

## Lesson Plans for Mashapaug Oral History Module

### WEEK 1: What is Oral History?

#### **10 mins: Introduce ourselves.**

Name game/icebreaker *'What is your favorite thing about spring?'*

#### **15 mins: Introduction to storytelling**

What is it? What do we learn from it?

Break out activity - tell a story about a place that is important to you, and tell your partner some memories you have of it.

#### **25 mins: Introduction to Mashapaug**

(Refer to Supplementary Material 1\_Factsheet, Supplementary Material 2\_Video and Supplementary Material 3\_Listening Guide) Go through factsheet and then listen to video. *How do these two different types of information tell us a different story?*

#### **10 mins: Conclusions**

## **WEEK 2: What makes a good interview?**

*N.B. Before this class it is advisable to contact your interviewee(s) to schedule their interview for the following week*

### **10 mins: Mock Interview**

Teacher selects a student or assistant to be the interviewee. Set up audio recorder, take photographs, give interviewee consent form and interview for a few minutes. Sample question: *Where did you like to play when you were a child?* Ideally for this you have a team of several people to demonstrate what the students' actual interview process will be like. We split the different tasks between the three of us and interviewed the students' teacher.

### **5 mins: What did we just see?**

Explain all the different roles in the interview. This will set you up to explain the roles for their interviews.

### **25 mins: Student Mock Interviews**

Hand out audio recorders and divide students into groups of 3-4. Have students practice interviewing each other. One person is interviewed, the other is the interviewer, the third records, and the fourth takes notes/asks follow-up questions. The topic is *'Best Birthday Ever'*. Teachers can walk around the room(s), helping with technology problems, etc. Give them time to try and listen to themselves, and let the other people in each group take a look at how to use the recorders. Many students will be familiar with using recorders but will benefit from instruction about ways to capture the best sound (e.g., placement of the recorder near the speaker; importance of not frequently handling or moving the equipment during the recording).

### **5 mins: Assign roles**

(Refer to Supplementary Material 4\_ Group Roles) Individual teachers may have preferred ways to do this fairly. We gave each student an index card for them to pick their top three roles, and then selected the roles from there ourselves.

### **15 mins: What makes a good interview question?**

In the two interview groups, talk about who they will each be interviewing and start thinking about what good questions for each would be. Good questions will draw on interviewees' first-person knowledge and will ask them to explain, describe, and reflect on their experiences. One option here would be to create small bios about the interviewees for students to read so that they can prepare appropriate questions. Assign homework: think of 5 good interview questions and practice them on someone at home.

Some examples of questions our students came up with:

- The biography we read about you said that you're Native American. Does that have anything to do with your relationship with Mashapaug Pond?
- What was the most memorable thing you did at the pond?
- Since you do art for the pond what does it mean to use art to build a community?

### **WEEK 3: Interview!**

We split the class into 2 groups, and each group conducted one interview for the duration of the class, as per Supplementary Material 4\_Group Roles.

At the end of the interviews we gave every student a copy of Supplementary Material 4\_Reflection Sheet for them to complete for homework.

## **WEEK 4: Reflections and Conclusions**

*N.B. Before this class you will need to transcribe (create a word-for-word account, with time codes marked) the interviews from the previous week. Bring printed copies so that students can read the transcript (or part of a transcript if they are quite long) in pairs.*

### **10 mins: Review of last week**

Using Supplementary Material 5\_Reflection Sheet, discuss what the students found interesting from the interviews last week - things that surprised them or things they could relate to.

### **10 mins: Discussion of choosing clips for the audio tour**

Imagine you brought friends or family to Mashapaug (which you will!), what stories would you want them to hear? Stories should be only a few sentences long. Play Supplementary Material 6\_Audio Clip as an example. Also explain the scope of the audio tour we are making and the themes that we will be focusing on:

- Stories about enjoying the pond
- Stories about using the pond in other ways
- Stories about the environmental problems of the pond and efforts to fix them
- Stories about people living in the area by the pond
- Stories and information about the pond's water quality and connections to other bodies of water.

*N.B. Our teaching module was part of a larger project to create an audio tour. However, it would be quite possible to substitute an audio documentary for audio tour. The teacher could play part of a This American Life, or similar radio program for students to get a sense. Putting together the clips into a simple documentary can be done using free programs like Audacity. For classrooms or teachers without access to audio editing resources, the clips could be used in other ways – e.g., developed into a performance, selected for exhibit text, or as prompts for creative writing.*

### **15 mins: Picking clips**

Students read through transcriptions in pairs, highlight interesting stories and make notes. Each pair will read half of a transcript (about 3 pages)

### **10 mins: Listening to chosen clips**

Students will suggest stories they have chosen and play those clips for the class. Discuss them as a group – are they good choices, what would listeners get from them? Having the audio ready on a computer with speakers is necessary for this.

### **15 mins: Final Reflection**

Reflecting on the overall experience and lessons of oral history. What did they learn? What did they like? Why do they think oral history is important?