History Speaks: Using Oral History to Teach Historical Thinking

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**History Speaks: Using Oral History to Teach Historical Thinking**

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

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**Abstract**

This research project sought to enhance the viability and usefulness of existing oral history interviews in a classroom setting and to develop best practices and resources for teachers to use in lesson planning. We sampled a collection of oral history interviews from the Cleveland Regional Oral History Collection according to a list of search terms pertaining to content standards typically taught in a high school classroom. After listening to these interviews, we created shorter segments called story clips which highlighted a particular event, topic, or concept.

The essays and lesson plans published on the Social Studies @ CSU blog ([www.socialstudies.clevelandhistory.org](http://www.socialstudies.clevelandhistory.org)) explore oral history pedagogy and how to successfully deploy oral history interviews in the classroom. The existing scholarship on oral history pedagogy dealt with creating oral history by having students conduct interviews of people within their communities. This blog series serves as a primer on how to utilize existing oral histories and story clips in the classroom. We discuss how they can be used to introduce subject matter, develop historical thinking skills, and cultivate personal connections with history.

We researched how to tie those story clips to Ohio Department of Education Social Studies curriculum standards. We then paired these clips with content standards, abstracts, and keywords on the History Speaks website ([www.historyspeaks.clevelandhistory.org](http://www.historyspeaks.clevelandhistory.org)). This website serves as a resource for teachers and provides examples as to how to tie story clips to state education standards.