

Pennsylvania Libraries: *Research & Practice*

Practice

Past Events, Current Teens, Future Skills

Producing Digital Oral History

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Public libraries can use digital oral history projects (1) to teach digital literacy skills to teens in accordance with national and state information literacy standards and (2) to develop local digital collections. The technical standards for such projects are modest, and the Library of Congress Veterans History Project provides an ideal template with which to begin. This article highlights the benefits of using the Veterans History Project for library programs and events and summarizes how the Veterans History Project can be collaboratively implemented across libraries. Suggestions for curriculum-based program development for young adult users of public libraries are also outlined.

Introduction

Creating digital oral histories is an easy multipurpose project that incorporates fundamental literacy skills with community engagement. Digital literacy is defined as “possessing an ability to navigate, manipulate, and stay ahead of emerging computer and Internet technologies. Also having an ability to use technology responsibly and ethically and transfer everyday ideas into technology processes” (Braun, Hartman, Hughes-Hassell, & Kumasi, 2014, p. 6). Digital literacy is considered a fundamental skill and this educational benefit is a key component of the Library of Congress (LC) Veterans History Project (VHP). Teens are introduced to project-planning concepts such as logistics, technology issues, and pre-interview research.

According to Hoopes (1979), an oral history is a method of historical research, a “collecting of any individual’s spoken memories of his life, of people he has known, and events he has witnessed or participated in” (p. 7). As Leavy (2011) outlines, major purposes of oral histories include:

- Filling in the historical record. The events can be recounted decades after they occur (e.g., Holocaust survivor interviews) or collected immediately following an event (e.g., experiences of survivors, family members and rescue workers involved in the terrorist attacks of September 11).

- Understanding people's subjective experiences of historical events (e.g., presidential elections).
- Understanding people's subjective experiences of historical periods or periods of change (e.g., gay marriage).
- Understanding people's subjective experiences of current or recent events (e.g., sports championships).
- Contributing to the understanding of topical areas (e.g., immigration).
- Gaining community experiential knowledge (e.g., water crisis in Flint, Michigan).

Using the VHP as a template, it is possible to use those purposes to develop ideas for oral histories that foster teen involvement in community-, school-, and academic-based projects. Placing the teen oral history project in the confines of the library and with these allied organizations allows for the incorporation of the legal and ethical issues in the design and execution.

Oral History, Public Libraries, and Teenagers

The modern practice of oral history dates to 1948, but the expense of recording equipment and a focus on interviewing politicians, scientists, and other elites provided little room for the involvement of public libraries. This had changed by the 1960s. Less expensive portable tape recorders were becoming available, and the emergence of the field of social history focused attention on the experiences of ordinary people (Yow, 2005). The Oral History Association was established in 1966 (Oral History Association, n.d.), and by the 1970s there were a number of practical guides for those wishing to start oral history projects (Pfaff, 1980). Rumics (1966) helped introduce oral history to the library community, and in 1977 the American Library Association published a guide for librarians interested in oral history projects (Davis, Back, & MacLean, 1977).

Baum (1970) argued that the local library should be the "locus" of community oral history projects because it could provide project continuity and was the ideal custodian of the recorded interviews and transcripts. She also stressed the importance of oral history in terms of the library's traditional role in preserving local history, noting the increasing interest in preserving the stories of all members of the community, including minorities (pp. 272–273). A decade later, Pfaff (1980) also saw the public library as "the most well-equipped institution to preserve the history of the community due to its access to primary research sources and the traditional role of preserving perishable material" (p. 569). That public libraries across the United States heeded these calls is apparent from the library literature of the 1970s and 1980s. Palmer (1983, 1984) describes such projects in New York and nationally, Libbey (1981) in Connecticut, and Friedlund (1980) in Texas. While public library oral history projects almost always focus on the community's history, some have dealt more narrowly with specific occupational groups ("Oral History in New Jersey," 1978), minority groups (Duncan, 2005; O'Toole, 2005; Pinnell-Stephens, 2005), veterans ("Vietnam in the Public Library," 1983), reading habits (McNicol, 2007; Schlosser, 1980), and notable individuals (Davis, 1991).

While the public library's local history mission clearly encompasses oral history and while public libraries are well situated to manage such projects, especially as it relates to cataloging, preservation, and access, it has long been recognized that volunteers would need to perform much of the actual work. Indeed, Baum (1970) thought oral history the "ideal" project for volunteers due to its "visible social usefulness, rapid achievement, a suitable job for every kind of personality, low initial cost, and just plain fun" (p. 271). While Baum may have been thinking about adult volunteers, the literature shows that teenagers can also contribute to oral history projects. Carr (1989) reports on a project in which high school students interviewed former faculty, students, and community members. In Woburn, Massachusetts, middle and high school students interviewed senior citizens ("Teenage Hangouts and Blue Laws," 1992). The Monroe County [Indiana] Public Library used students to interview local residents on such diverse topics as the limestone industry and the Ku Klux Klan ("Ind. Volunteers Credited with Oral History Success," 1975). Jacobson (2000) used eighth graders to interview local farmers, and O'Toole (2005) used Chinese teenagers to interview their parents and

grandparents. The StoryCorps oral history project also makes use of intergenerational interviews (Kniffel, 2005). Clearly, there is a place for teenagers in oral history projects.

The Veterans History Project

The Veterans History Project was established by act of Congress in 2000 with the goal of building “a lasting legacy of recorded interviews, memoirs, and other documents” regarding the experiences of Americans during times of war. Included are not only those who served in the military but also those who worked in war industries or contributed their services as volunteers (Library of Congress, 2010). The role of the Library of Congress (LC) is to provide training materials, as well as organize and preserve the interviews. It is up to community volunteers to solicit interviewees and to conduct the actual interviews. Technical standards for the interviews are modest (either audio or video are acceptable), and anyone ten years of age or older may participate. Community partners do not have to register to participate. They are asked to follow the guidelines posted online and to send the completed interviews and paperwork to LC (Library of Congress, 2014). Recording equipment is the responsibility of the community partner. Once completed, the interviews are submitted to LC, which then takes responsibility for preserving the interviews and any accompanying documents. While LC does make a selection of interviews available online, information on all interviews is entered into the project’s National Registry of Service, which is a searchable online database. All interviews are available to the public at LC’s American Folklife Center (Library of Congress, 2016).

Clarion University’s Department of Information and Library Science provides an example of how a community partnership might work. The department signed up as a participant shortly after receiving a mailing from LC announcing the program. The department was to provide overall management of the project, while recruiting student volunteers to conduct the project. In this way, the students would gain experience with both management and implementation of an oral history project. The university library agreed to add the interviews to its digital collection so that they would be accessible to the community. The plan also called for students to assist the library by providing the necessary metadata, something that LC does not require. Work then began to recruit student volunteers and to acquire the recording equipment. The local American Legion post agreed to make its membership roster available as a means of contacting veterans.

Finding the equipment and training volunteers to use it proved easier than finding veterans willing to be interviewed. During the first year of the project, the focus was on veterans of World War II and Korea. Unfortunately, only about 10% of the veterans contacted using the American Legion roster agreed to be interviewed, despite both mail and personal appeals. Several noted that there were memories they would rather not recall. Greater success was achieved in the project’s second year, when the focus turned to veterans enrolled at the university. This shift allowed the department to support the university’s commitment to being a veteran-friendly campus and to manifest the kind of high impact educational practices that the university is encouraging. Working from a list of student veterans involved with the campus veterans’ organization, ten interviews were arranged in short order. These contacts also led to interviews with relatives of student veterans, further broadening the project’s reach and community impact.

Proper documentation of the interviews is essential, especially if they are to be made available online. Fortunately, LC provides most of the necessary forms in the project’s Field Kit (Library of Congress, n.d.). These include a biographical data form, release forms, and a recording log. The recording log is important because it provides time marks for each topic covered in the interview. The release forms (one for the interviewee and one for each person conducting the interview, including, for example, the videographer) grant LC nonexclusive rights to make the recording available online. The veteran retains copyright to his/her interview. Separate release forms are required if the community partner wishes to make the recordings available as part of a digital repository with remote access.

Clarion adapted the LC release forms so that the university library would also have the necessary non-exclusive digital rights.

While high-quality records are obviously desired, LC asks only that its partners use the best equipment they have available, know how to use it, and test for sound quality before beginning the interview. While LC accepts both audio and video recordings, it does have a few recommendations: avoid mini or micro cassette recorders, use an extended microphone (such as a lapel microphone) instead of a built-in one, use a tripod for video, and above all, test both the recording equipment and recording medium in advance (Library of Congress 2016). Clarion has encountered instances of defective video tape, but has thus far avoided the ultimate misstep of recording over a previous interview.

The original version of the Field Kit also had recommendations in terms of the interview's setting. These are still well worth following. They suggest an area that will not pick up outside noise and that has carpeting and upholstered furniture to minimize echoes. For video, direct and even lighting works best, while backlighting and very bright backgrounds should be avoided. The camera should be focused on the subject's upper body so as to capture hand gestures. Avoid the camera's zoom feature, as the results tend to be distracting. Perform a final sound check and you should be ready to record (Library of Congress, n.d.).

Clarion has found that most interview subjects become quite loquacious once prodded with a few questions. Here, again, LC provides suggestions on the questions to ask, techniques for jogging the subject's memory, and closing questions. These general suggestions are easily adapted for other oral history projects. The interviews themselves must be at least thirty minutes long (Library of Congress, n.d.). Thus, LC suggests brief introductions of both the interviewer and the veteran, with the former indicating the date and location of the interview. Next come questions about the veteran's background and family, how he/she entered the service (including whether the veteran enlisted or was drafted), wartime service, and return to civilian life. At the end of the interview, the veteran is asked to provide any further reflections on his/her service and is given the opportunity to add any final remarks (Library of Congress, n.d.). Student veterans are also given the opportunity to comment on the campus and community climate for veterans.

There is post-production work involved in the project. Activities, such as preparing the interview for addition to the collection and following up with the interviewee as needed, can provide opportunities for volunteers who do not wish to conduct the actual interviews. The process of adding the interview to the collection begins with the recording. It will be necessary to make copies of the recording, and, if the recording medium will not be the storage medium, to transfer the interview to the final medium. Depending on the equipment available in the department, Clarion has used miniDV cassettes, miniDVDs, and SD cards to record the interviews, then transferred the recording to a standard-sized DVD-R, a format required by the Library of Congress. Clarion makes three copies: one for the Library of Congress, one for the veteran, and one for the university library. The Library of Congress instructs participants not to label or write directly on the CDs or DVDs sent to it (Library of Congress, n.d.). Clarion does add a label to the copies for the veterans and the university library. This label is designed to provide a usable preferred source of information for cataloging purposes. As such, it identifies the veteran and the date of the recording as well as the project and the department. The copies of the recording are produced as quickly as possible so that one can be provided to the veteran in a timely fashion. In addition to a DVD of the recording, the veteran also receives copies of the release forms and a thank-you letter. The final step in this phase is to prepare the recording log, which, of course, requires a volunteer to view the recording. Once this step is completed, the recording and supporting paperwork is sent to the Library of Congress via a commercial delivery service, such as FedEx or UPS, since LC no longer accepts submissions sent through the U.S. Postal Service (Library of Congress n.d.).

If the community partner is content to let the Library of Congress handle organization and access to the recordings, the process is now over. It is expected, however, that many partners will want to make the recordings available locally, either in the library itself or, more commonly, over the Internet. Some libraries have their own digital repositories (such as Clarion University of Pennsylvania), but public and school libraries will probably choose to

participate in a state, regional, or national digital materials management service. An example of such a service is Pennsylvania's PA Photos & Documents (formerly known as Access PA Digital Repository), which is administered by the Office of Commonwealth Libraries. It provides participating school, public, and university libraries access to a content management system (CONTENTdm), data storage on a secure server, and 24/7 public access to the library's digital resources (PowerLibrary, n.d.). PA Photos & Documents is, in turn, affiliated with the Digital Public Library of America (Digital Public Library of America [DPLA], n.d.) to provide even broader access to its collections.

Once the decision is made to make the recordings available locally, the final step is to prepare descriptive metadata and create a bibliographic record for each recording. As already noted, a well-designed DVD label should provide most of the information needed for the record. The record itself should be created according to the library's existing cataloging standards and/or to those of the library's digital materials management service. If the latter, it is likely that the service specifies the record format (probably Dublin Core) but not the rules for record content. It is strongly recommended that the latter use whatever standards the library uses for other cataloging. This will probably be a combination of *RDA: Resource Description & Access* or *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, second edition, revised*, for descriptive cataloging and *Library of Congress Subject Headings* or *Sears List of Subject Headings* for subject access. Libraries used to purchasing bibliographic records from a vendor or relying on copy cataloging may think original cataloging of unique material such as oral history recordings more challenging than it is. In fact, much of the record content is either repetitive or drawn from the DVD label. The following example of a RDA MARC record for the DVD uses Library of Congress Subject Headings, data taken from the disc label being shown in bold.

```
100 1# #a Moore, Edgar C., #d 1922- #e interviewee.
245 10 #a Edgar C. Moore : #b US Army, World War II / #c Clarion University,
Department of Library Science, Veterans History Project.
264 #0 #a 2012 February 1.
300 ## #a 1 videodisc (40 min.) ; #c 4 1/2 in.
336 ## #a two-dimensional moving image $2 rdacontent
337 ## #a video $2 rdamedia
338 ## #a videodisc $2 rdacarrier
518 ## #p Clarion, Pa. #d 2012 February 1
600 10 #a Moore, Edgar C., #d 1922- #v Interviews.
610 10 #a United States. #b Army. #b Armored Infantry Battalion, 53rd. #b
Company C #x Interviews.
650 #0 #a World War, 1939-1945 #x Veterans #z Pennsylvania #z Clarion $v
Interviews.
650 #0 #a Veterans #z Pennsylvania #z Clarion #v Interviews.
650 #0 #a World War, 1939-1945 #v Personal Narratives, American.
650 #0 #a World War, 1939-1949 #x Campaigns #z Europe.
655 #7 #a Nonfiction films. $2 lcgft
655 #7 #a Oral histories. $2 lcgft
700 1# #a Widdersheim, Michael, #e interviewer.
710 2# #a Clarion University of Pennsylvania. #b Department of Library
Science, #e sponsoring body.
710 2# #a Veterans History Project (U.S.), $e sponsoring body.
```

The record for an online version of the resource would differ in the following respects.

```
300 ## #a      1 online resource
337 ## #a      computer $2 rdamedia
338 ## #a      online resource $2 rdacarrier
856 40 #u      [uniform resource locator]
```

As can be seen from the above example, most of the record content is drawn from the disc label, or is repetitive (e.g., the class of persons heading and the genre headings), or is a variation on a theme (e.g., the war in which the veteran participated and his/her military unit). Most oral history projects will probably require fewer subject headings.

Like many digital repositories and digital materials management services, Clarion University's library uses CONTENTdm and Dublin Core for its digital collection. The library defined a set of Dublin Core elements for VHP records. Using this set of elements, the interview represented in MARC above appears as follows:

Title: Edgar C. Moore: U.S. Army, World War II
Interviewee: Moore, Edgar C., 1922-
Role(s) of Interviewee: World War II veteran
Gender of Interviewee: Male
Decades Discussed: 1940
Military Branch: United States. Army.
Conflict Discussed: World War, 1939-1945.
KLN Categories: Interview
Project Name: Veterans History Project (U.S.)
Interviewer: Widdersheim, Michael
Contributor(s): Clarion University of Pennsylvania. Department of Library Science.
Course: [if applicable]
Course Instructor: [if applicable]
Repository: Clarion University of Pennsylvania Archives
Contributing Institution: Clarion University of Pennsylvania
Object Type: Video
Language: English
Date Original: 2012-02-1
Date Digital: [leave blank]
Format Original: DVD
Format Digital: [leave blank]
Length of Recording: 0:40:00
Identifier: [if applicable]
Rights Management:
Subject: World War, 1939-1945—Veterans—Pennsylvania—Clarion—Interviews.
Veterans—Pennsylvania—Clarion—Interviews.
World War, 1939-1945—Personal narratives, American.
United States. Army. Armored Infantry Battalion, 53rd. Company C—Interviews.
World War, 1939-1945—Campaigns—Europe.

Whether one chooses to participate in the Veterans History Project or not, it provides an accessible starting point for any oral history project with regard to technical standards, interview questions, and digital rights management. While much more could be said about cataloging/metadata as it relates to oral history, the basic takeaway is that it is repetitive and manageable, even for libraries with limited original cataloging experience. In addition, libraries with a digital materials management service will probably find that consultants are available to help them.

Leveraging Skills from VHP to Library Projects

Oral history is a way to connect one person's experience to the social or historical context of the account (Leavy, 2011). In the case of the LC VHP, the veterans' stories allow for a better understanding of the realities of war (Library of Congress, 2015). A teen oral history project can start using an established platform like the VHP and then expand to use the same histories in other programs. For example, the VHP oral histories can be supplied to the LC and then used in other ways in the library.

The VHP histories can be used as library-, community-, school-, and academic-based projects. The library can create a teen VHP as a way for teens to learn and use digital tools. Using teens to research and record the VHP oral histories creates a multigenerational project that the library can supply to the LC as well as use to begin a local history collection of veterans' stories. The oral histories can be used by the community in memorial events such as Veterans Day and Memorial Day commemorations. Local school and college involvement could be fostered in history and video production classes.

The teen-developed VHP oral histories project can be used by the library to build community engagement. The project would welcome veterans to the library. In addition, the oral histories present opportunities for educational benefits and collaboration. The histories could be paired with a book club featuring selections that include events recounted in the histories. Veterans Day and Memorial Day programming could feature excerpts. The library could collaborate with the local history society for research opportunities for the teens as they prepare to conduct the interviews. Additional ideas for projects include:

- Using oral histories to make the library visible.
- Using excerpts on the library web page.
- Playing excerpts at fundraising events.
- Interviewing family members who participated in major local or national events.

Leveraging Skills from VHP to Community Projects

The skills used in the VHP can be extended to other community oral history projects (see Bartis, 2002 for an extensive list of ideas). One purpose of oral histories is to fill in the historical record, with the main goals being documentation, preservation, and archiving (Leavy, 2011). In this vein, projects could be created to preserve the experiences of community and civic leaders surrounding traditions, projects, and events. The mayor could be interviewed each year using pictures and plans. Community leaders involved in planning events such as parades or festivals could relate stories. Members of the Chamber of Commerce might recount economic changes and business growth. Another use of oral histories is to gain community experiential knowledge. Toward this end, groups of community members (descendants of founding families, members of minority groups, immigrants) can capture first-hand experiences. Additional ideas for projects include:

- Interviews following major community events (e.g., loss of an industry).
- "Day after" interviews following an international news event to capture the local reaction.

Leveraging Skills from VHP to School Projects

High school clubs and organizations would be great places to recruit teen volunteers for a VHP. Clubs with themes such as history, community service, and computers and technology could be good matches. Working with school clubs could introduce teens who might not otherwise go to the library to its resources. Additional ideas for school oral history projects include:

- Interviewing retiring teachers.
- Integrating with class projects.
- Memorializing sports or academic accomplishments.

Leveraging Skills from VHP to Academic Projects

Libraries can pursue collaboration with local colleges and universities as part of the VHP. Veterans who are enrolled at local academic institutions could be participants in the project. Colleges are striving to welcome veterans and the program offers a forum for expressing appreciation of their experiences. Participating colleges could use the histories on a web page directed at recruiting veterans. Discipline-specific faculty could help with the oral histories. Faculty in history, English, communications and library science could be natural partners. As with school clubs, college organizations could become partners, such as ROTC, Greek organizations, and career groups. Additional ideas for projects include:

- Inviting special speakers to record an oral history while they are on campus.
- Spotlighting noteworthy alumni and interview their friends, family members, classmates and colleagues.
- Increasing college archive visibility by playing excerpts of interviews with retiring faculty at retirement events; by playing excerpts before ceremonies (for example, matriculation and commencement); by using at reunion events; and by looping at recruitment fairs.
- Fostering affiliation by including material at alumni events, such as interviews from their time at the university.

Educational Opportunities and Curriculum Application

Educators and librarians are continually reminded of their responsibility to incorporate a range of skills, commonly referred to as information literacy, in their instruction and interaction with patrons. Regional accrediting bodies, such as the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, professional groups, namely, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), and state departments of education have issued standards that focus on the student's ability to recognize an information need, to locate relevant information through effective search strategies, to evaluate information critically, and to use information, technology, and communication tools ethically and legally (American Association of School Librarians [AASL], 2007; Middle States, 2006; Pennsylvania Department of Education [PDE], 2016). These standards are offered as guidelines for educators and librarians to ensure the quality of their instructional programs, to maintain accreditation, and to engage in meaningful activities that build upon information literacy skills for library patrons.

Best practices also dictate student engagement in learning and the use of varied, authentic assessments as positive measures of learning. Performance tasks that require students to demonstrate the skills they have learned are considered true indicators of student achievement (Keeling, Woodlee, & Maher, 2013; Maxwell, 2012; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005; Wink & Putney, 2002). Varied performance and problem-solving tasks demand that students not only use the targeted skills but show how to transfer these skills to new situations (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005; Wink & Putney, 2002).

Young adult librarians in public libraries are in a position to collaborate with their counterparts in nearby school districts. This often involves sharing or augmenting resources for school libraries, but it could also include scheduled visits to the schools, shared programming, and thematic activities according to the curriculum (Agosto, 2013; Morris & Nelson, 2014). Likewise, college or university librarians can reach out to high school librarians to collaborate

on effective, meaningful projects that will prepare students for college research and writing (Dobie, Guidry, & Hartsell, 2010). The overarching outcome of all of these efforts, whether in the school or the library, is that teens have increased guided opportunities to acquire and to actualize the skills as outlined in the PDE (2016) and the AASL (2007) standards.

Veteran oral histories offer a unique opportunity to align standards from Middle States (2006), an influential professional organization (AASL, 2007), and PDE (2016) to the school curriculum and public library young adult programs. Best practices in teaching (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005; Wink & Putney, 2002) are also attainable by using a veteran's rich experiences and first-hand stories. The skills and activities needed for capturing, producing, and reflecting upon the oral histories of veterans set the tone for integrating information literacy, student engagement, and authentic performance tasks into young adult programming and collaborative activities.

While the main thrust of these collaborative activities is encouraging teens to produce digital oral histories, a secondary benefit is supporting the middle and high school curriculum. Although a natural starting point is the VHP recommended media, such as digital cameras, DVDs, and SD cards, for capturing and storing the audio-video recording, teens can expand and reinforce their abilities by experimenting with the recording capabilities of mobile devices, various applications for mobile devices, web conferencing programs, and streaming video websites. Producing the digital component and reflecting on the historical content present opportunities to incorporate additional skills and allow young adult and school librarians to place joint oral history projects within the context of the language arts, history, and social studies curriculum. Students can enhance their language arts skills by formulating and planning the interview and research questions so that the interviewees are engaged in telling their stories and experiences. Discussing issues and hot topic debates embedded in the historical context of the veteran's story gives students a chance to sharpen their speaking skills. Furthermore, students can strengthen their research abilities when using a variety of nonfiction resources to locate background material to close any information gaps in historical timelines presented in each veteran's experiences. Distinguishing between fact, fiction, and bias involving the issues of the historical period addressed in a veteran's recollections also allows teens to become sensitive to other cultures and gives a global perspective to their learning outcomes. Additionally, digital presentation skills develop as students explore ways to visually display web-based materials, such as photos, graphics, and maps that capture the historical context of each veteran's story.

Further academic possibilities and suggestions are evident for high school students preparing for college. Regular and advanced placement secondary education courses, particularly in language arts, history, and political science, present venues to integrate information literacy into instruction. For instance, history courses, especially those focused on the United States, can challenge students to place the oral history in the context of an overarching event. All students will determine the information need, select relevant materials and resources, and refine search strategies to access the information. Students will locate background information through appropriate sources, whether newspapers or articles, and distinguish between various types, such as first-hand accounts, archival materials, and scholarly analyses. Students will learn to identify core sources that include relevant article databases, government websites and documents, books, and professional groups. Teachers and librarians can also challenge students to address any gaps in information presented in the oral histories by encouraging them to seek out different perspectives that can expand on the veterans' experiences.

Instructors of political science or speech and debate classes can address the controversial issues and political climate exemplified by a veteran's oral history describing major campaigns, wars, expeditions, or military operations. Students can participate in speeches or debates that will require them to identify information from varied sources, to discern points of view and perspectives from advocacy or ethnic groups, data sets, or opinion polls, to decide on viewpoints to maintain or reject for a balanced portrayal of the issue, and to analyze the structure and logic of supporting arguments. Overall, students will determine the credibility of information by recognizing the cultural, physical, and other contexts that can impact the interpretation of events.

Of course, language arts and related courses can involve students from the very beginning by conducting the interview with the veteran and by recording and producing the oral history. As mentioned earlier, students will gain experience in assessing the resources needed to produce the oral history digitally. They can also tailor the veteran’s story for specific audiences, such as the local community or politicians, and format it for delivery through TV, news, radio, or other media outlets. Students can exercise their writing skills as they compose the narrative or transcript of the interview by organizing content into an appropriate format for these various audiences. Students will have the opportunity to integrate background information with the oral history and incorporate relevant digital images and data for the final project. Students will learn to use and reproduce digital and textual information ethically and legally through the project experiences offered by the oral histories of veterans (see Table 1 for the curricular areas, suggested learning activities, and outcomes with the applicable standards).

Table 1
Information Literacy Possibilities and Suggested Activities for Middle and High School Students

Topic	PDE (2016)	AASL (2007)	Outcomes
<p><u>Language Arts</u> <u>Integration</u></p> <p>Obtains/produces oral history</p> <p>Debates on key political issues during the time period of oral history</p>	<p>CC.8.6.6-8F. (8.6.9-10F; 8.6.11-12F): <i>Conduct short research projects to answer questions, drawing on several sources.</i></p> <p>CC.8.5.6-8F (8.5.9-10.F; 8.5.11-12.F): <i>Identify aspects of text that reveals author’s point of view or purpose.</i></p>	<p>1.1.3-Develop and refine a range of questions to frame the search for new understanding.</p> <p>1.1.7-Make sense of information gathered from diverse sources by identifying misconceptions, conflicting information, and bias.</p>	<p><i>Documented oral history with appropriate interview questions and prompts.</i></p> <p><i>Consult different points of view through advocacy/ethnic groups, opinion polls; data sets.</i></p> <p><i>Give persuasive speech or engage in formal debate on issues emanating from the oral history.</i></p>
<p><u>History</u></p> <p>Places the oral history in context by locating background material concerning events highlighted in the oral history</p>	<p>CC.8.5.6-8.B. (8.5.9-10.B; 8.5.11-12.B): <i>Determine central ideas from primary & secondary sources; provide an accurate summary.</i></p> <p>CC.8.5.6-8C (8.5.9-10C; 8.5.11-12C):</p>	<p>1.1.5-Evaluate information found in selected sources on the basis of accuracy, validity, appropriateness for needs, importance, and social and cultural context.</p>	<p><i>Initiates research by reading background information to identify appropriate core sources, such as newspapers, articles, biographical information, historical/archival, scholarly analyses, books,</i></p>

<p>Addresses gaps in the information provided through the oral history</p>	<p><i>Identify key steps and analyze series of events; determine cause and effect.</i></p> <p>CC.8.5.6-8.I (8.5.9-10.I; 8.5.11-12.I): <i>Analyze relationship between primary and secondary sources.</i></p>		<p><i>and government websites.</i></p> <p><u>PA Common Core Standards:</u> CC.8.6.6-8B (8.6.9-10B; 8.6.11-12B) and CC.8.5.6-8G (8.5.9-10G; 8.5.11-12G)</p>
<p><u>Social Studies-Geography</u></p> <p>Creates visual display or map of area described in oral history</p>	<p>CC.8.6.6-8F. (8.6.9-10F; 8.6.11-12F): <i>Conduct short research projects to answer questions, drawing on several sources.</i></p> <p>CC.8.6.6-8.G (8.6.9-10.G; 8.6.11-12.G): <i>Gather relevant information from print and digital sources; assess credibility and accuracy of sources; quote or paraphrase data, avoiding plagiarism.</i></p>	<p>1.1.8-Demonstrate mastery of technology tools for accessing information and pursuing inquiry.</p>	<p><i>Consider digital recording and presentation media appropriate to integrate maps, web pages, photos, graphics, or other visual display items for final presentation; consider ethical and legal implications for recording and presenting content.</i></p>
<p><u>Social Studies-Cultural Aspects</u></p> <p>Identifies influx of new languages, cultures, and immigrants</p>	<p>CC.8.6.6-8F. (8.6.9-10F; 8.6.11-12F): <i>Conduct short research projects to answer questions, drawing on several sources.</i></p>	<p>2.1.6-Use the writing process, media and visual literacy, and technology skills to create products that express new understandings.</p>	<p><i>Hold cultural fair with advertising materials, food, music, native dress; digitally record for webcast presentation.</i></p>

	<i>CC.8.6.6-8.G (8.6.9-10.G; 8.6.11-12.G): Gather relevant information from print and digital sources; assess credibility and accuracy of sources; quote or paraphrase data, avoiding plagiarism.</i>		<i>Document using: <u>PA Common Core Standards:</u> CC.8.6.6-8B (8.6.9-10B; 8.6.11-12B) and CC.8.5.6-8G (8.5.9-10G; 8.5.11-12G)</i>
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Incorporating Library Staff and Services

Last, but not least, an oral history project can span library staff and services beyond the youth services librarian. Reference staff can be involved in the very important preparation phase for the interviews (Oral History Association, 2009). Technology staff may work on the digital technology component (Boyd, 2016). Technical services staff will be vital for the preservation and cataloging of the resultant recordings (Wayne, 2009).

Conclusion

An oral history project, such as the VHP, can provide a platform for teens to have the opportunity to practice digital literacy skills by using technology in a formal process. Digital literacy skills, such as the effective use of digital devices to create, store, and share oral histories, communication skills, and collaboration are necessary components of such a project. The incorporation of so many literacy constructs makes public library digital oral history projects especially useful because they can be applicable in a variety of settings. As an example, specific suggestions for leveraging skills in other library, school, and community projects, including collaborative K-12 curricular applications, were highlighted. Public and school librarians could collaborate to design shared programs or thematic activities that develop information literacy skills. The VHP is also stellar as it communicates key concepts for digital literacy beyond the simple use of current technology that one might superficially associate with the concept. The VHP provides an accessible starting point for any oral history project with guidance on technical issues, project planning, and digital rights management, which are all crucial components of becoming competent and ethical digital citizens. Implementing a library-based digital oral history project is a low-cost, scalable process with collaborative possibilities, which makes it a great project for any size library.

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