

8. Riascos, 16 January 2013.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Sonia Maritza Riascos, telephone interview by Guillermo Vodniza, 11 December 2014.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Riascos, 16 January 2013.
16. Riascos, 11 December 2014.
17. Riascos, 16 January 2013.
18. Riascos, 11 December 2014.
19. Riascos, 16 January 2013.
20. Ibid.
21. Charles Parkinson, "Santos Apologizes For 1999 Massacre in South Colombia," *Colombia Reports* 24 January 2012, online at http://colombiareports.co/santos-apologizes-for-1999-massacre-in-south-colombia, accessed 6 April 2015; "Government Supports Reparations in El Tigre (Putumayo Department)." Online at http://www.unidadvictimas.gov.co/index.php/es/international-cooperation/122-news/1953-government-supports-reparations-in-el-tigre-putumayo-department, accessed 6 April 2015.
22. Riascos, 16 January 2013.
23. Juana Alicia Ruiz Hernandez, interview by Guillermo Vodniza, Popayán, 4 June 2014.
24. Juana Alicia Ruiz Hernandez. *Vivencias. Narraciones Communitarias de la Historia, los Aprendizajes y el Desarrollo de la Ruta Juridica en el Marco de la Sentencia 34547 de Justicia y Paz, a Partir de las Experiencias de Mampuján* (María la Baja, 2013).
25. WWSF Women's World Summit Foundation-Women's Section Report, "Rising From Pain to Healing and Hope One Stich at a Time." Online at http://womensection.woman.ch/index.php/en/laureates/laureates-2014/410-juana-alicia-ruiz-hernandez-colombia, accessed 6 April 2015.
26. William Neuman, "Displaced Residents Grapple With Hurdles of Going Home," *New York Times*, 2 December 2012, online edition, accessed 21 January 2015.
27. Juana Alicia Ruiz Hernandez, telephone interview by Guillermo Vodniza, 12 November 2014; Gustavo Valdivieso, "After Fleeing

Rural Massacre: Former Tabacco Farmer Sells Coffee in the City," UNHCR News Stories, 21 December 2009. Online at http://www.unhcr.org/4b1697436.html, accessed 6 April 2015.

28. Juana Alicia Ruiz Hernandez, telephone interview by Guillermo Vodniza, 5 November 2014.
29. WWSF, "Rising From Pain."
30. Ruiz, interview by Vodniza, Popayán, 4 June 2013.
31. WWSF, "Rising From Pain." In November 2015, Ruiz and the Women Weavers of Dreams and Flavors of Peace of Mampujan won Colombia's National Peace Prize, highlighting their contributions to peace-building, recovery of historical memory, support for victims, and reconciliation. "Mujeres de Mampuján ganan Premio Nacional de Paz," *El Universal* (18 Nov. 2015). Online at http://m.eluniversal.com.co/colombia/mujeres-de-mampujan-ganan-premio-nacional-de-paz-211616, accessed 2 March 2016.
32. Juana Alicia Ruiz Hernandez, interview by Guillermo Vodniza, email to Guillermo Vodniza, 21 October 2014.
33. Juana Alicia Ruiz Hernandez, telephone interview by Guillermo Vodniza, 23 February 2015.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Juana Alicia Ruiz Hernandez, telephone interview by Guillermo Vodniza, 15 January 2015.
40. Individuals received 17 million pesos (ca. USD 6,200.00), capped for families of eight or more at 120 million pesos (USD 43,900.00). According to the *New York Times*, former residents of Mampujan were the first to have their land titles returned in October 2012 (see Neuman, "Displaced Residents").
41. Ruiz, interview by Vodniza, Popayán, 4 June 2013.
42. Susana Piñacue, interview by Guillermo Vodniza, Cauca, 30 May 2014.
43. Minority Rights Group International, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples—Colombia: Paez (Nasa) and Guambiano*, 2008. Online at http://www.refworld.org/docid/49749d3937.html, accessed 6 April 2015.

44. Rosalba Ipia Ulcue et al. *¿Qué pasaría si la escuela …? 30 años de construcción de una educación propia* (CRIC. 2009), 73, 273.
45. Susana Piñacue, telephone interview by Guillermo Vodniza, 15 November 2014.
46. Mario A. Murillo, "Colombia's Minga Under Pressure," *NACLA Report On The Americas* 43, no. 5 (2010): 13–39; Piñacue, 25 October 2014.
47. Piñacue, 25 October 2014.
48. Ulcue et al., *¿Qué pasaría si la escuela …?* 17.
49. Ulcue et al., *¿Ulcue et al., la escuela …?* 17.
50. Susana Piñacue, telephone interview by Guillermo Vodniza, 1 March 2015.
51. Piñacue, 1 March 2015.
52. Piñacue, 25 October 2014.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Stephane Levesque, *Thinking Historically: Educating Students for the Twenty-first Century* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 5.
56. Penney Clark, "Introduction," in ibid., ed., *New Possibilities for the Past: Shaping History Education in Canada* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2011), 1–30.
57. Kent den Heyer, "History Education as a Disciplined 'Ethics of Truths'," in Clark, *New Possibilities for the Past*, 154–173.
58. Ibid., 154–155.

CHAPTER 17

Learning with and from Rwandan Survivor-Historians: Testimonial Oral History as Relationship Building in Schools

Lisa K. Taylor, Marie-Jolie Rwigema, Shelley Kyte, and Umwali Sollange

Introduction: Researching the Pedagogical Implications of Oral History as Method in the Study of Genocide

The expanded use of oral history in education reflects several trends: the democratization of history as a discipline (and the expansion of feminist, Indigenous, working-class, postcolonial, and other popular, social, and public histories); democratization of curriculum development (including the re-conceptualization of curriculum studies, critical pedagogy, and

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social justice education); and the democratization of knowledge with new media and digital culture that have facilitated and popularized the creation and dissemination of primary historical accounts within a technological age of secondary orality.[1]

In the history classroom, oral and life histories are not simply a primary source.[2] In our research, we approach oral history as both an interpretive practice with the potential for unique historical insight and analysis[3] and a narrative practice of collective memory that can ground structural analysis to generate popular consciousness, political education, and action for social change.[4] Specifically, we contextualize oral history as one of diverse shared forms of knowledge within Rwandan diasporic communities that have been shaped through histories of trauma and migration (e.g. oral history, music, literature, and artistic or healing practices).

In this chapter, we share some of the insights and conclusions drawn from an ongoing university–community–school participatory research project that seeks to expand the sources and pedagogical approaches used in the study of the 1994 Rwandan genocide against the Tutsi[5] at the secondary level. Initiated as a partnership between a university researcher and members of the Rwandan Canadian community in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, the project has since 2011 pursued collaborative curriculum development and research with Toronto District School Board (TDSB)[6] teachers of the unique course "CHG38 Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity: Historical and Contemporary Implications," a locally developed adaptation of the Grade 11 Canadian and World Studies course offered in boards throughout the province of Ontario.[7] This collaboration has been part of a qualitative case study evaluating the challenges and pedagogical implications of foregrounding Rwandan Canadian knowledge production, perspectives, and expectations in the study of the 1994 genocide. Activities to date include community-led in-service workshops, curriculum development and piloting using community-produced oral history resources, and guest speaker classroom visits, as well as qualitative analysis of student work and participant observation.

A key community-produced resource introduced into classrooms participating in this project is the documentary *The Rwandan Genocide as Told by Its Historian-Survivors* (hereafter referred to as *Historian-Survivors*).[8] The documentary was created by Marie-Jolie, Umwali, and a collective of Rwandan Canadians in response to a growing body of non-Rwandan academic, journalistic, and popular texts about the 1994 Rwandan genocide. The film situates the voices of Rwandan genocide survivors at the center of an experientially grounded analysis of the genocide, its colonial origins and conditions, its political legacy and implications, and the politics of knowledge production surrounding it. The documentary explicitly demands that the audience critically examine the politics of their gaze (i.e. how they are listening and looking) as the survivors testifying in the film frame their accounts within the larger context of imperialism in which the viewers themselves are implicated.

In this chapter, we do not discuss the data analysis or conclusions of the project. Rather, this collaborative piece interweaves the distinct voices of four key research partners offering insights and guidelines for practitioners interested in bringing testimonial oral histories into their classroom. Each of the four co-authors—Lisa, Marie-Jolie, Umwali, and Shelley—writes from her disciplinary and embodied location as researcher and educator and offers insights arising respectively from the research collaboration, documentary film production and reception, guest speaking engagements, or developing pedagogy. Lisa draws from a history of participatory action research and anti-discriminatory teacher education with a focus on pedagogies of witnessing and remembrance.[9] Marie-Jolie Rwigema and Umwali Sollange are members of the Rwandan community in Toronto and have been active as equity educators and organizers in community processes of healing and commemoration. Shelley Kyte is the Assistant Curriculum Leader of Canadian and World Studies at Silverthorn Collegiate Institute in Etobicoke, Ontario and is a teacher with one of the longest histories in teaching and generating curriculum for the course.

The research thus far has clarified two central challenges in bringing oral history into classrooms as a method and resource. The first is to include key stakeholders as partners in developing curriculum in a way that is both equitable and accountable to the diverse communities that schools serve. The second is specific to testimonial oral and life histories of mass trauma and violence. This is a challenge of curricular and pedagogical development, demanding a careful cross-pollination of the fields of anti-racist/social justice education, genocide education, pedagogies of remembrance, and history education so that these might mutually refine and critically inform each other to respond to the expectations of community partners.[10]

As an anti-hierarchical methodology, oral history informs both the project's community-led action research and the curriculum and pedagogy development. In terms of the former, oral history research practices of horizontal collaborative relations, reciprocity, and shared authority are crucial to our process.[11] These include a practice of knowledge co-construction based on a sustained relationship of ongoing dialogue, shared respect, trust, leadership and benefit, and concern or care for the other's well-being.[12] Such a relationship implies problematizing and actively working against hierarchies of knowledge and knowers in our methodology: this involves setting the academic authority of the researcher alongside the *equally valuable and irreplaceable* epistemic privilege,[13] thick contextual cultural knowledge ("insider knowledge"),[14] and embodied experiential knowledge and interpretive resources of the subject of the life history or testimony.[15]

In terms of the second challenge, Rwandan Canadian partners in this project have specifically prioritized that teachers practice critical and anti-oppression pedagogies. This reflects an expectation that their testimonies of survival be received not solely with sympathy or interest but more importantly with critical reflexivity and historical knowledge contextualizing the testimonies within long and ongoing histories of imperialism. As Marie-Jolie and Umwali elaborate below, the partners' insistence is grounded in a rigorous critique of colonial representations of the genocide within Eurocentric discourses of African violence, helplessness, victimhood, and voicelessness especially as these play out in educational spheres.[16] In her section below, Marie-Jolie offers principles for the practice of shared authority in introducing oral history into the classroom, guidelines that emerge from the production and reception of the documentary *Historian-Survivors*. She describes this process as a consensus-based practice of critical, resistant, remembrance-based healing, and knowledge generation.

Introducing oral history into the history classroom demands pedagogy that develops students' appreciation for historic truth as well as evidentiary truth. While the latter is essential in legal processes, Dori Laub[17] argues that the former allows listeners to attend to not merely the speaker's individual subjective truth but also "the very historicity of the event." Building a nuanced appreciation of historicity with a sense of agency is a key element of historical thinking[18] through which students come to understand the present conjuncture as part of longer historical forces and processes in which we each have responsibility, agency, and multiple possibilities for action that have historical significance. As Kristina Llewellyn has argued,[19] this moves the study of history from questions of "What happened?" to those of "Why does it matter?" "To whom?" "For what social projects?" and "In what time or place?" (including how this history matters to the learner here and now). It directs historians' and students' attention to questions of subjectivity, significance, and memory[20]: What did a past event or moment mean to the person experiencing it? How does a community remember the event even today? Which people's memories are important to listen to and how is our access to them filtered through relations of power? How does the meaning of this event change as each generation remembers it differently according to their lives and context? How are collective identities defined through contemporary practices of remembering the past through oral history? What kinds of futures do different remembrance practices build?

Our research is specifically concerned with pedagogies that attend to the particular genre, address, and dynamics of *testimony*.[21] As Umwali elaborates, oral history is testimonial when the witness or survivor has an additional purpose for telling their story: this can include a desire that this event never be forgotten, that the dead be honored, or that the living be vigilant and intervene into ongoing historical conditions that make mass violence/atrocity possible.[22] Testimonial oral history grabs the listener and says, "You need to pass this story on! This story must not be forgotten or disappear! It has too much to teach us and we owe the dead this respect! Our listening must enact the promise: Never again shall this violence be permitted to recur."

Introducing testimonial oral and life histories into the history classroom has a series of curricular and pedagogical implications. These include an understanding that learning from testimony always involves emotions, intensified by oral history's emphasis on building personal relationships, not just between a speaker and a listener but also between and within whole communities. Recognizing this affective dimension of witnessing testimonial oral and life histories points to the need for students to learn new listening practices. Offering classroom examples and strategies from extensive experience teaching this course, Shelley explores in her section the challenges of building critical empathy and historical thinking, as well as engaging respectfully with competing historical accounts and tensions within and between different communities.

As Umwali explains in her section below, the visiting survivor does not simply testify but also brings their traditions and conventions of sharing and witnessing testimony. The oral history practice of shared authority might ideally include students learning from these community practices in which oral histories are told in order to teach children moral principles, ground their sense of identity within longer, complex histories of collective becoming, and build ways of living that honor the dead. Umwali examines the possible values and aspirations informing a classroom speaker's decision to share testimonial oral histories of genocide and survival. To the degree that survivor speakers are motivated by larger goals of building a more just world, she describes the kind of listening practices, critical thinking, and emotional support a guest speaker might expect from teachers as part of a relationship of reciprocity and mutual respect.

Marie-Jolie: The Value of Documentary Film as Oral History and Educational Tool

Within our research focus on best practices of learning from testimonial oral history, the value of documentary film as oral history and educational resource lies in the processes of both creation and pedagogical reception. My vantage point is as a jack-of-interrelated-trades (social worker, therapist, scholar, educator, active member of the Rwandan Canadian community in Toronto) and as a participant in the collective creation of the unique documentary *Historian-Survivors*.[23] This documentary's overarching goal was to archive the stories and analyses of a community of which I am a member, the Rwandan Canadian diaspora.

My purpose in bringing a group of Rwandan Canadians together in 2006 to share our perspectives on the 1994 genocide in Rwanda was to address the glaring absence of films made by Rwandans. As a practicing social worker and mental health counselor, I was also very interested in how survivors in our community cope with their trauma. The genocide itself was an outcome of colonial power relations and specifically Belgian "divide and conquer" strategies and the institutionalization of ethnic differences and divisions in Rwanda, a process later fueled and manipulated by French neo-imperial policies of military intervention and support.[24] Given this context, the documentary participant co-creators and I felt it was important that we make an intervention into the neo-colonial power relations evidenced by the dominance of Western voices in cultural and academic representation of the Rwandan genocide. Put simply, we were all exasperated that the most popular Rwandan genocide story in Canada was one of two films: *Hotel Rwanda*[25] or *Shake Hands with the Devil*.[26] Survivors commonly consider the first historically inaccurate in that it creates a hero out of someone many consider a genocide opportunist.[27] The latter selectively heroizes a Canadian general (Romeo Dallaire) that many survivors feel failed them, along with the United Nations whose peacekeeping forces he led.[28] Those of us who created the film felt that these dominant narrations of the Rwandan genocide added not only insult to injury but additional injury to injury.

The collective's approach to making the documentary bears much in common with the oral history practice of shared authority (without explicitly using the term). I would trace this less to methodological commitments than a personal sense of accountability inherent in our pre-existing relationships as members of a community. Specifically, our shared anti-colonial, anti-oppressive politics demanded a filmmaking process that was transparent, horizontal, and as collective as possible. Collectively, we chose to steer away from a focus on individual survivor stories of trauma and healing common to other accounts, a focus that can construct suffering as "spectacle" for empathic consumption.[29] Rather, we preferred to foreground participants' discussion of the larger context of socio-political and neo-colonial context of forces leading to the genocide, one that has not ended but continues to shape contemporary knowledge production and cultural representations of the genocide. When possible, we also share decision making about how the documentary is used (i.e. screenings and distribution). That being said, the group ultimately entrusted me with editing the final product.

The documentary provides less an account of "what happened" and more a recounting of how some of us, as survivors and intergenerational survivors, make sense of the genocide and its subsequent representation. The value and strength of the documentary as an educational resource for scholars, trauma practitioners, and others lies, then, in its insistence on the primacy of Rwandan genocide survivors' perspectives and expertise in the process of historiography, that is, the researching and writing of the genocide as history.

This documentary is also valuable in the explicit politicization of contemporary understandings of genocide survival. It broadens academic and professional discussions from a focus on individual trauma and healing to a socio-political analysis that contextualizes such trauma within larger systemic processes of colonial violence and inequitable international power dynamics. Seen within this context, these historical and professional discussions must become critically self-reflexive, broaching questions of accountability, reciprocity, voice, privilege, and expertise, key issues within the emerging field of oral history. As a scholar and educator, I would argue that this is where the strength of oral history as an educational resource lies. In contrast to traditional, hegemonic, “top-down” histories (both inpopular culture and academic research), oral history as a methodology focuses on the perspectives of people who do not have at their disposal the institutional power to ensure their perspective becomes widely accepted as truth.[30] Oral history prioritizes the epistemic privilege[31] of those whose voices are often deliberately de-legitimated and silenced, if not unintentionally drowned out by those with systemic and institutional access to write over/overwrite the history of others.

Beyond insights into testimonial oral history emerging from the documentary’s creation,[32] a number of salient aspects of the documentary’s pedagogical reception emerged from our research in teacher workshops and the classroom. In contrast to traditional approaches to the study of history through primary and secondary written texts, the oral dimension of oral history has the potential to engage students in both emotional and critical forms of learning. In my classroom visits, I have observed a consistent intensity of students’ affective engagement with the narratives and analysis of the survivor-historians in the film. The fact that the historian-survivors move back and forth between, on the one hand, sharing personal experiences of suffering and, on the other, an anti-imperialist historical analysis of the genocide effects an important shift in the film’s reception. That is, this movement shifts the classroom discussion from a sympathetic focus on individual suffering to critical questions of remembrance, responsibility, and global justice.

Beyond shifting reception from apolitically sentimental to critical modalities, I have observed a particular agency in the documentary as oral history. The protagonists are not words on a page. They address audiences actively and directly, and explicitly self-position as historical subjects and experts. In doing this, they demand a particular mode of attention, such that they are “seen” and “felt” by students on their own terms. That is, the film’s protagonists and I as the editor do not speak to the students as the kinds of helpless victims and “speechless emissaries”[33] imagined by the “white savior industrial complex.”[34] Viewers find themselves addressed explicitly by Africans speaking not simply from immense suffering but also with epistemic authority. The kind of listening we demand is neither empathetic nor anthropological, but critically reflexive and self-implicating in both the larger geopolitical conditions of genocide and the politics of its representation. Our testimonial address invites viewers into a relationship of responsibility and accountability central to oral history as method.[35]

Umwali: A Guest Speaker's Perspective on Bringing Oral History to Classrooms to Teach About Mass Violence

Oral history is a common form of intergenerational remembrance and pedagogy in Rwandan culture both nationally and in the diaspora. In fact, a sect from the *Abiru* clan historically held the role of knowledge holders of Rwandan tradition, monarch secrets, and other forms of collective memory. As a member of the Rwandan community, then, oral history is part of how I have integrated and shared knowledge all my life. Within these broader Rwandan traditions, my interest in the context of this chapter is to discern the ways I have experienced Rwandans passing on memory of mass tragedy and honoring the dead. I then draw out the implications of this for teachers wishing to invite survivors to share testimonial life and oral histories of mass violence in their classrooms.

In my experience, family, friends, and community members share stories of atrocities they have witnessed or survived in very informal ways that are woven into the fabric of everyday conversation. These stories and memories arrive unannounced and incidentally, almost unexpectedly (at least for the listeners). The art of storytelling, including tragic accounts, is interspersed with jokes and laughter and the flow of intimate family conversation. The stories told are familiar—we might have heard them once or many times—and the protagonists are family or community members whom we know as whole, complex beings. Testimonial histories, in this context, are an everyday practice.

The hardships and suffering described in these stories are not distant, shocking, or unfathomable. Without essentializing, as a community we are accustomed to hardship: death is a part of living. Telling stories of violence, like telling stories of life, love, and strength, is a means by which older community and family members pass on a common heritage. For those of us listening, we learn more than "what happened." We learn the cultural values of our community; we learn what it means to lose a loved one, how to console the survivors for their loss, how to stay grounded and strong as a community, and how to survive with tears and laughter. It is through listening to these stories of atrocity and survival that we develop a shared set of memories and understandings, cultural norms, and values. It is also through taking up these memories that we affirm our relationships to ourselves and to our family members both present and dead, close and distant.

This speaks to the pedagogy of oral history in family and community contexts that I have known. The sharing is aimed to acculturate us into a collective memory, worldview, and community, or, in the case of a distant issue or culture, to offer an experience from which we need to learn. In other words, testimonial oral histories are a form of interpersonal, historical, humanist *education* in which we learn to respect and apply that knowledge in how we move through life. Most importantly, the practice of sharing oral histories of collective trauma is implicitly treated as a conversation and a relationship between people, in which everyone is *involved* in the content, the collective practice, and the lessons learned.

What do these community practices of testimony and remembrance practices mean for the ways that I would hope the larger global community would receive and value the wisdom gleaned from traumatic histories of the 1994 genocide as told by survivor communities? There are methods to oral history as it is practiced in different cultural traditions and (diasporic) communities in Canada. These shared conventions have implications for receiving speakers in classrooms, including: a relationship of reciprocity and responsibility that humanizes the testimony and extends pre- and post-visit; listening and honoring information in a dialogic etiquette, especially when listening to trauma; equalizing as much as possible power relationships between the speaker, teacher, and students in order to support a dialogue (rather than monologic communication that speaks to or speaks at); and follow-up to the conversation in order to process any after-reactions.

In offering these guidelines to teachers, I want to emphasize that the experience of recounting testimonial oral histories of mass violence to classrooms of strangers is, for a speaker, fraught and demanding in many ways. Yet we accept these challenges. Our motivations are too strong to remain silent. For this reason, I ask educators to honor our goals in offering the gift of testimony. As a guest speaker, I am motivated by the urgency of building a more equitable, democratic society and world. This means developing students' capacities to analyze and actively transform discrimination of all forms, and expanding access and opportunity to contribute to social, economic, political, and cultural spheres in society.[36]

This personal motivation places me somewhat at odds with the contemporary context of systemic and institutional inequity, one that is still invested in maintaining Eurocentrism, patriarchy, classism, and heterosexism. This means a certain implicit trust is broken and I arrive in classrooms with a degree of skepticism and a set of expectations. My specific concern is with relativist approaches to studying history—and especially histories of mass violence—through the dominant Canadian lens of multiculturalism that might lead to an unhealthy fascination with how "they" could have committed such a crime. As much as valuing cultural diversity is a preferable societal ethos to assimilation, an apolitical focus on the uniqueness of Rwandan culture will not get us far in understanding the larger forces leading to the 1994 genocide. A power-blind focus on "cultural difference" would misread the geopolitical—and specifically imperial—forces behind mass violence and camouflage the social inequality in our very conditions of learning, undermining the struggles of minoritized groups for equity and justice.

The goals and priorities I bring as an invited speaker have implications for the relationship I ask teachers to honor in their invitation to me. I offer oral histories not as "contemporary tourism which exploits the past."[37] Rather, I agree to enter classrooms as a community stakeholder and Canadian citizen with an investment in the ways action-oriented, anti-discrimination, and social justice pedagogies frame and inform the history curriculum. In such pedagogies, teachers, students, and guests work side by side as active seekers of critical and self-reflective understanding of difference. It may seem I am overstepping my boundaries but I see myself as more than a guest in someone else' classroom. The act of giving difficult testimony is an affirmation of a relationship with mutual obligations, and I am deeply interested in the ways my testimony will be received and the agendas framing that reception. As a racialized immigrant Canadian woman who has spoken in several classrooms, I find it vitally important to speak in ways that develop students' analysis of and appreciation for how this event matters in their lives and in mine in terms of building collective memory and defining our civic rights and obligations as Canadians. For example, as a speaker for the Passages Canada Program at Historica Canada,[38] I would recount and explain the pre-1994 role of colonialism, prejudice, and miseducation in Rwandan classrooms in terms of revisionist curriculum and the targeting of students who identified or were perceived as Tutsi. This critical pedagogical orientation implies making links between my testimony and that of, for example, survivors of Canada's Indian Residential School system lasting over a century until 1996.[39]

As a community member and stakeholder, my priorities lie in extending the learning process beyond the classroom to ensure that lessons learned promote social justice in the world we share. The conditions necessary for this include financial investment, contextualization, and social supports.

Investing financially includes curriculum development, teacher and administration training, and psycho-social supports if required for the speaker or students. I would further argue that it is ethically important to develop a compensation strategy for employing community–historian–experts who offer a diversifying and expanded dimension to the history curriculum.

In addition, the practices of collective remembrance in Rwandan diasporic communities that I have described imply the importance of *context* in listening. Survivors are unique knowledge holders and teachers. Often testimonies and personal accounts offer forms of cultural meaning, memory, and knowledge not captured in text, especially if the oral community is one in which knowledge is shared in informal settings such as home, relatives, and community storytelling. Culturally and linguistically embodied perspectives can give uniquely detailed insights that carry their own forms of analysis and theory. For example, testimony humanizes loss so that it is no longer one million people who died, but a parent, a sibling, a friend, a relative, or a neighbor. As Patrick Sharangabo eloquently explains, it is the unique loved one whom the survivor or witness is remembering, not a number.[40] Testimony honors the courage of the dead in ways that historical accounts simply cannot with their disciplinary conventions of impartiality. My testimony offers not only unique contextualization but also a clear demand and political project that emerge from collective experiences of survival. That is, I am interested in leveraging Rwanda's tragic past as a conversation platform for students to examine what Rwanda can teach all of us as we are differently situated in contemporary relations of power, violence, and potential change.

Finally, my priorities as a community stakeholder imply a set of supports for both students and speaker. In a global crossroads like Toronto, for example, it is likely that there are students and/or teachers with their own traumatic histories. Supports for such experiences would begin to shift and expand the infrastructure of the education system as a learning community space. Schools can utilize existing resources such as: (1) intentional buddy systems for students and teachers to debrief in a safe and informal space, building on the trusting relationships that are already in place and (2) alerting the school counselor of potential need for their support. It would also be preferable but perhaps not practical for a speaker to come with a companion because in my experience it is essential to debrief after giving a talk.

There is much schools can learn from oral history practices in communities that build informal relationships of support and healing as part of learning. I would like as a speaker to know that the conversation will not end when I leave the class. I recommend ongoing dialogues that promote interpersonal skills and support students in working through differences and building an empathic and critical learning space. I would hope that listening to testimony of mass violence might serve as an opportunity to prepare teachers and students to embody compassion while building critical consciousness and dismantling power structures. As a Rwandan activist and speaker, I know that love and caring are integral to my healing and have supported our community in working through very difficult situations. I believe that the kind of listening practices and supports demanded by the address of testimony also compose the ability to "see each other" in our complex and true nature, allowing students to see themselves as whole beings. In my experiences as a speaker, audience interest was more focused on details and information about the 1994 Rwandan genocide against the Tutsi, or on the experience of being a youth and immigrant. I would argue that oral history is most powerful when students are focused on reflectively finding their relationship to this story. As dark and depressing as testimonial oral histories of mass violence may seem, the gifts they can bring are not pessimism but a vigilant, committed optimism. This is the hopefulness of an emotionally engaged student community invested in "the aliveness and strength in each person concerned."[41]

Shelley: Pedagogical Considerations for Teaching History with Testimony and Oral Histories of Mass Violence

For teachers, genocide education poses a particular set of challenges: beyond apprenticing young historians, genocide education has the broad civic goal of building students' empathy, sense of universal humanity, and social agency. Testimony and oral history are absolutely essential to these aims. I will reiterate Marie-Jolie and Umwali's emphasis on the ethical importance of building relationships but include an additional motivation for teachers. There is a lack of resources in optional courses at the secondary school level in Ontario, Canada. Even if a teacher is willing to personally supplement these, it can be difficult to access quality sources. Using testimony and oral history allows schools to engage in partnership building with survivor communities. Once contact has been made it is like ripples in a pond; more opportunities tend to follow. Importantly, this partnership is interactive. Inviting community groups into the schools provides survivors with a greater voice in how knowledge about the Rwandan genocide is constructed. As a teacher partner in this project, this relationship with community groups is ongoing and my students now have access to documentaries, documentarians, survivors, and educators they would not have had otherwise.

A series of pedagogical guidelines emerge from this collaborative curriculum development project. The first concerns building critical empathy. While life histories and testimony humanize history, it is the interpersonal and interactive nature of oral testimony that pushes students not only to feel but also to think. Not only should the students get an opportunity to ask questions, they should also be challenged in turn by the speaker. Educators can guide student engagement through a series of open-ended prompts to assess if they are making connections, have questions, or are indeed having an emotional response. The following prompts can be used with almost all testimony: "The following points cause an emotional response or resonated with me," "What big ideas of right or wrong are raised for me," "What connections can I make to class concepts," "Am I left with any unresolved questions or moral concerns."

Beyond empathy, there are unique ways that survivor testimony can support goals of teaching historical thinking concepts.[42] The development of historical consciousness is fundamental to the critical study of history[43] in which students can come to understand that history is not a list of facts but rather a continuous process of interpreting and socially constructing the past. Students should examine a wide range of historiography that includes both primary (firsthand or eyewitness accounts) and secondary (second-hand accounts) sources. Testimony and oral history gives students opportunities to apply their historical thinking skills to analyze primary sources and to evaluate how knowledge is constructed and assigned value by society and institutions. Their historical inquiry process should include an examination of competing sources or those that present different narratives of events. For example, *Smile Through the Tears* is an oral history in graphic novel format by survivor Rupert Bazambanza,[44] one that my students have read alongside *Rescue in Rwanda*, a non-oral and clearly Western-centric didactic graphic novel.[45] Students can then use these sources to evaluate historical significance and identify competing points of view in the construction of history. One of the higher-level thinking activities students can do is to evaluate which sources—primary or secondary—are more credible and reliable and what criteria can act as the basis of such a judgment. The greatest value of this activity lies in challenging students to articulate and then defend the criteria they design in order to answer this question.

Oral and life histories should not be an underrepresented add-on to the resources in a history classroom examining mass violence. Far too often they are viewed as someone's "story" or dismissed as a legitimate source of knowledge. There are many ways teachers can scaffold students' learning to critically listen and analyze oral testimony as a legitimate primary source. For example, in a lens-based approach, students are assigned one lens or perspective to focus on at a time (they might focus on facts learned, emotions evoked, negatives or positives presented, or conclusions that can be drawn). This introductory framework allows students to eventually come together to discuss and synthesize all assigned perspectives.[46] The use of lenses both structures and supports students in accessing prior knowledge and in analyzing the source. Other scaffolds introduce critical literacy strategies prior to, midway through, and after reading.[47] Whatever scaffolds one uses, they should be introduced to students early on in the course before they are exposed to oral testimony.

Finally, I have found it essential to approach teaching these critical historical thinking skills within a framework of anti-racist, global education, not only in response to community partner expectations but also to support students in understanding the institutional power relations shaping how history is written. It is insufficient, for example, to start one's examination of the Rwandan genocide with the "One hundred days" of violence in 1994. Cause and consequence (another concept of historical thinking) demands examining the origins of the genocide much further back in the history of colonization and postcolonial imperial forces. This includes colonial policies that institutionalized ethnic divisions in Rwanda based on racist ideologies: I have used a "power triangle" to help students distinguish different forms of power and identify not only interpersonal discrimination but also psychological, institutional, and structural.[48]

One of the challenges in genocide education is the limited resources available to high school teachers and how they are differently weighed and valued. Marie-Jolie's questioning of the privileged place afforded Romeo Dallaire as a major source on the Rwandan genocide (especially in Canada) has particular salience for critical thinking, given that he was an outsider. Clearly, his experiences can offer insight into the role of the international community, but where is the voice of the people who experienced the genocide themselves? I have witnessed "a-ha" moments as my students examined the availability of sources and the degree of respect they are afforded in people's responses. Such an exercise helps them gain insight into how institutions create knowledge/history through inequitable power relations.

A series of challenges and questions remain for teachers in this project. For example, time is a luxury that is usually missing from classrooms but it is essential if educators are going to do justice to testimony and oral history. I have noticed that a stranger in the classroom changes the dynamic and students need time to adjust. Ideally, speakers do not pop by for one class but a relationship builds over several visits: one class for an introduction, one to speak, and one for debriefing activities that can bridge into social action projects. I have also observed that it takes time to establish the context necessary for any guests coming into a classroom, both in terms of the receptive classroom atmosphere and the kinds of scaffolding activities that historically contextualize the testimony. I have often decided that more time is needed if I assess that students have missed the enduring lessons and implications of the commitment "Never again." Given the importance of these goals, something else has to give.

Culturally diverse school boards can offer a number of challenges when bringing testimony into schools. As Umwali explains, some cultures celebrate and venerate oral traditions as a source of knowledge. Other cultures may be dismissive of them as non-academic or non-institutional. Oral traditions within individual families or communities may have been lost or suppressed, especially if parents prefer to leave behind traumatic experiences of civil violence, flight, or emigration to Canada. Teachers can bridge this range of family cultural orientations with explicit instruction about how to respect and evaluate testimony and to achieve the historical thinking skills expected in the curriculum.

In a city as diverse as Toronto, students may strongly identify with perpetrator or target groups, a potential source of classroom tensions and challenge for even the most experienced teacher. This was particularly common in the early years of the *Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity* course. There was a great deal of opposition from the Turkish Canadian community and the Turkish government for including the Armenian genocide as a unit of study in the curriculum. For teachers interested in expanding the course to examine other twentieth-century atrocities, similar conflicts have arisen when students or their families identify with perpetrator or target groups from former Yugoslavia. I have witnessed parents getting involved quite heatedly. Teachers should view this as a rich learning opportunity rather than a reason to avoid genocide education. This very opposition and tension illustrates why it is so crucial to engage students, parents, and survivor communities in conversations framed by goals of social justice and building civic relationships, protections, and agency.

For a teacher new to genocide education, deciding whom to invite into one's classroom is also a challenge, especially when one part of a survivor community disagrees with another part over which testimony has value. I have approached this as a rich opportunity for students to examine these disagreements over voice and perspective. Consequently, my curriculum planning has stretched to incorporate very different sources, such as the documentaries *Finding Hillywood*[49] and *Sweet Dreams*.[50] Both films offer oral history of the Rwandan genocide and its aftermath, focusing on the ongoing journey of reconciliation. My students have compared how the two films differently represent the genocide, imply different conclusions, and are received by differently positioned audiences.

Testimony and oral history on mass violence by its very nature is going to feature dark and depressing subject matter. Students cannot simply be left to wallow in the violence that occurs during genocides. They can bear witness to the survivors and what they experienced as an act of memorializing what occurred. As Marie-Jolie and Umwali argue, however, students would ideally extend this learning experience into their own lives and worlds in ways that would inspire a desire to take action. This expression of social justice principles in action is one of the most challenging aspects of genocide education to teach and to assess in the short and long term. Traditional tests do not accomplish this goal. Guided writing activities can support a holistic evaluation of enduring learning: for example, double-entry diaries ask students to respond to specific prompts using their own observations. Assessment also offers an opportunity to encourage students to take action in more than imaginary time–place assignments. For example, when Kobe Bryant was the Global Brand Ambassador for Turkish Airlines, my students wrote letters to him attempting to dissuade Mr. Bryant from this role as the Turkish government is a major owner of the airline and has yet to accept responsibility in relation to the Armenian genocide. Perhaps the best part of genocide education is that once the teacher has modeled what it looks like, students come up with their own ideas for the many ways to become civically active.

Conclusion: Weaving the Past into a Shared Future

Portelli argues that one of oral history's distinguishing features as a methodology is the way it foregrounds the creative, collaborative process of historiography and remembrance, that is, of making meaning and making identity within a complex web of relationships. As a story told by one person to another, oral history presents itself as a(n) (inter)subjective practice in which "the narrator is now one of the characters, and the telling of the story is part of the story being told."[51] Locating oneself as an inseparable part of the story being told can, as we observe in this project, generate a whole set of critically reflexive questions about conventional practices of "studying" this thing called "history." That is, it draws students' attention to ways that "studying history" is also *making* history (in both senses of the word). Taking responsibility for one's role in this partial, situated, but collaborative process of remembrance implies learning how to act as a witness who is inside, not outside, the "big picture." It also implies attending to the kinds of relationships being built between survivor and stakeholder communities, teachers, and students. As Shelley emphasizes, the relationships being forged in this collaborative project may indeed be its most generative dimension. Framed by survivor-historian commitments to social justice, the dialogues among multi-generational, globally conditioned but community- and family-based historical memory have become rehearsals for the civic skill of building vigilant, engaged, and critical publics.

Notes

1. Marshall McLuhan, *Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962).
2. We understand oral and life histories as oral in origin and delivery though multiple media: while delivered by the individual subject or survivor, this performance can be heard or read in its recorded form through a range of media. Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different" in *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London: Routledge, 1998), 63–74.
3. Sherna Berger Gluck, Donald A. Ritchie, and Bret Eynon, "Reflections on Oral History in the New Millennium: Roundtable Comments," *The Oral History Review* 26, no. 2 (1999): 1–27; Steven High, *Oral History at the Crossroads: Sharing Life Stories of Survival and Displacement* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press,

2014); Steven High. "Introduction." In *Beyond Testimony and Trauma: Oral History in the Aftermath of Mass Violence*, eds. Steven High and Concordia University Centre for *Oral History and Digital Storytelling* (Vancouver: UBS Press, 2015), 3–30; Steven High, Lisa Ndejuru, and Kristen O'Hare eds. Special Issue on "Sharing Authority." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 43, no. 1 (2009); Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different"; Michael Frisch, "Oral History and the Digital Revolution," *The Oral History Reader* (2006), 102–114; Bruce Miller, *Oral History on Trial: Recognizing Aboriginal Narratives in the Courts* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 73.

4. Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010); Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, eds. *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1991); High. "Introduction"; Suroopa Mukherjee, *Surviving Bhopal: Dancing Bodies, Written Texts, and Oral Testimonials of Women in the Wake of an Industrial Disaster* (NY: Palgrave, 2010).
5. We give primacy to the designation "the Rwandan genocide against the Tutsi" in recognition of the reality of discourses of denial and revisionism (i.e. the propagation of theories of "double genocide" and outright denials that the 1994 genocide was primarily aimed at decimating the Tutsi population of Rwanda). Nonetheless, we recognize that those targeted for massacre extended beyond ethnic lines to include those identified as sympathizers, traitors, or internal threats. We use a range of terms, including "1994 Rwandan genocide" and "Rwandan genocide."
6. One of Canada's largest and most ethnoracially diverse public schools boards, the TDSB, also has a history of leadership in anti-discrimination and equity education: see, for example, Toronto District School Board. *Equity foundation statement and commitments to equity policy implementation* (Toronto: Toronto District School Board, 2000).
7. Developed by equity leaders in the TDSB and the organization Facing History and Ourselves, the course curriculum encompasses Lemkin, the UN Convention against Genocide, the Holocaust, and the Armenian, Cambodian, and Rwandan genocides. Toronto District School Board. *TDBS Ontario Ministry of Education Approved Proposal for a Locally Developed Course: CHC38 Genocide and Crimes against Humanity (Course Profile)* (Toronto: Toronto District School Board, 2008).

8. Marie-Jolie Rwigema, Axelle Karera, Natacha Nsabimana, Ntare Sharangabo, and Umwali Sollange Sauter, *The Rwandan Genocide as Told by Its Historian-Survivors* (videotape), dir. Marie-Jolie Rwigema (Toronto: Kabazaire Productions, 2009).
9. Roger I. Simon, *The Touch of the Past: Remembrance, Learning, and Ethics* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
10. We have elaborated the intersection of and implication of these fields of education for teaching the Rwandan genocide in: Lisa Taylor, Marie-Jolie Rwigema, and Umwali Sollange, "The Ethics of Learning from Rwandan Survivor Communities: The Politics of Knowledge Production and Shared Authority Within Community-School Collaboration in Genocide and Critical Global Citizenship Education" in *Beyond Testimony and Trauma: Oral History in the Aftermath of Mass Violence,* eds. S. High and Concordia University Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 88–118.
11. Miller, *Oral History on Trial*, 73; Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University New York Press, 1990); Henry Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Recounting and Life History* (New York: Praeger, 1998); High et al. "Sharing Authority"; High, *Oral History at the Crossroads*; High. "Introduction"; Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different"; Alistair Thomson, ed. Special Issue on "Sharing Authority: Oral history and the Collaborative Process." *Oral History Review* 30, no. 1 (2003).
12. Dwayne Donald, Florence Glanfield, and Gladys Sterenberg, "Living Ethically within Conflicts of Colonial Authority and Relationality," *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies* 10, 1 (2012): 53–77.
13. Uma Narayan, "Essence of Cultural and a Sense of History: A Feminist Critique of Cultural Essentialism" in *Decentering the Centre,* eds. Uma Narayan and Sandra Harding (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 80–100.
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CHAPTER 18

Learning with Digital Testimonies in Germany: Educational Material on Nazi Forced Labor and the Holocaust

Cord Pagenstecher and Dorothee Wein

Introduction

"There are fewer and fewer survivors, and testimonies and records are needed for other people and other generations." With these words, Polish artist and Ravensbrück survivor Helena Bohle-Szacki described her motive for granting an interview to the online archive *Zwangsarbeit 1939–1945* (*Forced Labor 1939–1945*).[1] But she was also voicing a challenge for educators: How can testimonies be made beneficial for future generations?

Oral history has long been a feature, albeit a rather marginal one, in Germany's educational system. Recently, however, new technologies have fostered fresh approaches to learning with testimonies. Interviews with Holocaust survivors, former forced laborers, and other victims of Nazi persecution have been pivotal in disseminating oral history in German schools and memorials. The immense value of oral history projects in education is largely acknowledged, but how can students actively learn using

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pre-existing testimonies, and what happens to the dialogical character of these testimonies in this process? In this chapter, we explore the contexts, approaches, and challenges for conceptualizing and realizing interview-based educational material for formal and informal education in Germany.

Since 2008, Freie Universität Berlin has been developing online archives and learning environments for testimonies. Two of these educational programs address German schools: The DVD series *Zeugen der Shoah* (*Witnesses of the Shoah*) is based on interviews from the USC Shoah Foundation's *Visual History Archive*[2] and the DVD *Zeitzeugen-Interviews für den Unterricht* (*Video Testimonies for School Education*) is derived from the *Forced Labor 1939–1945* collection.[3] Furthermore, specific online and offline programs, as well as smartphone apps, aim at localizing testimonies and enhancing visits to memorial museums. This chapter describes the interview collections and the educational material based upon them, and reflects on their approach, realization, and reception. To contextualize these considerations in a transatlantic debate, we discuss the specifics of Holocaust Education in the perpetrators' country and the educational possibilities of an "encounter" with video testimonies in classrooms.

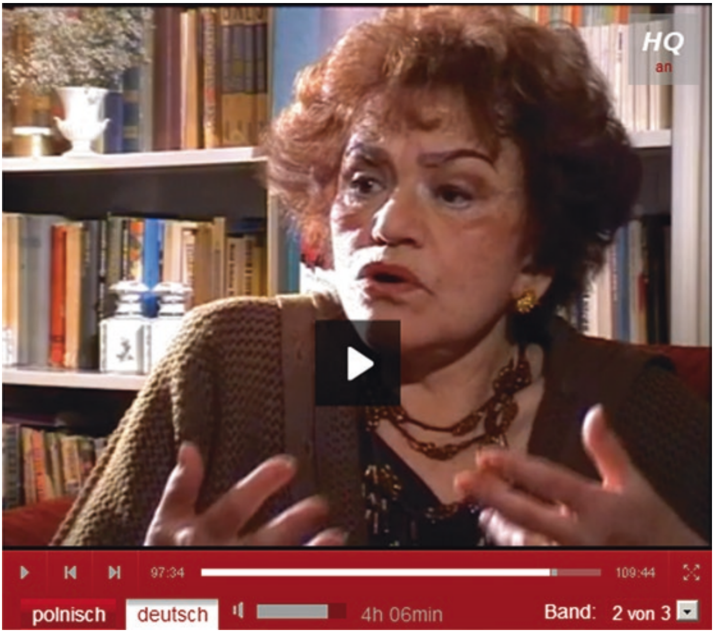
Interview Archives at Freie Universität Berlin

Oral history is one of the Digital Humanities core activities at the Center for Digital Systems (CeDiS) at Freie Universität Berlin. Since 2006, CeDiS has been hosting three major collections with testimonies focusing on Nazi Forced Labor and the Holocaust. The *Visual History Archive* of the USC Shoah Foundation,[4] the interview archive *Forced Labor 1939–1945*,[5] and the British–Jewish collection *Refugee Voices*[6] contain thousands of audiovisual life-story interviews. To manage these large digital archives, CeDiS has developed online platforms that give access to manifold audiovisual narrative data and include sophisticated mapping, searching, and annotating tools for collaborative research. The learning material described below was produced for educational use. Additionally, historians and educators at Freie Universität Berlin are engaged in academic debates on oral history, memorial culture, and Holocaust education, as well as forging strong links with memorial museums and experts in didactics. International conferences such as *Erinnern an Zwangsarbeit* (*Remembering Forced Labor*)[7] or *Preserving Survivors Memories*[8] were prepared for these purposes. New Digital Humanities projects, focusing on advanced methods of cross-collection access and analysis, are currently in preparation.

The oral history projects started when Freie Universität Berlin became the first full-access site outside the United States for the Shoah Foundation's *Visual History Archive*. The USC Shoah Foundation Institute for History and Education has collected over 53,000 testimonies with survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust and other genocides, thereby creating the largest oral history collection in the world. The interviews were conducted in 61 countries and 39 languages. Apart from 52,000 interviews with Jews, Roma, and other groups persecuted by Nazi Germany, the collection also includes interviews with rescuers and liberators, and with survivors and witnesses of other genocides (e.g. 1915 in Armenia, 1975–1979 in Cambodia, and 1994 in Rwanda).

The cataloging and one-minute-based indexing provided by the Shoah Foundation allows for a user-friendly search for specific sections within testimonies through a set of more than 60,000 keywords and 1.2 million names. While everyone can search through 1600 interviews online,[9] users need to visit access points like Freie Universität Berlin to obtain access to all of them.[10] The Shoah Foundation had not originally transcribed the interviews, but 908 German-language (plus 50 foreign-language) testimonies were transcribed by Freie Universität Berlin.[11] The time-coded transcripts enable full text searches and a subtitle-like viewing of the video interviews. Due to license restrictions, this functionality is accessible only within the campus network of Freie Universität Berlin, but the transcripts themselves are publicly available as PDF files (Ill. 18.1).[12]

Starting in 2008, Freie Universität Berlin created a sophisticated online archive for a new interview collection on Nazi forced labor. The interview archive *Forced Labor 1939–1945*: *Memory and History* commemorates more than 20 million people who were forced to work for the Reich—one of the largest systems of forced labor in history. Bringing together nearly 600 personal narratives from 26 different countries, this digital memorial aims at preserving and presenting the voices and faces of some of the survivors of a long-neglected group of Nazi victims. Five hundred and ninety former forced laborers tell their life stories in detailed audio and video interviews. Most of the interviews were conducted in the Ukraine, Poland, and Russia. Approximately 40 percent of the narrators were women and about a third were prisoners of concentration camps—many of them Jews or Roma. The interviews, collected 60 years after World War II, yield important factual information about individual camps and places for research purposes. At the same time, they constitute a valuable source for studying competing patterns of forgetting and remembering in



Ill. 18.1 Interview with Polish artist and Ravensbruck survivor Helena Bohle-Szacki in the online archive *Forced Labor 1939–1945*, www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de, za253

postwar Europe.[13] The biographical interviews do not only relate to Nazi forced labor; they also touch upon various other historical aspects of the *Century of Camps*, from *Holodomor* to *Perestroika*, from the Spanish Civil War to the Yugoslav Wars. The collection was initiated and financed by the Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future." The testimonies were recorded in 2005 and 2006 by 32 partner institutions under the coordination of oral history expert Alexander von Plato at the Institute of History and Biography at FernUniversität Hagen.[14]

Freie Universität Berlin subsequently created an online archive for these multilingual audio and video interviews and their accompanying photos and documents. Since January 2009, the digitized, transcribed, and translated interviews have been available on an online platform, along with a collection of short biographies and photographs.[15] The online platform is available in English, German, and Russian.[16] Multiple retrieval options allow for a targeted search for victims' groups, areas of deployment, places, camps, companies, and people. A map visualizes the origin and deployment locations of the interviewed forced laborers throughout Europe. Using the full text search, you can jump directly to specific sequences within the interviews. Tables of contents and brief biographies offer an orientation into the occasionally complex narrative structure and help to clarify the biographical context. The public website was developed around the interview collection and provides interactive maps and timelines, topical interviews with experts, and thematic short films. Due to ethical considerations and for the protection of the biographical narrations, users are required to register with the online archive before they can access the full interviews. Since 2009, over 6500 archive users—students, researchers, teachers, and other interested parties—have been granted access to the collection.

Holocaust Education in the Perpetrators' Country

The use of testimonies as part of an education program about National Socialism requires some general reflection on the aims, conditions, and challenges of an "education after Auschwitz"[17] and how it is understood in different countries. The last two decades have seen a universalization of methods and topics in what has become known as Holocaust Education. Institutions and organizations such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the USC Shoah Foundation, Facing History and Ourselves, and Yad Vashem have provided professional and well-researched educational material for a worldwide audience.[18] Many of these international educational projects use videotaped testimonies as one of their major sources of content. By showing the individual impact of Nazi persecution on survivors, these programs try to raise students' empathy and increase their awareness of a variety of contemporary phenomena of discrimination and persecution.

Beyond this, a personalized approach toward a human rights-oriented Holocaust Education, with the survivors' memories serving as inspiring personal examples, has become influential internationally, mainly because this offers an alternative to earlier "heroic" and nationalistic narratives. An innovative approach to getting students involved against "the evil" through videotaped testimonies apparently works in most countries, but it also has its limits and needs to be contextualized for different remembrance cultures.

This is specifically true for Germany, the country ultimately responsible for World War II and the Holocaust, where every German family has a direct connection to the Nazi past that will continue to be transferred to younger generations in one way or another. Intergenerational studies on family memories revealed how grandparents' narrations are interpreted by the following generations as stories of victimhood and antifascist resistance, and were easily adopted under the heading "Grandpa wasn't a Nazi."[19] On a collective level, German memory was "permeated with unconscious feelings of guilt."[20] Attempts to silence the past, deflect this guilt, and be accepted as a "good" nation became a central aspect of German postwar culture. Starting in the 1960s and 1970s, student protesters and people in History Workshops and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) felt a strong moral impetus to break this silence, an impetus that still drives many schoolteachers and museum educators today.

Nazi crimes have probably become the most explored topic in history education, yet often remain problematic in various aspects.[21] Many teachers seem to be either uneasy with or overcommitted to teaching about the Holocaust. With a wagging forefinger, some are teaching how to speak about Germany's Nazi past in a politically correct manner rather than teaching students how to approach this topic with a critical understanding. Empirical studies with high school students reveal the paradox of an alleged oversaturation of the topic and a simultaneous lack of factual historical knowledge.[22]

Public condemnation of Nazi crimes and identification with their victims often leave perpetrators and bystanders unidentified; the ordinary person's involvement and scopes of action or profit become almost invisible.[23] Even when working with survivors' testimonies, there seems to be a distinctive need to find positive German figures to identify with. During workshops with school classes conducted at Freie Universität Berlin, many students focused on interview excerpts that mitigated the horrors of the survivors' experiences and described positive experiences with the German population.[24]

In Germany, comparing the Holocaust with other crimes against humanity can easily be misconstrued as a relativization of Nazi crimes. As in several other countries in Central Europe, the experience of and teaching about Nazism and Communism, sometimes labeled as the "two German dictatorships" in Germany, can make for an equating of Nazi and communist systems that passes entirely over the central differences between the different ideologies and realities. But the universal approach also runs the risk of neglecting specificities and responsibilities. Students should be taught to stand up against discrimination in their everyday life, but they also need to understand the difference between their own experience and that of a Holocaust survivor.

While the Holocaust has become a central part of history curricula and textbooks, forced laborers have remained largely forgotten as victims of Nazi persecution. Only with the compensation debate around the turn of the millennium has the issue of Nazi forced labor been introduced into history education, especially in the form of local projects.[25] In regular school curricula, it still remains marginal,[26] and the same is true for other victim groups like Roma or homosexuals. Nevertheless, topographical traces of the Nazi past are omnipresent in Germany: People live in houses from which Jews were deported, are treated in hospitals involved in the "euthanasia" program, are educated in school buildings once used as forced labor camps, and walk on streets constructed by prisoners of war. A global human rights-centered approach of Holocaust education would risk ignoring the learning potential of a specific localized culture of remembrance where local memorials and initiatives of all kinds help in preserving—and disseminating among young people—historical knowledge and engagement with a problematic past.[27] Students can, in fact, discover traces of forced labor or the Holocaust not only in memorials and local history museums but also in their own neighborhoods or family histories.

These different challenges have one aspect in common: Holocaust events and narrations need to be taught in their historical context. This is even more important when working with video testimonies, where educational programs must strive to avoid the decontextualization so common to mass media. Therefore, the learning material presented here is based on a biographical, source-critical, and contextualized approach. All media and included activities share the common goal of a respectful understanding of the interviewee's life story, the critical examination of interviews as a historical source, and the contextualization and localization of these individual experiences and personal narrations.

Educational DVDs on Forced Labor and the Holocaust

Based on these reflections, and using the collections described above, CeDiS has developed two educational materials: *Zwangsarbeit 1939–1945: Video-Interviews für den Unterricht* (*Forced Labor 1939–1945: Video Testimonies for School Education*) and *Zeugen der Shoah: Fliehen, Überleben, Widerstehen, Weiterleben* (*Witnesses of the Shoah: Escape, Survive, Resist, Live On*). Both programs contain learning software on DVDs and a printed guide for teachers.[28] In *Forced Labor 1939–1945*, five former forced laborers from different countries take center stage and recount their deportations, their experiences in camps and factories, the behavior of Germans, and how they were treated after returning home. Two background films provide information on forced labor, compensation, and interview archive. The *Witnesses of the Shoah* series contains 12 biographies of survivors of different Nazi persecution policies. The titles of the four DVDs—*Escape*, *Survive*, *Resist*, and *Live On*—emphasize the individuality of each of the 12 life stories, which include Jewish survivors, Sinti and Roma, homosexuals, politically persecuted people, victims of Nazi eugenics, and rescuers.[29]

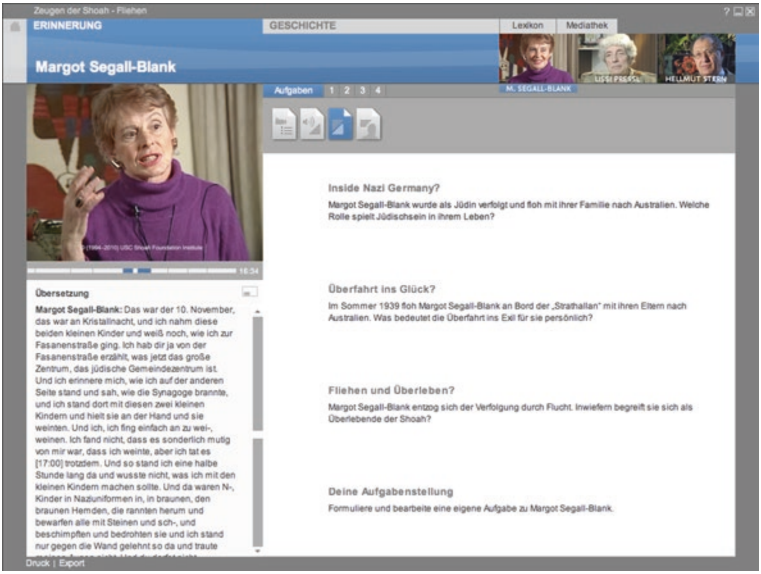
Though addressing different historical topics and using interviews from different collections, both programs have been conceived, designed, and realized according to a common conception developed through expert discussions, teacher workshops, and seminars with students. In nearly 50 one- to three-day workshops with school classes, the team developed and tested different educational methods, teaching scenarios, and user interface designs to support the students' lively "encounters" with the video testimonies. The results were published as guidelines for students and teachers[30] and formed the empirical basis for all future conceptual work.

Although being rather used to shorter movie clips with frequent cuts, students aged 14 and up paid close attention, even to long and uncut sequences, and responded well to the research options of the archives. For everyday school routines, however, it was necessary to edit the original interviews down and create short films of 25- to 30-minute lengths. These are not thematic clips, but were designed to maintain the shape and biographical arc of the original narratives as much as possible. All edits are clearly marked, and the interviewer's questions remain partly present in the narration. The interviews are presented as the central feature of a comfortable and secure learning environment. An interactive analysis of these complex historical sources is supported by suggesting activities relating to the interview and by the inclusion of additional photos, documents, and methodical guidelines. Listening to the interviews, the students can use the direct editing features of the learning software to create their own narrations. Photos, documents, animated maps, a timeline, and a glossary facilitate students' understanding.

The diverse tasks and activities are tailored to the particular biography of the narrator, but all follow a common didactic matrix consisting of biographical work, source criticism, historical context, reflections on memorial cultures, the facilitation of questioning, and narrative skills. Some tasks emphasize the non-verbal aspects of the testimony, the role of the interviewer, and the problems faced when editing several hours of interviews down into short films. On a second layer, taking oral history methods and the collection's genesis and specifics into account, subjective narratives are contextualized within their historical background.

To give one example, on the *Witnesses of the Shoah* DVD, students explore the transformation of the Jewish identity of Margot Segall-Blank, who grew up in Berlin prior to emigrating to Australia in 1939. Students can listen to her experiences with a growing anti-Semitism in Berlin and watch an excerpt from the 1937 documentary *Inside Nazi Germany*, which features Margot as a pupil at a Jewish school. Students are asked to reconstruct the transformation of her Jewish identity based on interview quotations of their own choosing but also to explore possible escape destinations and problematic issues of emigration. Then they are invited to connect Margot's story with their own experiences growing up, with the transformation of their self-esteem, or with the migration experiences of their own families; at the same time they work closely on the differences between Margot's identity changes and their own. The ways in which this process of differentiation evolves within the historical context may be understood as evidence of the dialogical character of this pedagogical design (Ill. 18.2).

The material is aimed at 14–18-year-old students from different kinds of schools. It addresses various learning scenarios: the teacher-centered classroom, interactive work in the computer lab, and individual exam preparations. All of the documents and each student's work results can be printed out for portfolios and working groups. In addition to history lessons, the material can also be implemented in the fields of politics, ethics, art, or German and English language studies. In multilingual learning groups, the



Übersetzung

Margot Segall-Blank: Das war der 10. November, das war an Kristallnacht, und ich nahm diese beiden kleinen Kinder und weiß noch, wie ich zur Fasanenstraße ging. Ich hab dir ja von der Fasanenstraße erzählt, was jetzt das große Zentrum, das jüdische Gemeindezentrum ist. Und ich erinnere mich, wie ich auf der anderen Seite stand und sah, wie die Synagoge brannte, und ich stand dort mit diesen zwei kleinen Kindern und hielt sie an der Hand und sie weinten. Und ich, ich fing einfach an zu wei-, weinen. Ich fand nicht, dass es sonderlich mutig von mir war, dass ich weinte, aber ich tat es [17:00] trotzdem. Und so stand ich eine halbe Stunde lang da und wusste nicht, was ich mit den kleinen Kindern machen sollte. Und da waren N-, Kinder in Naziuniformen in, in braunen, den braunen Hemden, die rannten herum und bewarfen alle mit Steinen und sch-, und beschimpften und bedrohten sie und ich stand nur gegen die Wand gelehnt so da und traute

Inside Nazi Germany?

Margot Segall-Blank wurde als Jüdin verfolgt und floh mit ihrer Familie nach Australien. Welche Rolle spielt Jüdischsein in ihrem Leben?

Überfahrt ins Glück?

Im Sommer 1939 floh Margot Segall-Blank an Bord der „Strathallan" mit ihren Eltern nach Australien. Was bedeutet die Überfahrt ins Exil für sie persönlich?

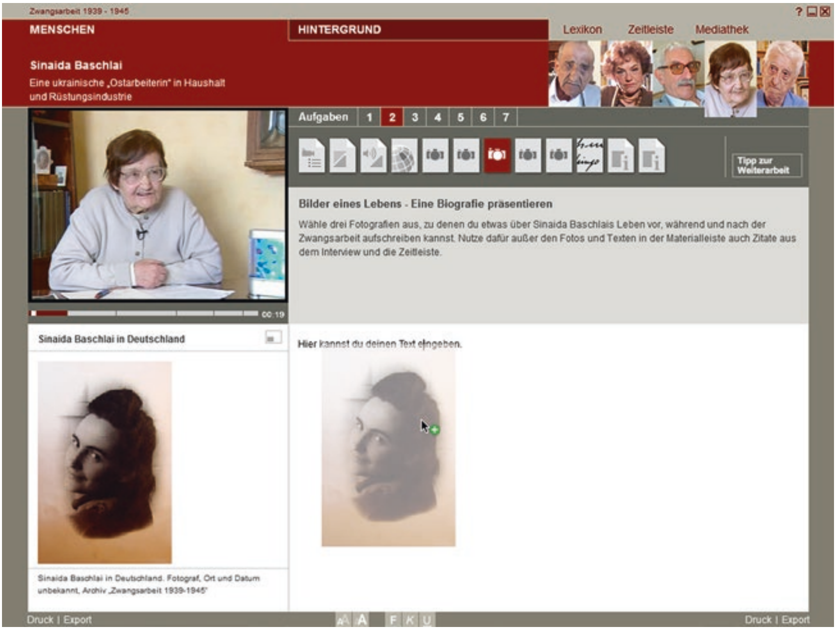
Fliehen und Überleben?

Margot Segall-Blank entzog sich der Verfolgung durch Flucht. Inwiefern begreift sie sich als Überlebende der Shoah?

Deine Aufgabenstellung

Formuliere und bearbeite eine eigene Aufgabe zu Margot Segall-Blank.

Ill. 18.2 Students' tasks on the interview with Margot Segall-Blank on the DVD *Witnesses of the Shoah: Escape*



Sinaida Baschlai

Eine ukrainische „Ostarbeiterin" in Haushalt und Rüstungsindustrie

Bilder eines Lebens - Eine Biografie präsentieren

Wähle drei Fotografien aus, zu denen du etwas über Sinaida Baschlais Leben vor, während und nach der Zwangsarbeit aufschreiben kannst. Nutze dafür außer den Fotos und Texten in der Materialleiste auch Zitate aus dem Interview und die Zeitleiste.

Sinaida Baschlai in Deutschland

Sinaida Baschlai in Deutschland. Fotograf, Ort und Datum unbekannt, Archiv „Zwangsarbeit 1939-1945"

Hier kannst du deinen Text eingeben.

Ill. 18.3 The interactive editor of the *Forced Labor 1939–1945* DVD

Polish, Russian, French, and Italian interviews from the *Forced Labor* DVD can be heard in their original language versions. Students from immigrant families can thus demonstrate their language skills, while bilingual schools can find linguistically linked teaching material for German history (Ill. 18.3).

History education experts and teachers were significantly involved in the conceptualization of the award-winning material. Both publications are being distributed by the German *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung* (Federal Agency for Civic Education). Since their public presentation in 2011 and 2012, more than 12,000 DVD editions have been sold. It is our desire in future to conduct a systematic evaluation of how teachers and students make use of the material.

Online Learning Programs

In view of improved internet access in schools and the growing prevalence of mobile devices, Freie Universität Berlin has been working to enhance the DVD concept toward an interview-based online learning environment about forced labor and the Holocaust, the results of which are publicly available since spring 2016 (www.lernen-mit-interviews.de). In light of the European dimension of World War II and the remembrance of Nazi crimes, CeDiS is supporting the development of educational material for different countries. In cooperation with the NGO *Živá paměť* (Living Memory) in Prague[31] and the High Tech University in Voronezh,[32] learning environments for the Czech Republic and Russia are being prepared. Online tools offer new possibilities of situating the survivors' experiences—and the listeners' encounter with them—within place-specific teaching and localized memorial activities. This is especially important, since forced labor, persecution, and murder were phenomena throughout Europe. The interviews, collected 60 years after the events, often reveal an amazingly detailed topographic memory about the sites of persecution. The survivors' descriptions of specific schools, synagogues, or prisons can be traced in today's urban landscapes and used in on-site education.

CeDiS has therefore developed further educational programs, together with memorial museums like the Topography of Terror in Berlin,[33] the former Flossenbürg Concentration Camp in Bavaria, and local memorials in the Ruhr area. Excerpts from survivors' testimonies enhance visits to memorial museums by combining individual narratives with the impressions from the historic site.[34] New mobile devices also enable the integration of testimonies into city excursions or tours of memorials. The testimony app developed by the *Berliner Geschichtswerkstatt* (Berlin History Workshop) contrasts recorded voices with real places. Some of Berlin's 500,000 former forced laborers talk about factories and camps in English and German, and photos and documents chronicle the victims and the perpetrators.[35] Following their everyday paths through the city, locals and tourists are able to associate personal memories with places in present-day Berlin.[36]

Encounters with Video Testimonies?

The teaching of history in German schools has focused primarily on written sources and examinable objective data, with teachers resenting oral history's approach as too subjective. Recent curricula, however, are shifting their attention from fact-based teaching to skill-oriented teaching, and aim at supporting media literacy and narrative competencies.[37] Within these shifting educational contexts, oral history interviews are gaining importance as a valuable narrative resource for historical learning. For many teachers, oral history interviews help convey history in a lively and meaningful way. Over recent decades, personal encounters with Holocaust survivors, former forced laborers, and other victims of Nazi persecution have been some of the most impressive experiences of historical learning. Seventy years after World War II, however, these live encounters have become increasingly difficult. Educators will thus have to use video testimonies when they want their students to engage with the history of Nazi atrocities from a survivors' perspective.

Based on intense discussions, as well as practical tests with students and teachers, CeDiS has conceptualized its approach, utilizing a number of assumptions regarding the character of videotaped testimonies and the students' possibilities of encounters with them. Instead of grouping thematic video clips with selected quotations from different narrators, the main objective has been to situate the witnesses' biographies at the center of the educational material. In this way, students get to know a specific person's life story, learn about his or her experiences and strategies before and after the persecution, and thus avoid reducing the interviewee to a role solely as victim. This will also help learners develop a more critical approach to the inadequate utilization of short interview excerpts, which has become increasingly common in mass media histotainment. These testimonies are subjective, biographical narrations about dramatic individual experiences of Nazi policies and atrocities. The survivors describe what various forms of exclusion, deportation, exploitation, the loss of home and loved ones, and the eventuality of survival meant to them. Students might need help in avoiding an inappropriate identification with the interviewee, since this would tend to ignore the students' own perspective and the alterity of the survivors' narrated experience.

The historical contextualization of the testimonies is essential when they are used in the classroom. Learners must be given the means to verify the historical and political opinions expressed in the testimonies by using additional information and material. In contrast to individual interviews, the wide variety of life stories offered in the large-scale interview collections can serve to demonstrate the multiple perspectives of victims' experiences, traumas, and diverse strategies of survival, as well as their resilience and coping mechanisms. The video testimonies attract and touch almost all students emotionally. This might be explicable simply by the fact that visual and digital media strongly appeal to today's students, and that watching a video is somewhat easier than reading a text. Indeed, video testimonies are an important tool for approaching the growing number of virtually illiterate students. But there is even more behind the attraction of survivors' testimonies. Apparently their visual presence, complete with mimics and gestures, has an engaging effect and creates a feeling of closeness to the interviewee, whom many students automatically call by his or her first name. Although the narrators were usually older (in their seventies), and the students were very young or not even born yet when the testimonies were recorded, the narrators were often, in the timeframe of the events discussed in the videos, about the same age as the student target group.

Due to the camera guidelines of both interview projects,[38] the interviewees appear as talking heads in conversation with somebody who listens and responds, but is not visible. This encourages the students to adopt the role of an attentive listener. The interviewers' questions and the communicative dynamic during the interview is often the subject of discussion in classrooms. Many students criticize the interviewer and suggest more or alternative questions, thus entering into a mediated relationship with the interviewee. Multimedia-supported testimonies intrinsically carry a strong promise to mirror reality.[39] Their "truth" is rarely questioned by viewers, especially those of a younger age. The interviews are, however, spoken or performed texts that emerge from a specific situation in conversation with another person. They are influenced by remembrance cultures, individual memory patterns, and specific narrative codes. Recorded in a specific way, their verbal, non-verbal, and visual dimensions need to be taken into account. Every educational presentation of these interviews has to reflect on the role of the interviewer, the camera, and the entire setting. Learners should be invited to engage with the testimonies, to step out of their role as "pure listeners" and to position themselves in relation to the source, voicing their own questions and judgments. The students learn to work critically with interviews as a specific historical source, and learn that history as such—whether in interviews or books—is always an interpretive construction of the past.

Video interviews can never be a substitute for personal encounters with survivors, whose personal authenticity can be felt best in a direct dialog. On the other hand, the nature of the digitized interviews allows students to actively engage with the historical sources. They can stop at difficult sentences and replay them; they can interrupt the narration by asking questions or voicing doubts to their teacher or peers—something that many of them would not dare in a live encounter with a survivor. In a digital environment that includes carefully conceived tasks and activities as well as contextualizing background material, students can more readily begin with their own critical analysis and their own interpretation efforts. Seen from this perspective, the in-depth interaction with a video testimony may be the best contemporary method for critical learning about National Socialism and its legacy.

Technological progress enables increasingly advanced levels of interactivity and visual presence. The USC Shoah Foundation's "New Dimensions in Testimony" project captures 3D interviews with Holocaust survivors and projects them as life-size holograms into classrooms. Through advanced speech recognition software, this hologram will "understand" students' questions and give adapted answers. The aim "to record and display testimony in a way that will continue the dialog between Holocaust survivors and learners far into the future"[40] is more than a logical continuation of the mediatized character of all recorded testimonies—from written to audio to VHS to digital to HD recordings.[41] It strives for an augmented reality that keeps survivors "alive" even after they have passed away.

For educational purposes, however, it might be more beneficial to help students to deconstruct the setting of giving testimony and actively listen, analyze, and reconstruct the testimonies than to imitate a live dialogue. After all, the testimonies are primarily a legacy, which needs to be interpreted and adopted individually with their educational, historiographical, or judicial usability subordinated to this character. A respectful treatment of the individual life stories should therefore be central to the way these interviews are utilized.

Conclusion

The material described here was conceptualized as a response to the challenges of educating about Auschwitz in Germany. The DVDs *Witnesses of the Shoah* and *Forced Labor 1939–1945*, developed by Freie Universität Berlin, aim to facilitate the students' encounter with the testimonies and to support new and adequate models of historical learning. Furthermore, providing teachers and students with customizable material for different teaching settings, technical equipment, and time frames has been a key concern.

Feedback from students has confirmed that learning from video testimonials differs significantly from traditional teaching in classrooms. Listening to a narration about the precarious survival of an individual, students can better understand the dimensions of Nazi atrocities. Using recent technology, young people confront survivors' testimonies as participating viewers, where their contributions can be interpreted as "answers" to the video testimonies. In these responses, students often make references to their own living reality but also refer to the fundamental differences of a time period that lies outside of their direct experience. Thus, videotaped interviews can enhance history teaching in a very meaningful way, if adequately presented and framed. With more than 70 years having elapsed since the war, education about National Socialism will have to increasingly rely on such new media formats.

NOTES

1. Polish-language interview with Helena Bohle-Szacki in the interview archive *Forced Labor 1939–1945*, www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de, za253.
2. *Witnesses of the Shoah* project: www.zeugendershoah.de.
3. Freie Universität Berlin and Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, eds., *Zwangsarbeit 1939–1945. Zeitzeugen-Interviews für den Unterricht: Video-DVD—Lernsoftware—Lehrerheft* (Bonn: BpB, 2010), www.bpb.de/shop/multimedia/dvd-cd/33895; *Lehrerheft:* www.bpb.de/shop/multimedia/dvd-cd/33897.
4. The Institute for Visual History and Education, USC Shoah Foundation: www.sfi.usc.edu.
5. Interview archive *Forced Labor 1939–1945*: http://www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de/en.
6. Interview collection *Refugee Voices*: www.refugeevoices.fu-berlin.de.
7. See also Nicolas Apostolopoulos and Cord Pagenstecher, eds., *Erinnern an Zwangsarbeit: Zeitzeugen-Interviews in der digitalen Welt* (Berlin: Metropol, 2013).
8. See also Nicolas Apostolopoulos, Michele Barricelli, Gertrud Koch, and Ralf Possekel, *Preserving Survivors' Memories* (Conference Proceedings, Berlin, 2016, forthcoming). Preserving Survivors' Memories. Digital Testimony Collections: History, Education and Media (Education with Testimonies, vol. 3), ed. by Nicolas Apostolopoulos, Michele Barrichelli, Gertrud Koch on behalf of Stiftung "Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft" (EVZ), Berlin 2016, http://www.stiftung-evz.de/fileadmin/user_upload/EVZ_Uploads/Handlungsfelder/Auseinandersetzung_mit_der_Geschichte_01/Bildungsarbeit-mit-Zeugnissen/Testimonies_Band3_Web.pdf.
9. See also vhaonline.usc.edu.
10. See also sfi.usc.edu/locator.
11. Sigrid Abenhausen, Nicolas Apostolopoulos, Bernd Körte-Braun, and Verena Lucia Nägel, eds., *Zeugen der Shoah: Die didaktische und wissenschaftliche Arbeit mit Video-Interviews des USC Shoah Foundation Institute* (Berlin: Freie Universität, 2012).
12. www.vha.fu-berlin.de/recherche/transkripte.
13. See also Christoph Thonfeld, *Rehabilitierte Erinnerungen? Individuelle Erfahrungsverarbeitungen und kollektive*

Repräsentationen von NS-Zwangsarbeit im internationalen Vergleich (Essen: Klartext, 2014).

14. Alexander von Plato, Almut Leh, and Christoph Thonfeld, eds., *Hitler's Slaves: Life Stories of Forced Labourers in Nazi-Occupied Europe* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn, 2010).
15. See also Apostolopoulos and Pagenstecher, *Erinnern an Zwangsarbeit.*
16. Interview Archive *Forced Labor 1939–1945*: http://www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de/en.
17. Theodor W. Adorno demands in one of his key lectures "Erziehung nach Auschwitz" (Education after Auschwitz) an education toward autonomy, reflection, and self-determination, an education that enables individuals to become resilient toward authoritarian tendencies. Educating about Auschwitz resp. Holocaust Education should keep those reflections in mind. Theodor W. Adorno, "Erziehung nach Auschwitz, Vortrag im Hessischen Rundfunk, gesendet am 18. April 1966," in: *Zum Bildungsbegriff der Gegenwart*, eds. Theodor W. Adorno (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1967), 111ff.
18. See the wide-ranging learning environment of the USC Shoah Foundation: http://iwitness.usc.edu/SFI/; Facing History and Ourselves: https://www.facinghistory.org/; Yad Vashem's program "Witnesses and Education": http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/index.asp; for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHHM): http://www.ushmm.org/educators/teaching-materials.
19. Harald Welzer. *Grandpa wasn't a Nazi: National Socialism and the Holocaust in German Memory Culture* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2005), 17.
20. Verena Lucia Nägel, "Witnesses of the Shoah: The USC Shoah Foundation's Video Testimonies in School Education in Germany," in *Holocaust Education in the 21st Century*, eds. Matthes Eva and Elisabeth Meilhammer (Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, 2016), 84–96.
21. Ibid.
22. Meik Zülsdorf-Kersting, *Sechzig Jahre danach: Jugendliche und Holocaust. Eine Studie zur geschichtskulturellen Sozialisation* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2007), 35–121.
23. Ulrike Jureit and Christian Schneider. *Gefühlte Opfer: Illusionen der Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2010).
24. Juliane Brauer and Dorothee Wein, "Historisches Lernen mit lebensgeschichtlichen Videointerviews. Beobachtungen aus der

schulischen Praxis mit dem Visual History Archive," in *GedenkstättenRundbrief* Nr. 153 (2010): 9–23, accessed 12 April 2015, http://www.gedenkstaettenforum.de/nc/gedenkstaetten-rundbrief/rundbrief/news/historisches_lernen_mit_lebensgeschichtlichen_videointerviews_beobachtungen_aus_der_schulischen_pr/.

25. See also www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de/buecher_medien.
26. Cord Pagenstecher, "Zeitzeugen-Interviews für den Unterricht. Eine Lernsoftware zur NS-Zwangsarbeit," in *Erinnern an Zwangsarbeit. Zeitzeugen-Interviews in der digitalen Welt*, eds. Nicolas Apostolopoulos and Cord Pagenstecher (Berlin: Metropol, 2013), 223–232.
27. Cord Pagenstecher and Karen E. Till, "The City of Camps: Remapping Berlin through the Forced Labor Testimony App," in *Terrorscapes: Transnational Memories of Mass Violence in Contemporary Europe*, eds. Rob van der Laarse and Georgi Verbeeck (Amsterdam: AUP, 2017, forthcoming).
28. Freie Universität Berlin and Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, eds., *Zeugen der Shoah. Fliehen—Überleben—Widerstehen—Weiterleben: Lernsoftware mit Video-Interviews* (Bonn: BpB, 2012), www.bpb.de/shop/multimedia/dvd-cd/141267, *Begleitheft für Lehrende*: www.bpb.de/shop/multimedia/dvd-cd/145580; Freie Universität Berlin and Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, eds., *Zwangsarbeit 1939–1945. Zeitzeugen-Interviews für den Unterricht: Video-DVD—Lernsoftware—Lehrerheft* (Bonn: BpB, 2010), www.bpb.de/shop/multimedia/dvd-cd/33895, *Lehrerheft:* www.bpb.de/shop/multimedia/dvd-cd/33897.
29. See also Verena Lucia Nägel and Dorothee Wein, "Witnesses of the Shoah: The Visual History Archive of the Shoah Foundation in School Education," in *From Testimony to Story. Video Interviews about Nazi Crimes. Perpectives in Four Countries (Education with Testimonies, Bd. 2)*, eds. Dagi Knellessen and Ralf Possekel on behalf of the Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" (Berlin: EVZ 2016), 173–179, http://www.stiftung-evz.de/service/publikationen/monografien-sammelbaende.html.
30. Dorothee Wein, "Didaktische Grundsätze und Impulse zur Arbeit mit lebensgeschichtlichen Video-Interviews," in *Zeugen der Shoah. Fliehen, Überleben, Widerstehen, Weiterleben. Schulisches Lernen mit*

Video-Interviews, Freie Universität Berlin and Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, eds., (Bonn: BpB, 2012).

31. *Ziva Pamet*: www.zivapamet.cz.
32. *Regional Center for Oral History Voronezh*: www.historyvoice.ru.
33. See also Dorothee Wein, "Stimmen der Opfer am Ort der Täter: Seminare mit Video-Zeugnissen an der Topographie des Terrors," in *Erinnern an Zwangsarbeit. Zeitzeugen-Interviews in der digitalen Welt*, eds. Nicolas Apostolopoulos and Cord Pagenstecher (Berlin: Metropol, 2013), 247–252.
34. See also Cord Pagenstecher and Christa Schikorra, "Online-Einstieg Flossenbürg. Zur Vorbereitung eines Gedenkstätten-besuchs," in *Erinnern an Zwangsarbeit. Zeitzeugen-Interviews in der digitalen Welt*, eds. Nicolas Apostolopoulos and Cord Pagenstecher (Berlin: Metropol, 2013), 259–266.
35. *Forced Labor Testimony App of Berlin History Workshop*: www.berliner-geschichtswerkstatt.de/forced-labor-app.html.
36. Ewa Czerwiakowski, Thomas Irmer, and Cord Pagenstecher, "Digitale Spurensuche und mobiles Lernen im öffentlichen Raum. Die Zeitzeugen-App zur NS-Zwangsarbeit in Berlin," in *Erinnern an Zwangsarbeit. Zeitzeugen-Interviews in der digitalen Welt*, eds. Nicolas Apostolopoulos and Cord Pagenstecher (Berlin: Metropol, 2013), 267–272.
37. See also Michele Barricelli, *Schüler erzählen Geschichte: Narrative Kompetenz im Geschichtsunterricht* (Forum historisches Lernen), (Schwalbach/Ts: Wochenschau Verlag, 2005); Michele Barricelli and Michael Sauer, "Current Issues in German Research on Historical Understanding" in *Interpersonal Understanding in Historical Context,* eds. Matthias Martens, Ulrike Hartmann, Michael Sauer, and Marcus Hasselhorn (Rotterdam, Boston, Taipei: Sens, 2010), 61–79.
38. USC Shoah Foundation. *Videographers Guidelines* (2007): 5, accessed 12 April 2015, http://sfi.usc.edu/download/USCSFI_Videographer_Guidelines.pdf.
39. See also Nägel, "Witnesses of the Shoah."
40. USC Institute for Creative Technologies, *New Dimensions in Testimony* (2013), accessed 12 April 2015, http://ict.usc.edu/prototypes/new-dimensions-in-testimony.
41. Bernd Körte-Braun, "Erinnern in der Zukunft: Frag das Hologramm" in *Leben nach dem Überleben. Yad Vashem E-Newsletter*, 10 (2013), accessed 12 April 2015, http://www.yad-vashem.org.il/yv/de/education/newsletter/10/article_korte.asp.

Index

A
Aboriginal history, 255
Aboriginal people, 80, 189, 190, 196, 197, 242, 255
abortion, 8, 108–10, 112–17, 119–23, 124n8
access, 3, 9, 22, 24, 31, 33, 90, 93, 97, 98, 100, 101, 110, 114, 136, 137, 146n46, 146n47, 152, 155, 156, 189, 193, 208, 218, 220, 224–6, 232, 237, 238, 243, 266, 319, 320, 341, 344, 346, 349–51, 362–4, 370
accredited training, 200
active listening, 26
activism, 18, 30, 100, 108, 119
activist pedagogy, 293
advocacy, 110, 117–20, 122, 144–5n33
affective *experience*, 208
African epistemologies, 344
agency, 7, 23, 28, 31, 44, 46–8, 52, 54, 56, 57, 130, 137–42, 176, 177, 210, 219, 222, 277, 292, 293, 310, 340, 344, 349, 353
AHCILM404A *Record and Document Community History*, 190, 206n48
Alexievich, Svetlana, 1, 281
anti-colonialism, 343
anti-racism, 339, 351
appropriate training, 190, 201
archives, 2, 8, 21, 25, 31, 33, 45, 46, 53, 80, 81, 109, 110, 113, 124n13, 129–34, 137, 139, 141, 146n46, 153, 177, 192, 201, 211, 224, 225, 241, 244, 255, 317, 342, 361–4, 367, 368
artifacts, 114, 188, 212–15, 217–19
audiovisual, 51, 215, 218, 221, 362
Australian Curriculum, 187

Note: Page number followed by 'n' denotes notes.

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K.R. Llewellyn, N. Ng-A-Fook (eds.), *Oral History and Education*, Palgrave Studies in Oral History, DOI 10.1057/978-1-349-95019-5

Australian Institution for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), 196
Australian Quality Training Framework, 192
Australian 1967 referendum, 189
Australian stolen generation, 194, 196

B

Berlin, 11, 362–4, 366, 368–70, 374
big idea, 260, 275, 278, 294n4, 350
biographies, 108, 113, 169, 182n9, 189, 209, 286, 364, 367, 368, 372
Broadfoot, Barry, 281
Broome Western Australia, 189, 190, 197

C

Campo Bello, Putumayo Province, 320
cause and consequence, 66, 72, 80, 173, 256, 264, 302, 309–10, 351
change and continuity, 10, 300, 307–9, 312, 313
civil rights, 3, 32
civil war, 25, 288, 318, 320, 330, 364
co-created narratives, 24, 28, 77
collaboration, 10, 19, 22, 24, 26, 27, 30, 46, 53, 109, 111, 136, 155, 208, 210, 212, 215, 216, 219–21, 223, 226, 235, 242, 243, 253, 254, 258, 261, 263, 282, 283, 292, 293, 322, 323, 338, 339, 350, 354, 362
collaborative learning, 10, 111
collective decision-making, 24
collective memory, 19–21, 26, 72, 152, 153, 215, 338, 345–7
collectivity, 215, 217–18, 220
Colombia, 10, 317–35
Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC)), 318–20
colonial frontier logics, 242
colonial logics, 76, 102n2, 102n4
colonization, 52, 77, 78, 189, 210, 211, 225, 239, 274, 278, 291, 318, 351
colonizing, 7, 88, 90–3, 96, 97, 99–101, 102n2, 102–3n4, 210, 292
community, 2–7, 9–12, 18, 19, 24–9, 31–3, 45, 53, 55, 59n7, 70, 75, 76, 78, 83n13, 90, 93, 95–8, 100, 101, 109, 115, 116, 120, 122, 130, 133–6, 138–40, 151, 153, 159–61, 168, 170–2, 189–95, 197, 199–201, 207–30, 232–5, 237, 238, 244, 255, 258, 262–4, 266, 274–6, 278, 279, 281, 285, 287, 288, 290–3, 297n59, 301, 305, 307, 308, 312, 317, 319, 320, 322–31, 338, 339, 341–3, 345–54
community building, 255
Community Education Project (*Projecto Educativo Comunitario*, PEC), 328
community of memory, 27
conflict, 6, 17–23, 26, 29, 32, 44–52, 54–8, 59n9, 66, 72, 162, 168, 177, 220, 239–43, 279, 317–35, 352
Congreso Regional Indigena del Cauca (Regional Indigenous Council of the Cauca, (CRIC)), 328
conscientization, 11, 18, 24, 28–33
continuity and change, 48, 54, 66, 72, 73, 94, 173, 179–81, 256, 287, 288, 302

country, 4, 11, 20, 32, 44, 45, 51, 52, 70, 84n17, 136, 171–4, 179, 192–4, 197, 201, 237, 242, 265, 291–3, 318, 331, 362–7, 371
critical history, 7, 67, 68, 351
critical pedagogy, 6, 19, 138, 140, 337, 347
critical thinking, 22, 145n33, 170, 342, 351
cross curriculum approaches, 199–200
Cruikshank, Julie, 89, 93
culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogy, 209–12, 215, 218, 220–1, 223, 226
cultural protocols, 192–6, 223
cultural self-determination, 208
culture, 2, 7–11, 20, 22, 24, 25, 28, 31, 50, 58, 58n3, 69–72, 80, 88, 90, 93, 102n2, 103n5, 129, 135, 162, 167–8, 171, 172, 188–92, 197–201, 208, 210, 211, 213–15, 217–26, 234, 237–43, 253, 268, 274–8, 287, 290, 291, 293, 297n59, 309, 318–19, 325–29, 331, 338, 340, 342–8, 352, 362, 365, 367, 368, 373
culture, Afro-Colombian, 319
culture, indigenous, 80, 102n2, 197, 210, 318, 328
culture, rural, 138
curriculum, 4–12, 17, 20, 21, 23, 27–9, 32, 33, 43–6, 49, 53, 55, 56, 66–9, 71–4, 78, 81, 87, 89, 91–5, 98, 108, 134, 141, 155, 158, 169, 171–2, 181, 187, 188, 191–2, 196, 199–202, 210, 213, 217, 232, 235, 237, 240, 242, 243, 253, 254, 256, 266, 267, 269n11, 274–8, 281, 285, 286, 293, 294n4, 297n59, 299, 300, 305–9, 327, 329, 330, 337–9, 341, 347, 348, 350, 352, 353, 355n7

D
decolonization, 102n2
decolonizing, 6, 7, 87–90, 92, 98–101, 102n2, 102n4, 105n33
deep listening, 27, 28, 33, 213
democratic citizenship, 22
democratization, 4, 18, 24–8, 33, 337, 338
didactics, 350, 362, 368
difficult knowledge, 4, 9, 27, 232, 236, 282, 292
digital environment, 373
digital filmmaking, 215
digital histories, 212, 214–19, 221, 222
digital literacies, 68, 233
digital resources, 44
digital storytelling, 8, 10, 11, 222
digital technology, 208, 218, 224
dilemmas, 44, 89, 91, 95, 100, 132, 133, 151, 157, 194, 195, 201, 232
disciplinary history, 8, 65, 66, 72–4, 81, 129, 130, 133, 134, 139, 288, 300, 348
displacement, 6, 10, 25, 68–70, 234–6, 238, 240, 318, 326, 327
displacement, forced, 318, 327
documentary, 11, 20, 27, 53, 95, 158, 171, 212, 214–18, 222, 231, 258–9, 263, 301, 338–40, 342–4, 350, 353, 369
dominance, 342
dominant narratives, 129, 130, 133, 136, 141

E
Edelsky, Carole, 276
education, 1–14, 17–41, 43–7, 49, 50, 56–7, 65–90, 93, 95, 97, 99, 101, 103n8, 111, 112, 119, 125n17, 129, 130, 132, 133,

136–8, 141, 146n46, 149–51, 154, 167–85, 190, 192, 201, 206n50, 207–11, 214–16, 218, 220, 222, 226, 253–6, 259, 260, 262, 267, 275, 277, 288, 289, 299–317, 319, 321, 322, 328–31, 337–40, 342–4, 346–9, 351, 353, 355n6, 356n10, 361–78
educators, 4–12, 17, 20, 29–31, 33, 34, 46, 47, 65–7, 69, 74, 82, 89–91, 97–101, 132, 139, 142, 149–51, 154, 155, 157, 161–3, 177, 178, 181, 187, 190, 201, 208, 209, 220, 226, 253–72, 292, 295n11, 313, 339, 342, 343, 346, 350, 352, 361, 362, 366, 372
Elder Interviews, 212, 213, 216, 217, 219, 221
Elders, 3, 7, 9, 68, 75, 76, 79, 81, 91, 93, 95–7, 99, 101, 103n5, 192–4, 198, 211–13, 216, 219–20, 222, 223, 225, 231, 232, 234–6, 239–44, 273, 276, 281, 292, 293, 323
Elder testimony, 281
e-learning, 361–378
El Tigre, Putumayo Province, 319–24
emotions, 6–8, 29, 30, 44, 46–7, 49, 51, 52, 54, 55, 57, 71, 80, 84n27, 101, 110, 112, 114, 117, 119–22, 132, 151, 155, 157, 158, 161–3, 167, 178, 198, 282, 283, 289, 304, 331, 341, 342, 344, 349–51, 372
empathic skills, 121
empathy, 30, 33, 47–9, 54, 56, 75, 84n27, 122, 341, 349, 350, 365
epistemic privilege, 340, 344
ethical dimension, 29, 40n87, 66, 82, 120, 173, 256, 266, 302, 310–13
ethical issues, 29, 193–6, 208, 216
ethical judgments, 30, 33
ethical relationality, 242
ethics, 5, 9, 22, 27, 33, 87, 132, 140, 142, 190, 192, 193, 198, 265, 310, 331, 369
Eurocentric history, 227n1
evidence, 2, 23, 24, 32, 48–50, 54–6, 66, 72, 73, 78, 110, 149, 150, 154, 155, 173, 178–9, 181, 243, 256, 264, 273, 276, 278, 281, 284, 285, 287, 291, 299, 301–5, 307, 308, 342, 369
experiential learning, 139, 254, 259
extrapersonal skills, 261–3

F

family history, 167–85, 201, 274, 279, 280, 286, 288, 323, 328, 367
Family Treasures Project, 276, 294n8
feminism, 6–8, 24, 107–27, 132
feminist methodology(ies), 8, 110, 122, 123n1
feminist oral history, 107, 108, 111, 112, 119, 122, 123n1, 124n7, 124n10
feminist pedagogy, 108, 110, 111, 117, 122, 125n17
film, 11, 68, 78, 92–100, 104n17, 212, 214, 218, 220, 222–4, 231–3, 235–6, 240, 243, 244, 338, 339, 342–4, 353, 365, 367, 368
Firefox Project, 276
Fort McKenzie, 9, 231, 234, 235, 239–42
Frank, Arthur, 7, 89, 90, 93, 94, 97–9, 101, 103n6, 103n11, 104n20, 104n26, 104n31, 105n37, 105n38, 105n46

G
generations/cross-generational, 2, 3, 7, 8, 19, 21, 25, 29, 30, 34, 51, 69, 77, 80, 92–4, 108, 109, 111, 115, 116, 121, 122, 169, 181, 191, 192, 196, 202, 210, 221, 255, 265, 289, 290, 299, 307, 340, 341, 361, 365
genocide studies, 337–42
Germany, 11, 19, 294n3, 361–78
global education, 17, 23, 24, 351
grand narrative, 7, 66, 67, 75, 152, 291, 313, 314

H
HBC. *See* Hudson Bay Company (HBC)
healing, 29, 71, 218, 325, 326, 331, 338–40, 343, 348, 349
High-Impact Practices, 111
historical consciousness, 5, 6, 18–21, 44, 46–8, 50, 52–4, 56, 57, 65, 71, 75, 77, 78, 80–2, 120, 170, 174, 350
historical contextualization, 173, 175–7, 372
historical empathy, 30, 84n27
historical evidence, 2, 78, 110, 149, 178, 181, 276, 301, 303, 305
historical fact, 181, 255
historical inquiry, 4, 67, 80, 284, 299–302, 306–8, 313, 350
historical learning, 371, 372, 374
historical memory, 29, 236, 326, 329, 334n31, 354
historical perspective taking, 72
historical questions, 173–5, 181, 301
historical reasoning, 173, 174, 301, 302
historical significance, 24, 39n72, 66, 72, 73, 173, 256, 264, 305–7, 340, 350
historical thinking, 4, 5, 7, 10, 17, 18, 26, 29, 39n72, 65, 66, 68, 72–4, 77, 80, 81, 84n27, 111, 120, 126n38, 169, 170, 173–5, 179–81, 208, 226, 253, 256, 264, 269n11, 271n36, 273, 275, 277, 278, 282–8, 293, 299–316, 331, 340, 341, 350, 351
historical thinking skills, 9, 10, 24, 32, 68, 168, 181, 208, 264–6, 277, 284, 300, 350–2
history, 1, 17, 43, 65, 88, 107, 129, 149, 167, 187, 207, 231, 253, 273, 299, 317, 337, 361
history curriculum, 4, 5, 7, 73, 74, 78, 169, 170, 188, 347, 348
history education, 4, 5, 7, 8, 45, 47, 65, 67, 73–5, 78, 88, 151, 154, 167–70, 172–5, 180, 339, 366, 370
history of education, 10, 307, 313
history pedagogy, 232
history textbooks, 19, 71, 77–9, 170, 172, 179
Holocaust, 4, 5, 11, 18, 27, 152, 155, 159, 160, 254, 260, 264, 355n7, 361–78
Hudson Bay Company (HBC), 92, 231, 233, 234, 239
human rights, 17, 18, 21, 23, 26, 27, 153, 236, 325, 365, 367

I
identity, 7, 19, 20, 27–30, 80, 89, 91, 93–5, 98, 100–2, 120, 132, 152, 154, 156, 160, 172, 199, 201, 210, 227n3, 233, 236, 265, 281, 291, 297n59, 300, 303, 313, 319, 327, 329, 341, 354, 368, 369
identity resources, 233
Indigenous, 2, 24, 67, 89, 188, 207–30, 242, 274, 310, 318, 337

Indigenous Australians, 188–91, 193, 196, 197
informed consent, 193, 196–8
Inga Indigenous people, 318
inquiry process, 4, 275, 287, 350
Institutional Review Board (IRB), 112, 116, 117, 119, 222, 223
interconnectedness, 18, 21, 27
interdisciplinary, 6, 89, 238
intergenerational, 67, 69, 71, 73, 80, 92, 94, 98, 101, 122, 151, 263, 343, 345, 365
intersubjectivity, 303, 304
interviewing skills, 257
the interview process, 195–9, 289
interviews, 3, 26, 49, 75, 87, 108, 117–19, 131, 151, 169, 192, 212, 213, 235, 254, 276, 300, 319, 361
intrapersonal skills, 261–3
Inuit, 7, 66, 69, 88–101, 102n3, 103n5, 103n9, 253, 255, 269n4, 281
Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, 88, 89, 92, 103n5
Inuit schooling, 7, 66, 69, 88, 90, 99, 100
IRB. *See* Institutional Review Board (IRB)

J
Jewish history, 159, 160

K
knowledge, indigenous, 208, 209, 221, 329
knowledge paradigms, 132, 135
knowledge, traditional, 91, 211, 319, 321, 329, 330

L
land claims, 2, 88, 92–4, 100, 102n2, 234
Language Experience Approach, 275
La Violencia, 318
leadership, 88, 94–6, 101, 122, 214, 220, 226, 340, 355n6
lived history, 259–60

M
Magabala Books, 189
Mampuján, Bolivar Province, 324–7, 334n40
Mampuján Nuevo, Bolivar Province, 325
memories, 3, 5, 8, 18–21, 25–7, 29–31, 45, 47, 59n7, 70–2, 110, 134, 142, 150, 152, 153, 169, 178, 180, 190, 195, 210, 215, 218, 225, 236, 241, 259, 260, 266, 281, 282, 289, 303, 305, 319, 322, 326, 329, 331, 334n31, 338, 341, 345–8, 354, 365, 371, 373
Mujeres Tejiendo Suenos y Sabores de Paz, 325
multimodal elements, 232, 233
museum, 3, 5, 8, 9, 12, 151, 155, 157, 158, 201, 207, 213, 214, 362, 366, 367, 371
museum exhibits, 157–8, 212–14, 216–19

N
narco-trafficking, 11, 318
narrations, 20, 50, 51, 81, 89, 96, 97, 343, 365, 367, 368, 372–4
narrative habitus, 89, 90, 94, 100
narratives, 2, 19, 58, 66, 68–72, 89, 107, 129–46, 168, 188, 210,

231, 255, 274, 299, 331, 338, 362
Naskapi, 231–7, 239, 240, 243, 244
Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach, 231, 232, 247n29
National Liberation Army (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN)), 318
Nazi forced labor, 361–78
negative peace, 22
Nunavut, 7, 87–105, 253, 255

O
oppression, 11, 24, 28, 30, 31, 47, 108, 168, 211, 225, 314, 317
oral history, 1–14, 17–41, 43–63, 65–105, 107–27, 129–46, 149–65, 167–85, 187–230, 232, 236–9, 244, 253–97, 299–335, 337–59, 361–4, 368, 371
Oral history Australia, 190, 203n15, 205n38
oral testimonies, 67, 77, 161, 173, 178, 179, 188, 255, 269n4, 350, 351
oral tradition, 2–4, 8, 10, 11, 74, 169, 191, 192, 198, 200, 231, 255, 281, 323, 352
orienting truths, 8, 130

P
Paez (Nasa) indigenous people, 327
participatory, 23–6, 33, 212, 214, 216, 221, 222, 226, 226n2, 317, 330, 331, 338, 339
peacebuilding pedagogy, 5, 6, 19
peace education, 6, 17–24, 26, 28, 29, 32, 33
pedagogical approaches, 8, 43–63, 122, 151, 167, 210, 338
pedagogical possibilities, potential, 6, 91, 93, 94, 101
pedagogy, 3, 5–7, 11, 17–41, 44, 46–8, 51–2, 56–8, 67, 74, 95, 108, 110, 111, 117, 122, 125n17, 138, 154–5, 157, 162, 172, 192, 209, 210, 222, 226, 231–50, 253–72, 293, 295n11, 297n59, 299, 300, 306, 307, 317–35, 337, 339, 340, 345, 346
pedagogy, and death, 162
pedagogy, and food production, 234, 323, 325
pedagogy, and play, 19, 20, 26, 45, 46, 56, 237, 240, 317
pedagogy, and quilting, 325
pedagogy, and violence, 21, 28, 32, 33, 45, 49, 57, 157, 162, 317, 318, 320–4, 327, 330, 349–53
pedagogy, as knowledge discovery, 2, 281
pedagogy, intergenerational, 263, 345
pedagogy of discomfort, 6, 32, 44, 46–8, 51–2, 56–8
pedagogy, participatory, 23, 317, 330, 331
pedagogy, student-centered, 317
peer mentors, 114
performance, 113, 190, 191, 206n48, 322, 354n2
personal peace, 17, 21–4
perspective, 6, 18, 21, 26, 33, 45, 56, 57, 59n7, 66, 67, 73, 97, 100, 108, 110, 114, 115, 130, 138, 139, 141, 146n47, 154, 171–4, 177, 178, 188, 192, 195, 207, 208, 214, 216–17, 220, 225, 226, 234, 236, 240, 255, 256, 265, 274–6, 285, 287, 288, 290, 293, 300, 302, 303, 306, 309–13, 322, 325, 326, 338, 342–9, 351, 353, 372, 373
Piñacue, Susana, 327–31, 334n42, 335n45, 335n50

positionality, 8, 130–3, 136, 221
positive peace, 22, 24, 26, 28, 33
positive responses, 48–50, 57
poverty, 10, 224, 240, 317, 324
power, 28, 33, 52, 90, 95, 108, 111–14, 116, 120, 122, 124n10, 138, 161, 170, 188, 198, 208, 210, 211, 238–40, 274, 292, 301, 321, 328, 330, 341–4, 346–9, 351, 352
powerful pedagogy, 47
pre-service teachers, 7, 313
The *Price of Freedom: Americans at War*, 156
primary sources, 4, 66, 201, 256, 264, 276, 281, 284, 291, 300, 302, 338, 350, 351
private history, 173
progress and decline, 48, 54, 73, 308
public pedagogy, 2
Putumayo, 320, 323

Q
Qallunaat, 88, 90, 91, 96–101, 102n3

R
rapport, 118, 119
reason, 4, 7, 17, 32, 34, 44, 46–9, 89, 96, 120, 145n33, 188, 191, 193, 201, 212, 265, 266, 276, 281, 294n2, 300–2, 307, 346, 353
reassembling, 93
reciprocity, 161, 209, 212, 218, 220, 224, 226, 339, 342, 343, 346
reconciliation, 6, 7, 11, 18, 19, 29, 30, 65–86, 189, 192, 199, 293, 326, 334n31, 353
recruitment, 111–16, 125n29, 327
relational positive peace, 22, 33
relocation, 160, 236, 240
remember, 47, 57, 71, 79, 94, 169, 179, 210, 243, 265, 276, 289, 292, 305, 320, 325, 341, 348, 363
remembrance, 20, 31, 51, 152, 153, 157, 231–50, 300, 339, 341, 344–6, 348, 354, 365, 367, 371
representation, 9, 17, 71, 113, 115, 154, 160, 161, 163, 178, 179, 201, 215, 220, 223–5, 232, 233, 238, 243, 340, 342–4
reproductive rights or justice, 7, 8, 107–27
research, 5, 11, 17, 22, 43, 44, 49, 53, 54, 58n3, 71, 87–91, 99, 107–15, 119, 121, 122, 125n29, 129, 132, 133, 135–7, 139–41, 146n47, 151, 152, 155, 156, 160, 168, 169, 172, 173, 177, 179, 181, 194, 196, 208, 212, 214–18, 220, 222, 224, 226, 237, 255, 257, 258, 262, 267, 277–9, 284–6, 289, 291, 301, 304, 319, 326, 329–31, 338, 339, 341, 342, 344, 362, 363, 368
research, oral history, 43, 129, 152, 160, 217, 222, 339
research process, 54, 212
research skills, 110, 111, 121, 122, 286
resonance, 89, 97, 105n38
responses to conflict, 44, 48, 49, 57
responsibility, 18, 23, 52, 58, 102n2, 123n6, 142, 150, 162, 209, 224–6, 238, 340, 344, 346, 353, 354
retired teachers, 50, 300, 301, 303, 304, 306–8, 312, 314
Riascos, Sonia Maritza, 319–23, 330, 331, 332n4, 333n12
Roe *vs.* Wade, 116

Ruiz Hernandez, Juana Alicia, 324, 330, 333n23, 333n24, 334n27, 334n28, 334n32, 334n33, 334n339
Rwandan genocide, 11, 338, 342, 343, 349–51, 353, 355n5, 355n7

S
school-based projects, 29, 232
school-community partnerships, 3, 349
school history, 4, 151, 158, 168, 172, 173, 177, 181, 200, 256
schools, rural, 305, 323
Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM), 8, 129–46
Seixas, Peter, 13n20, 35n15, 35n20, 50, 61n28, 62n29, 72–4, 82n1, 83n10, 84n23, 85n33, 126n38, 168, 173, 177, 182n1, 182n3, 182n4, 184n25, 256, 264, 269n8, 277, 299, 302, 305, 307–12, 314n2, 315n10, 316n31, 357n18, 359n43
self awareness, 242, 263
Sembrando Paz project, 325
service-learning, 7, 109, 111, 115
shared authority, 18, 24, 25, 238, 339–41, 343
significance, 18, 24, 26, 39n72, 48, 54, 66, 72, 73, 97, 112, 120, 124n13, 149, 168, 173, 192, 200, 214, 232, 233, 237–9, 256, 264, 302, 305–7, 340, 341, 350
Smithsonian Institute, 151, 155, 156
social justice, 5, 6, 21, 44, 47, 56, 107, 108, 111, 119–22, 137–41, 154, 347, 353, 354
social studies, 4, 8, 66, 71, 92, 100, 101, 154, 155, 158, 159, 213, 256, 257, 267, 274
socio-cultural approach, 167, 170
socio-narratology, 89
source criticism, 368
state violence, 317
STEM. *See* Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM)
stories, 2, 21, 45, 87–105, 107, 134, 149–65, 168, 208, 232, 255, 257, 273–97, 299, 342
storytelling, 5, 8, 10, 11, 25, 112, 150, 153, 171, 189, 192, 195, 208–12, 216, 222, 224–6, 268, 279, 284, 289, 319–24, 329, 330, 345, 348
storywork, 9, 208–26
student teachers, 29, 54, 108, 202, 204n26, 261, 299–316
survivors, 4, 7, 11, 27, 28, 66, 67, 71, 75–8, 80, 81, 254, 258–60, 281, 338, 339, 341–5, 348–50, 353, 354, 361, 363, 365–7, 371–4

T
teacher education, 9, 43, 75, 82, 129, 137, 299–316, 339
teachers, 2, 17, 43, 90, 108, 129, 170, 187–206, 211, 231, 253, 274, 299–316, 319, 365
teaching, 5, 6, 9–11, 19, 20, 22, 28, 43, 44, 46, 48–50, 54–8, 65–8, 72, 76, 89, 91, 95, 100, 101, 108, 130–3, 137, 141, 145n33, 150, 172, 188, 190, 192, 200, 201, 210, 213, 222, 226, 232, 238, 254–6, 259–61, 267, 274, 275, 277, 294, 300, 303–6, 308, 310, 312–14, 317, 319, 321–3, 329–31, 339, 341, 349–53, 366, 371, 374
teaching the conflict, 54–7

testimonies, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11, 21, 27, 28, 31, 50–3, 55, 67, 75, 77, 110, 116, 139, 150, 154, 157, 160–2, 178, 179, 188, 236–9, 255, 281, 337–59, 361–78
Torres Strait Islander people, 199
trade commerce, 231
trauma, 18, 20, 27, 30, 33, 47, 96, 97, 99, 114, 150, 157, 222, 338, 339, 342, 343, 346
Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2, 66, 71, 83n5, 83n6, 86n40, 153, 281, 359n39

U
uncomfortable spaces, 47
undergraduate research, 111, 119
undergraduates, 78, 107, 108, 111, 119, 121
University of Winnipeg, 256, 319

V
violence, 10, 11, 20–2, 24, 28, 32, 33, 45, 49, 57, 71, 73, 76, 157, 162, 165n21, 317, 318, 320–4, 327, 330, 332n7, 339–41, 343, 345–53

W
war, 18–20, 26, 27, 48, 51, 52, 156–8, 162, 175–9, 213, 217, 238, 254, 257, 260, 264, 265, 279, 281, 287, 288, 318, 320, 327, 330, 331, 367, 374
Winnipeg, 319, 332n1
Winnipeg Education Centre, 319
World War II, 19, 156, 158, 257, 265, 267, 287, 365, 371, 372
writing process, 262, 276–8, 283–6, 289
writing skills, 262, 289

Y
youth, 19, 31, 32, 53, 69, 78, 88, 91–5, 98, 100, 157, 161, 162, 172, 212, 215, 218–20, 235, 236, 244, 282, 290, 329, 349