

Oral History Project for Adult Education Classes

New Bedford Division of Adult/Continuing Education

455 County Street
New Bedford, MA 02740

Everyone has a story to tell. This project allowed the students to take the time to record their stories. The students read stories and watched videos of life experiences of other people. The students decided to interview a family member or friend to produce a story. While comparing local history to oral history they developed their skills in asking questions and practiced with the interview process. The students conducted oral interviews, and then wrote, edited, word processed, and published their oral history document for distribution. Volunteer tutors assigned to our classes assisted our students with the writing process helping to make this project so successful.

The goals of this Oral History Project were to develop conversation and writing skills; to introduce the adult learners to the interview process; to help the students develop questions pertinent to the oral history process; to compare biographies and autobiographies; to help the learners share personal information and remembrances; to model interview techniques; and to create oral history essays for publication in a classbook.

Three English as a Second Language classes were the recipients of a mini grant from SABES and participated in an oral history project. Highlights of the project included participation in a tour of the Town of Fairhaven, a local community; a visit to the New Bedford Art Museum to view the Norwegian Exhibit; and the publication of the students' stories in Remembering Friends and Family. This Oral History Project includes ideas for class activities which Adult Literacy practitioners may use to teach Oral History. Examples of lesson plans are included. The main objective of this project is to improve adult literacy. The main goal was to have students improve their speaking, reading, and writing skills upon completion of this project.

This project was developed by the staff and students of three English for Speakers of Other Languages classes in the New Bedford Division of Adult/Continuing Education, the recipients of a mini-grant from SABES, and a mini-grant for this web publishing project from the National Institute for Literacy's LINCS Project and Northeast Lit-Tech.

Depending upon the goals and purposes of the curriculum of each program, this project presents the possibility of using as much or as little of the lessons as deemed necessary by the participants in each particular adult education program.

Lessons and Resources for Oral History

<u>Lesson: Personal and Historical Oral History Timelines</u>	<u>Lesson: The Local Community's Past and Present</u>
<u>Lesson: The Students' Oral History Project</u>	<u>Lesson: Making Introductions</u>
<u>Lesson: Roots Shield</u>	<u>Lesson: Family</u>
<u>Lesson: My Family Tree</u>	<u>Lesson: Model Interview</u>
<u>Lesson: Biographies</u>	<u>Lesson: Prioritize Questions</u>
<u>Lesson: The Oral Interview</u>	<u>Lesson: Interview a Classmate</u>
<u>Web Resources for Oral History</u>	<u>Printed Resources for Oral History</u>