**Oral History Analysis Lesson Plan**

**Topic**: The establishment and early development of the Marquette Women’s Center

**Primary source learning objectives / outcomes**: (SAA [*Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy*](https://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/Guidelines%20for%20Primary%20Souce%20Literacy%20-%20FinalVersion%20-%20Summer2017_0.pdf)):

1. Assess the appropriateness of a primary source for meeting the goals of a specific research or creative project.
2. Critically evaluate the perspective of the creator(s) of a primary source, including tone, subjectivity, and biases, and consider how these relate to the original purpose(s) and audience(s) of the source.
3. Situate a primary source in context by applying knowledge about the time and culture in which it was created; the author or creator; its format, genre, publication history; or related materials in a collection.
4. As part of the analysis of available resources, identify, interrogate, and consider the reasons for silences, gaps, contradictions, or evidence of power relationships in the documentary record and how they impact the research process.

**Historical Background:**

In 1972, Sally May, Gail Griffith, Holly Greer, Karlyn Rapport, and Patricia Micklow, known as the "Founding Mothers," held a conference at Northern Michigan University titled "The Changing Role of Women in the 70's.” It was organized in collaboration with Sarah McClellan, Marilyn Gorski, and Mary Soper. This conference led to the establishment of the Women's Center, which in 1973 became an official program of Northern Michigan University's Office of Continuing Education as a social and educational support group for women. The Center provided public educational workshops and programs such as assertiveness training, active listening, and a displaced homemaker program; it also offered sexual assault counseling and support services and fielded a sexual assault response team. Some of the Women’s Center staff and volunteers, notably Holly Greer, Karlyn Rapport, and Marilyn Marshall, were responsible for founding the Spouse Abuse Shelter Project, an independent non-profit organization offering a refuge for victims of domestic violence; this organization became part of the Women’s Center in 1986 and was renamed Harbor House in the early 1990s. Northern Michigan University ceased its funding of the Women's Center in 1980 owing to budget cuts. However, the Women's Center was reorganized as a non-profit community-based organization by the Women’s Center Community Advisory Council that same year and, after a period of transience, the Women’s Center found a permanent residence in the Marquette community in 1986.

**Preparation:**

1. In preparation for this lesson, have students review the [Women’s Center Oral Histories Collection](https://nmu.lyrasistechnology.org/repositories/3/resources/552) (MSS-302).
2. Direct students to the oral history interviews available online at the [Archives’ YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjs7nMHsZt2O15RjVszai3A).
3. Review the Oral History Analysis worksheet.

**Activities:**

1. Conduct an in-class discussion about the history of the [*Women’s Liberation Movement*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_liberation_movement) in the United States during the 1970s.
2. Invite the University Archivist to visit the class and give a presentation on the history of NMU during the 1970s.
3. As a class discussion, develop an historical question or problem that the students may seek to resolve from their analysis of the oral histories.
4. Direct students to listen carefully to each oral history and complete the Oral History Analysis worksheet.

**Assignment:**

1. Have students write a 2-3 page report summarizing their interpretation and analysis of the oral histories, and their resolution of the historical question or problem.

**Evaluation Method(s):**

Assessment Rubric for Primary Source Analysis

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Learning Objective** | **Minimal** | **Fair** | **Good** | **Exemplary** |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| **Assess the appropriateness of a primary source** | Makes a very brief or erroneous attempt at identifying the basic characteristics of the sources. | Offers only a basic description of the sources and may include errors. | Describes most of the elements of the sources correctly. | Thoroughly and accurately describes elements of document, photograph, and finding aid |
| **Critically evaluate the perspective of the creator(s) of a primary source** | Does not acknowledge or identify any bias, prejudice or factual errors | Does acknowledge and identify some bias, prejudice, or factual errors | Acknowledges and identifies appropriate bias, prejudices, and factual errors  | Acknowledges and identifies appropriate bias, prejudices, and factual errors AND explains how these problems raise questions about the credibility of the evidence.  |
| **Situate a primary source in historical context** | Is not able to place any of the sources in a broader historical context.  | Offers one example in which a source is placed in a broader historical context. | Explains and gives examples of the meaning and usefulness of more than one but not all of the sources, placing them in a broader historical context. | Explains and gives examples of the meaning and usefulness of all of the sources and places them within a broad historical context. |
| **Identify, interrogate, and consider the reasons for silences, gaps, contradictions, or evidence of power relationships in the documentary record and how they impact the research process** | Does not offer any additional information about the source besides what is already provided. | Asks questions about one source regarding its validity, limitations, and strengths. | Able to ask questions about more than one but not all of the sources regarding their validity, limitations, and strengths. | Able to ask questions about all of the sources regarding their validity, limitations, and strengths. |