WHERE OUR STORIES INTERSECT

AN EDUCATOR'S TOOLKIT FOR STARTING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT EMPATHY AND OUTROSPECTION

FROM THE TEACHERS AT AMOS ALONZO STAGG HIGH SCHOOL



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An Educator's Toolkit for Starting Conversations about Empathy and Outrospection

BASED ON THE BOOK

111th & Roberts: Where Our Stories Intersect

A Collection of Conversations by Students at Amos Alonzo Stagg High School

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VOICE OF WITNESS

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How to use this guide:

The guide is not meant to reflect a complete curriculum for our class, but rather a collection of activities and assignments arranged by units that we felt worked particularly well and are adaptable to a variety of purposes and settings. Within each unit, you will find activities and assignments with explanation of the original context in which they were used in our classroom as well as suggestions for adaptations below. If you are interested in seeing a planning calendar that mapped out what units and topics were covered over the course of the year in our classroom, please see the appendix at the end of the guide.

Introduction

As teachers, we feel the need to be straightforward. *111th and Roberts: Where Our Stories Intersect* is a product of several years of groundwork and situations unique to our school community at Amos Alonzo Stagg High School. While it started fairly ordinary, with a few teachers looking to find relevance and meaning in what seemed to be an increasingly data driven curriculum, the changes we hoped to make in the ways students read, wrote and thought about themselves and each other were irrevocably altered when we lost our friend and colleague, Mary Ogarek, at the age of 33. Mary was a teacher, one of our best, and her work to help bring Voice of Witness to our school had already started to illustrate the power of oral history and storytelling; when she got sick, she confronted her illness with honesty and courage and the unwavering support of our entire school community. Losing Mary after watching her fight as long and hard as she did changed all of us. Not only did it cause us all to take stock, to have important conversations and share stories, but it propelled the work Mary had started in the classroom forward with a sense of urgency that none of us expected.

In the wake of Mary's loss, a committee formed thanks to our principal who decided to put the personal back at the forefront of our school's priorities. The Empathy Committee, as it was named, brought together teachers, students, and administrators to discuss ways in which we could improve our school community and foster empathy. After talking to students, we realized the need for something and thinking back to the work we had started with Mary and Voice of Witness, the idea for a class focused on creating an oral history collection of the stories of our school community was born. Oral histories provide the platform to have conversations and in-depth interviews about who individuals are within our school community; these conversations were an extension of the honest and meaningful conversations Mary prompted within her classroom, and those that continued in the wake of her passing. It took an amazingly supportive principal and administration as well as 60 high school seniors willing to take a risk to get the class running as a senior English elective course, not to mention the immense amount of hard work and determination within the class to create and publish *111th and Roberts: Where Our Stories Intersect*.

The materials and resources included come from our yearlong oral history class, affectionately named Stagg's Voice of Witness class, or VOW. When choosing what to include, we understood that not every school or community has the chance to create a class that spends a whole school year writing and publishing a book, but we do feel that the essence of the class—the power of sharing stories to foster empathy and bring a community closer together—is something that can and should be recreated in a variety of ways. It shouldn't take loss to realize the value of making time for important conversations or the power stories have to heal and connect us. One also doesn't have to look very far into our world of the dividing and divisive language of media and politics to see that empathy and outrospection are needed now more than ever.

We hope that whether you are a community organizer looking to start conversations that foster empathy, or a teacher simply looking for small ways to bring the personal back into your school's curriculum, or even a teacher looking to start your own class, this guide provides you the resources and ideas to start the important conversations we all should be having. The materials included are some of our favorite and most effective, but they by no means encompass it all and were by no means created without help from so many wonderful people and organizations, including the invaluable support of the Voice of Witness Education Program. Each section is organized by a larger unit title from our course and is presented in the order we moved through each unit in our school year, although it is important to note that at various times the units themselves became more fluid and often overlapped to fit our shifting focus and facilitate the book project.

As teachers we believe that collaboration is at the heart of every important endeavor—more than anything we hope this guide serves as an example of what collaboration can inspire.

Unit I: Who Are We and What Do We Want to Accomplish?

One of our primary goals within our class was to build a strong classroom community. Before we asked our students to pursue the stories of others, we needed them to share their own stories and feel as though their own voices were heard and valued. The process of building an empathic classroom also involves acknowledging each other's differences and learning to find value of those differences. The importance of hearing diverse stories and fighting stereotypes is not common knowledge, it's a process of understanding through experience and conversations. Whether you use the activities or the writing prompts as part of a larger unit or simply to start these conversations within a classroom or community, anytime you can empower young people and adults alike to step outside their comfort zones and engage in meaningful dialogue, you are one step closer to building a stronger, more empathetic community.

"So here we go, you and me. Because what else are we going to do? Say no? Say no to an opportunity that may be slightly out of our comfort zone? Quiet our voice because we are worried it is not perfect? I believe great people do things before they are ready…"

—Amy Poehler

Part 1: Who Are We? Getting to Know Our Stories

Before you can explore and attempt to understand your community, it is vital to get to know one another. Empathy isn't easy, at times it is very hard work, but hard work that can be made easier if you feel that you are in it together.

Activity: Partner Interviews

Length: 2 class days (49 minute class periods).

Materials: Paper, pen, directions for the activity printed in a handout or shared on a board/PowerPoint slides.

Context: Before completing this activity in class we facilitated a discussion about the parameters of creating an interview experience that makes the person you are interviewing feel comfortable, protected, respected and honored. Being one of the first activities we asked the students to do as a class, we knew we had many students from various backgrounds that did not know each other well and we stressed the importance of respect for one another's experiences and what each person was willing to share. Within a high school classroom we also found it important to emphasize that our goal was to learn more about the person in front of us, not to extract the most salacious gossip or dramatic experience. Our conversation centered around the questions *"What do we need to feel safe?"* and also *"What do we owe one another as members of a classroom community?"* While the questions the discussion centers around may vary depending on your setting, it is vital that a discussion like this precedes this activity and that clear parameters and expectations are set related to mutual respect and potentially sensitive topics.

Partner Interview Activity Directions to Students:

STEP 1: Before we explore "who" our community is, we need to know who we are.

- Take five minutes to write a brief autobiographical sketch of yourself: Don't worry so much about writing conventions, worry about telling your story. Your goal is to give your reader some idea about who you are—include a brief personal history, specific accomplishments, influential experiences, etc.

STEP 2: Find a partner you don't know…or at least you don't know well.

- Trade your written autobiographies. As you read through your partner's autobiography, begin to plan an interview with this person. Jot down some notes and questions you would like to ask your partner using the ideas listed to help guide you.
- What aspects of the autobiography do I want to pursue further?
    - What do I think would be interesting to bring out about this person?
    - What "new story" would you like to uncover about this person?

STEP 3: You and your partner should take turns interviewing each other for 10 minutes each (we'll tell you when to switch).

- Use the questions you wrote down as a starting point, but don't be afraid to "go off script" and ask follow-up questions or go in a different direction if something new and interesting comes up. As you are interviewing your partner it is important to be an attentive listener. Don't worry about taking notes, just listen and ask questions to keep your partner talking.

STEP 4: When you have finished interviewing your partner, jot down 4-5 sentences that summarizes what you learned about your partner and the interview process.

- Your reflection should focus on what you learned that went beyond what your partner had written down in their initial autobiography. Don't forget to also reflect on how you felt the interview experience went.

STEP 5: Share your reflections—what have we learned as a class about each other and about the interview experience?

Adaptations:

- **In isolation:** This activity can function as a great icebreaker for any classroom or organization looking to build a stronger sense of community within its members. If conducting additional interviews is not a goal, the activity can be reduced by omitting the probing questions in Step 2. The discussion of respect and creating a safe environment is still an important precursor but may be reduced to a few clear guidelines emphasizing mutual respect.

- **Within an Oral History Unit/Project:** This is an extremely helpful activity to introduce students and those new to oral history to the experience and goals of the oral history process. By creating an opportunity for participants to be both the interviewer and the narrator, a sense of empathy and deeper understanding for the intangibles necessary to create a positive interview experience for both parties is achieved through the discussion, activity and reflection process.

Activity: Photo Reflection

Length: Students were given 3 days to complete the assignment and one class day was spent sharing—each student shared their photograph and explanation.

Materials: In our class we shared the photographs and explanations electronically through our Google Classroom page. Physical photographs can be brought in and passed around or shared through other electronic mediums.

Context: This idea came from a conversation with a student. She showed us a picture of her home in Yemen and we loved hearing about her life and childhood there. The picture itself and seeing her actual home allowed for an understanding that was more specific and allowed for an immediate understanding that is not always readily achieved in an interview.

Assignment Directions to Students: A PICTURE'S WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS
Pick a photograph—it can be recent or a baby picture, of you or people or places important to you—then write why it's important to you (about 100 words). Hopefully we can all learn something new about each other, and we get to share some pictures in the process.

Adaptations:

- **In isolation:** This activity can function as another great icebreaker for any classroom or organization looking to build a stronger sense of community within its members without any adaptations to the activity itself.

- **Within an Oral History Unit/Project:** This is an extremely helpful activity to expand the ways in which oral histories and stories can be shared. Discussing the impact of seeing a photograph rather than just hearing a detailed description may lead to an oral history project that seeks to incorporate photography as a means to share stories similar to *Humans of New York*, The Voice of Witness book, *Refugee Hotel*, or our book, *111th and Roberts* that includes student photography and art.

Part 2: Stepping Out of Our Comfort Zone

In our class we adopted "Out of your Comfort Zone Fridays" where nearly every Friday was devoted to participating in some sort of activity, improv comedy game, or discussion that took us all out of comfort zones to encourage empathy and build a sense of community. Sometimes the activities were serious and sometimes they were just silly, but in many ways they prepared us all to be more open and more connected.

Activity: Improv Games

Length: Varies from 10 minutes to full 49 minute class period.

Materials: See http://improvencyclopedia.org/games/ for materials needed for each specific improv game.

Context: Once we were a few weeks into our school year, our Fridays were spent playing silly and fun games to help us all feel more comfortable and less guarded around one another. It offered a new way to make space for vulnerability and class interaction that isn't directly focused on oral histories or empathy. We found students let their guards down to play the game, but the context of a game or fun challenge made that process easier for more to take part. One of our favorites is an improv game called "Bear, Hunter, Girl". You can see the game in action on our website: http://www.staggvow.com/blog/2016/2/22/book-pre-sales-are-here

Activity Directions to Students: Explore improv games and rules here: http://improvencyclopedia.org/games/

Adaptations: Adaptations can be made to any game to fit the purposes of team building. Improv games are not a necessary step in an oral history project, but helped us to build sense of community and connection in our classroom. They also provided necessary levity at times when our project seemed to be taking an emotional toll and thus can also be used as community component of self-care.

Activity: Big Circle Share Outs

Length: The length of these discussion varied depending upon the number of students and the length of the prompt/question they were being asked. For a smaller group with a shorter prompt, this could be used as a quick start to a class or meeting; with a larger group and more in-depth prompt/question, this could take an entire 49-minute class period.

Materials: Space to sit in a one large circle. A visible place to post the prompt or question.

Context: The big circle activity is perhaps the easiest to incorporate into a variety of classrooms or community settings. All it requires is that everyone involved form one "big circle" of desks, chairs, or just themselves. The circle puts everyone in an equal position and also then allows everyone to speak and be heard. We would typically begin our big circles by going around the circle and having everyone respond to a quick prompt and then open the circle to any additional comments—no hand raising or discussion leaders needed, just speaking honestly and listening openly. We recommend scaffolding the seriousness and depth of the prompts listed below—starting with lighter prompts and moving to heavier, more in-depth prompts as everyone within the classroom or community becomes more comfortable with one another.

Activity Prompts to Students:

- Take the bad with the good: What is your biggest pet peeve? What is one thing that makes your day?
- The future can be scary, but it can also be exciting. Either way we all think about the future at some point. When you think about your future what are your fears and hopes?
  One thing I'm worried about is _____.
  One thing I'm hopeful about is _____.
- _____ confirmed or challenged by beliefs in/about _____.
- I'm reading/writing/thinking about _____ and it makes me feel _____.
- What is one thing you wish you could say? What is one thing you need to hear?
- What is one thing you feel or felt certain about? What is one thing you doubt or doubted?

Adaptations:

- **In isolation:** This activity can function as another great icebreaker for any classroom or organization looking to build a stronger sense of community within its members without any adaptations to the activity itself. If arranging a circle and allowing time for a verbal discussion isn't possible, the prompts above may also be used as writing prompts/bell ringers.

- **Within an Oral History Unit/Project:** This is activity and discussion format may not directly tie to oral history itself; however, the format and discussions itself are aimed at fostering a more empathetic mindset as well as promoted a structure in which everyone is equally valued and listened to—all vital components of conducting a successful oral history project.

Activity: The Privilege Walk

Length: 1 full 49 minute class period.

Materials: Privilege Walk script and a large open space to complete activity.

Adaptations: This activity can be universally adapted to best serve the objectives and audience of any group by carefully choosing to add or omit different prompts.

Context: It is important that you introduce the activity with necessary gravity. It is vital that students understand that this activity is not meant to divide or cause anyone to feel guilt or hurt, but rather to illustrate differences we all have and create a true exercise in empathy.

As teachers, we prepared ourselves by personally responding to each statement and anticipating which ones would elicit emotional responses from students. By showing empathy to the students' experience with the Privilege Walk, we were able to preview what the activity might feel like to them.

While this activity was done within our first unit, it was not an activity we felt comfortable doing until a sense of community, comfortability and mutual respect was visibly created in our classroom through some of the other, less intensive activities.

Another element of preparation we would highly recommend is having a conversation about emotional triggers and "self-care". The process of conducting oral histories itself can be very emotionally demanding and may at times provoke emotional responses and personal connections that are unexpected and difficult to handle, especially for high school students. In anticipation of these situations in both the interview process, as well as this activity, we had our school social workers come to our classroom for a class period to address the potential emotional triggers and give them strategies and an overview of the network of school resources available to them to help process these reactions in productive and healthy ways.

In the introduction as well as the post-activity discussion we reiterated not only the potential for triggering emotional responses, but also reviewed the steps and resources available to empower students to exercise self-care. While facilitating the activity, we noticed emotional responses to questions from many students. Among the emotional responses there was one student that further shared a personal experience about a family member's murder with the class in the post-activity discussion that caused obvious distress for the student. Not only did our other students respond in a supportive manner, but as team teachers, one of us was able to step outside of the classroom with him to give him the chance to collect himself. We also followed up with his guidance counselor about his emotional well-being related to the situation.

Overall the tone of empathy already set in the class, the background knowledge provided by the social workers' presentation, and the awareness built by the explanation of the activity, allowed for the student and class to feel valued and supported emotionally.

Activity Directions for Students:
Here is the introduction from the original activity. We recommend reading it aloud after your own brief introductory discussion introducing the importance and gravity of the activity:

> *The purpose of the Privilege Walk Activity is to learn to recognize how power and privilege can affect our lives even when we are not aware it is happening. The purpose of this exercise is not to make any of us embarrassed about the privileges we have received, but to make all of us aware of how privilege based on gender, race, etc. function. Whether we are highly privileged, moderately privileged or lack privilege, it is possible to behave in ways that level the playing field for everyone.*
>
> *IMPORTANT: This exercise can be very triggering, so do not do this activity unless you are sure you have plenty of time to debrief and reflect what individuals experienced during the privilege walk.*

- **Directions:** Stand in a straight line closely together facing us. Hold hands with the person on either side of you and close your eyes. We will now read a series of statements that ask you to either step forward or backwards based on how it applies to you. As you do this, it is important that you keep your eyes closed, stay silent and try to continue to hold hands with the person to your left and right for as long as possible.

- **Note:** Below are the statements we used for the activity. These were gathered from an activity done in an educational cohort class in college at the University of Illinois. Various versions of this activity can be found online. We did not use all of the statements for our class and recommend choosing ones that best fit your group and larger goals.

- If your ancestors came to the United States by force, take one step back.
- If there were more than 50 books in your house growing up, take one step forward.
- If you are concerned that you will be paid less because of your race, gender, or ethnicity, take one step back.
- If you have ever had something negative posted about you on a social media site, take one step back.
- If you were ever stopped or questioned by the police because of your race, take one step back.
- If your family owned the house, where you grew up, take one step forward.
- If you have ever felt uncomfortable about a joke directed at your gender, race, or sexual orientation take one step back.
- If you can show affection for your romantic partner in public without fear of ridicule or violence, please take one step forward.
- If you have ever been embarrassed about your clothes or house, take one step back.
- If your both of your parents or guardians attended college, take one step forward.
- If you were raised in an area with crime and drug activity, take one step back.
- If you have tried to change your speech or mannerisms to gain credibility, take one step back.
- If you are able to move through the world without fear of sexual assault, take one step forward.

- If you were sexually active with several people and it would improve your social reputation in other people's eyes, take one step forward.
- If you are reasonably sure that you will not be denied access to jobs or political resources because of your gender, take one step forward.
- If you are able to be drive carelessly without someone attributing it to your gender, take one step forward.
- If you are relatively sure you can enter a store without being followed, take one step forward.
- If you are reasonably sure you would be hired based on your ability and qualifications, take one step forward.
- If your family is helping you pay for college, take one step forward.
- If you were ever called names because of your race, class, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, take one step back.
- If you have ever traveled outside the United States, take one step forward.
- If your parents worked nights and weekends to support your family, take one step back.
- If you can buy new clothes or go out to dinner when you want to, take one step forward.
- If you get time off for your religious holidays, take one step forward.
- If you've been stereotyped according to a personal attribute or interest, take a step back.
- If you ever tried to change your appearance, mannerisms, or behavior to avoid being judged or ridiculed, take one step back.
- If you have a foreign accent, take one step backward.
- If you can walk alone at any time of day or night in _____ without thinking about safety, take one step forward.
- If you went to galleries, museums, and plays with your family, take one step forward.
- If you attended private school or summer camp, take one step forward.
- If you were raised in a single-parent household, take one step back.
- If you studied the culture of your ancestors in elementary school, take one step forward.
- If members of your gender are portrayed on TV in degrading roles, take one step backward.
- If you have been a victim of sexual harassment, take one step backward.
- If you have been a victim of violence because of your race, gender, class, or sexual orientation, take one step back.
- If you ever went on a family vacation, take one step forward.
- If you have ever had a maid, gardener, or cleaning service, take one step forward.
- If you can walk past a construction site without being looked up and down or catcalled at, take one step forward.

Post-Activity Discussion Questions:

- How did you feel during the activity? What caused these emotions?
- What did you notice when you opened your eyes? How did you feel?
- Why do you think we chose to do this activity?
- In what ways can this activity help us to be better interviewers and listeners?

Part 3: Empathy Challenges and Events

In addition to activities and discussion/writing prompts, we also challenged our students to organize events or complete tasks outside of the classroom to bring our class goals out into our community.

Assignment: Habitual Empathy Experiment

Length: Assigned to be completed within one week.

Materials: Students completed and submitted reflections through our Google Classroom discussion board which allowed the class to view and respond to their reflections and empathy experiment. Assignment can be completed as a written assignment without the use of technology.

Context: After watching the "Power of Outrospection" video https://youtu.be/BG46IwVfSu8 we discussed examples of habitual empathy or "empathy adventures" similar to the ones the video explains. We also discussed the importance of empathy in relation to our larger class and oral history project goals.

Student Assignment Directions: For this activity, you will be conducting an individual social experiment on habitual empathy. Your task is to demonstrate an everyday act of empathy in your community. Note how people respond, how you feel, and what is going on around you. Then respond with a brief summary of your habitual empathy experiment and the reactions/impact you noticed. Now go rock somebody's world!

Adaptations:

- **In Isolation:** Since we feel that building an empathetic classroom environment is vital regardless of content area, this assignment can be given in any class as a way for students to explore empathy in the world and make meaningful connections to how their findings impact the behavioral norms established in the classroom. The discussion or follow-up assignment could be tailored towards particular subject areas. Science teachers could ask their students to make connections between empathy and survival/evolution of human beings; Social Studies teachers could connect to historical events where empathy could have impacted events, have students propose a change in school policies based on their findings or explore the psychology behind empathy and people's reactions to it; English teachers could have students write personal reflections, narratives or even argumentative proposals based on their experiences; Math teachers could tailor the habitual empathy experiment for students to collect statistical data and make conclusions/propose changes in the school community based on the data.

- **Within an Oral History Unit/Project:** While the activity itself is somewhat removed from the process of oral history, we felt that understanding empathy, sharpening those skills and seeing the types of reactions our school community had to our students' empathy experiments was a vital step in the preparation to conduct their own oral history interviews with members of the school community they may not know or have not established rapport with prior to the interview. Ultimately our students learned that empathy is hard work and may not always yield immediate results, yet can be extremely impactful for everyone involved.

Assignment: Mix it Up Day (via Teaching Tolerance)

Length: Allow at least one week of planning/preparation. The event itself is one day that takes place during all lunch periods.

Materials: Signs advertising the event (see the website link below for premade signs and other advertising tools), card and board games that are donated and do not have to be returned, signs for lunch tables to be arranged by birthday month, an interview booth, a sounds system to play music, anything else that you and your students think might make the lunch periods more fun.

Context: In our exploration of activities and options for class, we discovered many wonderful resources and organizations already focused on empathy in their own ways. Teaching Tolerance is an amazing resource for classroom activities, resources, discussion starters and events, like Mix It Up at Lunch: http://www.tolerance.org/mix-it-up/what-is-mix
This is a day devoted to breaking down social barriers in the lunch room. In our class we were able to utilize many of the standards and resources for Mix It Up at Lunch Day provided on Teaching Tolerance's website and also added our twists on the events to truly make it our own such as our addition of a student built interview booth that encouraged students to participate in mini conversations with our students during the lunch festivities.

Student Assignment Directions: Below is a list of the steps we took in class to plan, prepare and execute our own version of Mix It Up Day.

STEP 1: We began class by showing students Teaching Tolerance videos that explained Mix It Up Day: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCKMtQa10NDRdCtBfpCepJu_wlEUsRZ3j

Then we facilitated a discussion that asked the following questions:

- Is there a need for Mix It Up Day in our school? Why or why not?
- Now that we have established a need, what concerns or possible negative reactions can we think of. How can we provide a positive response to these reactions?
- What aspects of Mix It Up Day can we change to better fit the needs of our school and students?
- How can we make Mix It Up Day our own? What elements can we add or change to promote our focus on stories and empathy?

STEP 2: Once students had thoroughly discussed the event itself as well as the ways in which it could be tailored to best serve our school community and be hopefully as well-received as possible, we moved into discussing logistics, posing the question *"How do we make this really happen?"*

Students divided themselves into different task groups and gave us a list of tasks that they needed us to take care of as teachers such as reserving space, working with maintenance on table set-up, emailing staff and field tripping our students out for all lunch periods.

The student task groups they came up with are explained here:

- Advertising/Promotion of the event
- Construction (building the interview booth and creating any other larger supplies needed)
- Interview Booth Questions (making sure we had a supply of questions that would prompt students to share important aspects of themselves in a short-form interview setting)
- Games (Students collected donated games and were also in charge of set up and encouraging kids to play them on the day)
- Table set up (Students designed the unique way they wanted the lunch tables arranged and made the birthday month signs as well as conversation starter cards to place on the tables)
- Hype Group (Students made playlists for the day and one student even brought in his own DJ equipment to help make the lunchroom atmosphere exciting while other students took charge of the megaphone/mic for the day making announcements, welcoming kids to the cafeteria and encouraging them to participate in the events).

STEP 3: Execution. Our class was first hour and we were also able to secure permission to field trip our students out of their classes for the day to help with set up, the lunch periods themselves, and also clean up. The event itself required very little direction from us as teachers, rather we supervised, helped with any areas students needed, encouraged students and staff to participate and, in a few rare cases, diffused situations where students were resistant in a disrespectful manner to the event.

You can see first hand all that we did on our website http://www.staggvow.com/events/ and check out some of our student reflections below to see the power of events like these.

I had a lot of fun with it. I went around with a microphone and announced what we are doing, and got people to share with how much fun they were having over to microphone. Getting the microphone and speaker was a last-minute thing. I should have planned ahead of time and practiced so that everyone could hear. When I went around from table to table talking to kids about their experiences, the kids were actually really enjoying "mixing it up". Granted not everyone was participating, but those who were really liked it. I got to talk to people that I have never even seen or heard of before. People were really nice to me. That was really shocking, because I am just some random kid walking up to them. The fact that people were so receptive to me makes me hopeful that the student body will really value our book. Overall, Mix It Up Day was a success. The people at Stagg are more aware and are excited about our project. – Grace

I think mix it up day was very successful. I think people liked it just because it was a fun time at lunch. Even if they didn't mix it up, they enjoyed the games and music. The people who did participate enjoyed it even more I think because they made new friends while having a good time at lunch. I heard one person say, "I wish lunch was like this every day, it is so much better and much more fun. – Pat

Overall, Mix it Up Day was a good experience for everyone at Stagg. I was not able to mix it up for all three periods, but when I was able to during 6th, I only saw positive things. For example, a student had asked me what the "mini house" was doing in the lunchroom, and I told the student that it was an interview booth, and that anyone could go inside it. The student was immediately thrilled and ran to get in line. That was very surprising to me that a student was thrilled over being interviewed in a "mini house." The fact that the tables were not in their normal locations was a good idea, so if anything students were not sitting in the same location if they chose to sit by their normal lunch group. I mixed it up and made conversation at lunch, and it was only beneficial for everyone. I am glad that our class sponsored this event, and I am glad that it was so well. – Hayley

Adaptations:

- **In Isolation:** This can be done at any school or community setting without the need for a larger class or unit. The concept of Mix It Up Day is to confront places where segregation and cliques occur and change the dynamic to help promote empathy, breakdown stereotypes and cliques and also help students get to know one another better; these concepts can easily be transferred to community settings that naturally lead to segregation among fixed groups such groupings within an organization that don't typically interact or work together to even larger issues of segregations within neighborhoods or larger communities. It is not necessary to label the day or following Teaching Tolerance's model to create opportunities and spaces where segregation is confronted, broken down and open conversations are encouraged.

- **Within an Oral History Unit/Project:** Mix It Up Day is another example of creating opportunities for students to practice empathy out in the community before the longer form oral history interviews took place. In terms of our larger unit and class goal, the day served to provide students with practice conducting the shorter interviews in the interview booth and also served as advertising for our larger project and helped to solicit/highlight stories that were out there in our community that we later pursued for our longer interviews for our book.

Unit 2: How Do We Start a Conversation?

Once we felt our students had a grasp on what powerful oral histories and story examples looked like, we wanted to give our students the chance to begin their own conversations through interviews. Before our students conducted their own long-format interviews for our class book, we wanted them to be as comfortable as possible asking important and sometimes difficult questions. While these activities are listed in the progression we followed in our interview unit, many can be used isolation.

"Listening is an act of love, it is about insisting that every life matters and giving people a chance to feel heard."

—Dave Isay

Part 1: What Makes a Good Interview? Readings and resources for analysis and discussion

Ayers, Rick. *Studs Terkel's Working: A Teaching Guide*. New York: New Press, 2001. Print.

Burton, Susan. "Terry Gross and the Art of Opening Up." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 24 Oct. 2015. Web.

Bosman, Julie. "A Fisherman in New York's Sea of Faces." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 06 Nov. 2013. Web.

Harshaw, Pendarvis. *OG Told Me*. http://ogtoldme.tumblr.com 16 November 2016. Web.

Mayotte, Cliff, Richard Ayers, and William Ayers. *The Power of the Story: The Voice of Witness Teacher's Guide to Oral History*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.

"Principles and Best Practices." *Oral History Association*. N.p., n.d. Web.

Stark, Kio. "Why You Should Talk to Strangers." TED, Feb. 2016, https://www.ted.com/talks/kio_stark_why_you_should_talk_to_strangers

"This American Life's Ira Glass on How to Talk to Strangers." *Slate Magazine*. N.p., 28 June 2013. Web.

Part 2: Practicing Interview Activities

Length: These activities are part of the larger unit that spanned three weeks. The activities listed below took no more than one or two class periods in isolation always leaving time at the end to discuss how we could apply the interviewing strategies discussed to our own interviews.

Materials: Each activity is connected to a particular reading or video that is referenced in full in the works cited lists on the previous page.

Context: The following activities and prompts are examples of ways in which analysis of different types of interviews or interview prep scenarios may be guided. These readings/videos and activities were integrated throughout the unit along with specific activities helping them to better plan for their own interviews they would conduct.

1. **What's Terry Going to Ask?** In addition to reading the *New York Times* article: "Terry Gross and the Art of Opening Up," we had our students listen to a few examples of Terry's interviewing awesomeness on her Fresh Air Podcast: http://www.npr.org/programs/fresh-air/
   Once we broke down what Terry did well—the types of questions she asked and her ability to phrase follow-up questions in ways that truly allowed her guests to open up—we would play the "What's Terry Going to Ask?" game. We would play an interview and then strategically pause it when Terry was about to ask a question and see if students could predict her questions, or even come up with something even better.
   This activity was a fun way to engage the class while also getting them to practice and sharpen their own follow-up question and interviewing skills.
   Here are some great episodes we recommend exploring with your students: D. Watkins "Living and Dying While Black"; "Tig Notaro on Going 'Live' About Her Life"

2. **Speed Interviews** Get your students accustomed to jumping into conversations by conducting "speed interviews." Similar to the speed dating concept, partner students up for speed conversations of 5 minutes challenging them to find out the most they can about their partner in 5 minutes.
   When the 5 minutes are over, switch to a new partner and continue leaving enough class time to reflect on the experience and share what worked well and what they can learn from.

3. **Bubble Interviews** Have the students conduct a one-on-one interview with the class watching silently in a circle around them. These interviews should be interviews that the student has prepared for either by receiving a brief autobiographical sketch of who they are interviewing or even interviewing someone they already know from the class.
   In either case, the student should have prepared questions and notes before they conduct the interview. While intimidating, this setup allows for the students observing to offer constructive critiques and learn from the interviews first-hand.

4. **Guest Interviews** Invite members of your school or community in to be interviewed as practice. Be sure to explain the purpose of the interviews and have your guests answer a few general questions or submit an autobiographical sketch before coming in. In our class, we invited administrators, teachers, retired staff, alumni and even current students to come in.

We had our students prep for the interviews and create write ups modeled after Brandon Stanton's *Humans of New York* vignettes complete with space to photograph their interviewees. Afterwards we asked our guest volunteers to complete a survey and offer feedback and the interview experience which then allowed us to make adjustments before conducting our interviews for the book.

5. **Interview Reflection Questions:**

General Interviews

- What surprised you? Did anything happen that was completely unexpected?
- What went really well? What aspects of the interview or process are you most proud of?
- What would you change? If you could do it all over again, what would you do differently? Why?
- What lessons did you learn? What did you learn from the experience that you'll bring to your next interview?

The Interview Experience (for longer form interviews)

- What is the relationship between you and your interviewee?
- How did you get matched up for this interview?
- What was the interview like?
- What stands out to you most about it?
- If you knew the person ahead of time, what new did you learn about him/her after conducting the interview? If you did not know the person ahead of time, what was it like having a serious conversation with a stranger?
- What can be learned from these experiences?
- What did you learn from the experience?
- Why is your interviewee's narrative important for others to read?

Adaptations:

- **In Isolation:** Any of these activities can be done in isolation to help students or community members start conversations and better understand the characteristics that make for productive, meaningful and "good" conversations and/or interviews.

- **Within an Oral History Unit/Project:** These activities and the readings and videos that accompany them provide important foundations for helping students understand how to conduct interviews that are both effective and foster the deeper and meaningful connections that our project aimed to encourage. When asking students to conduct oral history interviews of any kind or length, we found that it was vital to provide models as well as several opportunities to practice the skills before setting them off on their own. As adults that also conducted interviews, we can attest to the fact that examples and practice helps immensely in creating a situation with an interview can feel comfortable and also be efficient and productive. The reflective questions are also a key component of producing a quality oral history project as we found that for our students and ourselves, there was always something to learn and improve upon from each interview.

Unit 3: How Do We Tell a Story?

We knew from the beginning of the class that we wanted to create and publish our own oral history collection of the stories of our school community so we devoted a significant amount of time of exploring examples of oral histories and impactful storytelling. However, even if your goal is not to create your own oral history collection, reading and analyzing these examples provide powerful exercises in not only critical reading and thinking, but also in experiencing the empathetic connections that come from powerful storytelling.

"Each person has a literature inside them."

—Anna Deavere Smith

Part 1: Class Reading Resources

Deavere-Smith, Anna. "Twilight: Los Angeles | Watch Great Performances PBS Online." THIRTEEN New York Public Media RSS, http://www.thirteen.org/programs/great-performances/twilight-los-angeles/

Eggers, Dave. *The Voice of Witness Reader: Ten Years of Amplifying Unheard Voices*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.

Orner, Peter, and Tom Andes. *Underground America: Narratives of Undocumented Lives*. San Francisco: McSweeney's, 2008. Print.

Petty, Audrey. *High Rise Stories: Voices from Chicago Public Housing*. San Francisco: Voice of Witness, 2013. Print.

Terkel, Studs. *Working; People Talk about What They Do All Day and How They Feel about What They Do*. New York: Pantheon, 1974. Print.

Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. New York, NY: Random House, 2010. Print.

The World Within: Writers Talk Ambition, Angst, Aesthetics, Bones, Books, Beautiful Bodies, Censorship, Cheats, Comics, Darkness, Democracy, Death, Exile, Failure, Guns, Misery, Muses, Movies, Old Boys' Network, Oprah, Outcasts, Sex, Suicide, Smoking, Strippers, Torture, Vietnam, VD, Violence, and More. Portland, OR: Tin House, 2007. Print.

Part 2: Class Creative Format Story Resources

"John Smith | This American Life." *John Smith | This American Life*. N.p., n.d. Web.

LindseyMichelleMedia. ""Two Sides of the Same Mirror" by Simmons College (CUPSI 2015)." *YouTube*. YouTube, 05 Apr. 2015. Web.

"The Moth | Radio Hour | Crime and Forgiveness (Re-aired 12/31)." *The Moth*. N.p., n.d. Web.

"Online 'Shaming' A New Level Of Cyberbullying For Girls." *NPR*. NPR, n.d. Web.

"StoryCorps." *StoryCorps*. N.p., n.d. Web.

TEDtalksDirector. "Dave Isay: Everyone around You Has a Story the World Needs to Hear." *YouTube*. YouTube, 25 Mar. 2015. Web.

Part 3: Sample Story Analysis Activities:

Length: These activities are part of the larger unit that spanned three weeks. The activities listed below took place in two class periods—the first was for either watching, listening or reading the piece together in class and assigning the questions for homework either in worksheet or online discussion form and then the second class period or day was used to discuss responses together and attempt to always bring the connection back to how we could apply what we noticed was effective in these story examples to our own story editing.

Materials: Each activity is connected to a particular reading or video that is referenced in full in the works cited lists on the previous page. Students completed and submitted reflections through our Google Classroom discussion board which allowed the class to view and respond to their reflections and also allowed us as teachers an easy way to pull up discussion strands on the projector to share with the class. Assignment can be completed as a written or worksheet assignment without the use of technology.

Context: The following activities and prompts are examples of ways in which analysis of different types of oral histories and/or shared stories may be guided. These readings and activities were integrated throughout the unit along with specific activities helping them to understand how to edit their own interviews to create a compelling story that honored the narrator.

1. **Introduction to the Power of a Story**
   Watch: Dave Isay—Everyone Around You Has a Story the World Needs to Hear
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKHk_UiQboA

   Discuss:
   - What stood out to you?
   - What could you relate to? What totally surprised you?
   - In what ways does Isay's message connect to our class goals?
   - How does this show the power of sharing stories?

   Here is a summary of our class discussion reflections. We posted these to our Google Classroom and allowed students to comment further:

   Summary of class Storycorps Reflections:
   - *Don't be afraid to discuss the taboo topics--ask the uncomfortable questions*
   - *Lessons learned from imperfection*
   - *Address topics that may get media attention but give them a sense of humanity--do not further marginalize subjects.*
     - *Interviewers and narrators are comfortable with one another.*
     - *Keep the focus on the person, not the subject.*
   - *Love can mean many different things, but can be a truly powerful element/emotion. How can we capture this idea in our stories?*
   - *Potential chapter on your worst day in high school? Solidarity in struggles.*
   - *The story of the mother and son's murderer is a true representation of empathy—putting yourself in the other person's shoes. We need to remember this as interviewers—put ourselves in the narrator's position/situation.*
   - *LGBTQ community in Stagg is not a community that has an amplified voice in Stagg—this community needs a voice in our book.*
     - *We need to remember that one person is not always representative of the entire community, but that individual struggles are important and deserve to be heard/respected.*
   - *As interviewers we want to connect, but we have a responsibility to let our narrators tell their stories without interjecting our own.*

2. **Response Prompts to *High Rise Stories: Voices from Chicago's Public Housing***
   Read Tiffany Tucker's story on p. 175. After a brief discussion in your groups, post your responses to Tiffany's story you read last night under the question headings.

   - What specific aspects or parts of the story stood out to you the most? BE SPECIFIC.
   - What is the value of this story? (Why is it important that this story be shared?)
   - What elements of this story could we use in our own collection? BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE (think about topic choice, stylistic elements, specific emotions the story e elicits at various points etc.)
   - What interview questions do you think drove this story? ("reverse interview")

3. *This American Life*: "John Smith" Viewing Worksheet

This episode of *This American Life* is devoted to the story of one life, told through the lives of seven people all over the country who have one thing in common: they're all named John Smith.

As we continue examining examples of stories about people captured in a variety of ways, covering a variety of topics, we ask you to watch this episode paying close attention to style, content, and larger purpose. We'll continue using our core questions to connect the examples to the stories we'll tell with our own book.

As you watch/after you watch, please comment on the following questions:

- What specific aspects or parts of the story stood out to you the most?
- What is the value of this story? (Why is it important that this story be shared?)
- What elements of this story could we use in our own collection? BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE (think about topic choice, stylistic elements, specific emotions the story elicits at various points etc.)
- What questions do you think drove this story? How were the questions different between each John Smith (give examples) and how did that impact the larger message of the episode?
- What made this collection of stories from "average" men interesting? What themes overlapped between stories? How did the episode stay true to the individuality of each John Smith?

4. Jigsaw Activity for Studs Terkel's *Working*

Step 1: *Get together with everyone from your same color group (you should all have read the same excerpt). Discuss the following questions and jot down your notes below:*

- What specific aspects or parts of the story stood out to you the most?
- What is the value of this story? (Why is it important that this story be shared?)
- What elements of this story could we use in our own collection? BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE. (Think about the way in which this topic is approached, stylistic elements, specific emotions that the story elicits and how it achieves that effect, etc.)
- What questions drove this story?
- When speaking of Studs Terkel, Rick Ayers states:

  The good interviewer and documenter reflects back your story with more clarity than your original telling. If the interviewer is sloppy, selfish, or narrow you will resent the story he tells and deny its truth. If he is, Studs, you recognize its essential truth and begin to better understand yourself and life (Ayers xiv).

In what ways is Ayers summation of Studs as an interviewer and oral historian present in the excerpt you read? What specific lessons does the excerpt teach us about interviewing and documenting a story?

Step 2: *Get together with everyone from your same number group (you should all have read different excerpts). Each group member should explain their excerpt, highlighting key points from their group discussion during part 1. Listen carefully and jot down notes for each excerpt except your own.*

Step 3: Tonight for homework, read and annotate the introduction to *Working*. As you read, think about the excerpts you have read and be ready to answer the following questions: *What is Terkel's larger purpose in Working? Based on your reading and discussion of the various excerpts, do you feel Terkel's collection, as you know it, successfully fulfilled his purpose?*

Adaptations:

- **In Isolation:** Any of these activities can be done in isolation as a critical reading/listening exercise. The examples listed do not have to connect to a larger project where students are creating their own oral history narratives and thus, the questions related to that goal can be removed. These examples could be used to supplement a unit focusing on reading skills or thematically connected to other required texts in your curriculum. Outside of the school setting, these stories and analysis activities might be helpful in terms of making connections to issues your community faces or to give another dimension to conversations in your community regarding larger social and political issues (i.e. using Underground America to deepen and understanding of illegal immigration and complicate thinking of the singular view of immigrants that may exist in your community).

- **Within an Oral History Unit/Project:** These activities and the readings and videos that accompany them provide important foundations for helping students understand the many ways stories can be effectively shared. Not only does this activity help them to become better editors of their own interviews, it also inspires them to think outside of the box beyond what traditional oral histories are "supposed to look like" opening them up to new ideas and ways to share stories in meaningful ways with their community.

Part 4: Sample Interview Projects

Length: These projects were assigned over extended periods of time. We recommend that at least two weeks is given for each of the projects listed. This does not include the time spent scaffolding the skills needed for the projects that is included in the context explanation. It is not necessary to give two weeks of actual class time as other activities can be going on while students are working on the projects on their own outside of class; however, we do recommend setting aside at least 4 days of class time within the two weeks to explain, answer questions, allow for collaboration and check in on progress.

Materials: Each project assignment was completed through our students' use of 1:1 Chromebooks that provided them access to Google Drive applications as well as our Google Classroom page. The use of this specific technology is not a necessity in completely these projects although access to recording devices (often on most Smartphones) and word processing software is recommended.

Context: The following projects were assigned in the order listed throughout the year (please see the calendar in the appendix for more detailed information). It is vital that these projects not be completed until students have the opportunity to learn and practice interview skills as well as analyze story examples.

Adaptations: In connection with the context, these projects can be used in isolation but should always include some sort of scaffolding of the interview skills and story examples. While we had much more time to make our scaffolding their own units, if you are in a classroom setting you could easily design an isolated unit using just one of these projects and build in a few scaffolding activities within the unit. In a community setting these projects could be used a loose framework for a community-based oral history project. For example, the first project has a question applicable to any community setting and the roles assigned to students could easily translate to tasks to consider as part of the project.

Sample First Quarter Projects:
https://youtu.be/O11u8u5daW4
http://staggsecrets.tumblr.com/

Assignment 1: Interview Project: What are the stories not being told in our community?

"Oral History is the poetry of the everyday, the literature of the streets, the subjective experiences and personal perspectives of the extraordinary ordinary people–not a substitute but an essential piece of any accurate record of human events. The approaches offered in this project, allow students as oral historians to reject the dispassionate stance of traditional social science, adopting instead a capacity for empathy and identification, for greater joy and immense indignation and, above all, a willingness to be changed in the process."

—Bill & Rick Ayers

Task:

In groups of five, your task is to create a multimedia (mix of photography, audio & video recordings, etc.) collection of oral histories that **seeks to answer an essential question about the lives of the people of our school community**. The collection must be diverse not only in its content (each oral history must bring a new perspective or dimension to answering the essential question), but also its production (the format you choose to share your oral history).

The question will be created by your group and will remain the focus of your project, so don't take this task lightly. Examples of questions that have driven previous VOW books include: *What happened to the people living in the Chicago high rise housing projects when those building were torn down? What circumstances lead to the wrongful conviction of an innocent person?* or Studs Terkel's driving questions for *Working*: *What do you do all day and how do you feel about what you do?* and *What is it like to be that other person?*

As we continue to read examples and other oral histories, ideas for your group will begin to take shape. The guidelines for the question are clear, but offer many complex possibilities: **The question must address some aspect of the lives of those part of our school community (students, staff, alumni, community members).** The purpose of your project is to illuminate possible answer(s) to your question (Think about the examples of StoryCorp, *This American Life*: "John Smith," Studs Terkel's *Working, NPR's All Things Considered: "*Online 'Shaming' A New Level Of Cyberbullying For Girls," *VOW: High Rise Stories: Voices from Chicago Public Housing*).

Group Roles:

Each of the five members of your group will have a specific role. Your role will remain the same for the entire quarter and each role will have specific tasks and responsibilities throughout the production of your project. Although you will have a designated role, it is expected that each member take on multiple responsibilities while working on the project. For example, **it is mandatory that each member conduct at least one interview in addition to your assigned role**. At the end of the quarter, you will be asked to justify your contributions to the group. Your ability to articulate and substantiate your individual work will be part of your project grade.

- **Publicist**: The publicist is the group's connection to the outside world. Responsibilities of the Publicist include but are not limited to: Publicizing aspects of your work in progress to the school community, district, media outlets, and communicating progress to the class as a whole, posting project updates on Google Classroom, etc.

- **Beat Reporter/Researcher:** The beat reporter is the group's eyes and ears and looks for story leads to help answer the group's essential question. Responsibilities of the Beat Reporter include but are not limited to: Researching potential narrator's for your collection, conducting preliminary interviews, and identifying what audio elements, video elements, print elements, or people will benefit your project.

- **Story Collector(s):** The Story Collector provides the material for the collection of stories. The Story Collector conducts the majority of the interviews, takes photographs, records audio, and captures any other media needed for the project.

- **Editor:** The Editor must take all of the collected material and create a cohesive final product. In many ways the Editor is the leader of the group in terms of project vision and delegation of tasks to ensure all members are working together equally, but the Editor should also possess the technical skills to piece everything together in an effective manner.

Process:

At the beginning of the project, you will submit a proposal including your essential question, potential (kinds of) narrators, ideas, resources to pursue, interview questions, timeline, and outlined responsibilities for each group member. After the proposal is submitted and reviewed, we'll have a short group meeting to discuss any revisions and your group will begin.

At various points throughout the quarter, we will check-in. This will be an opportunity for each group to share successes, lessons learned, and pose questions to other groups.

As a class, we will also have activities geared toward enhancing the work you are doing in your groups. For example, practice interview day, examples of similar projects, reading edited interviews, etc.

Project Proposal Ideas

Please fill the proposal form out in as much detail as possible. You only need to turn in one proposal per group. Please do not alter the question headings in anyway.

Group Members (please type all group member's first and last names):

Essential Question (One concisely worded question about the school community that you will seek to answer through your project):

Rationale (Explain why your group chose this question and what you hope to learn):

Potential Interview Subjects (Whom do you have in mind to interview at this point? You may list specific people or even types of people such as "a freshman" or "a transfer student", etc. Remember your project should include at least 4 different interviews.):

Tentative Group Roles (Assign roles to your group members based on their strengths. These roles may change as the project unfolds, but you should set out a tentative plan):

Interview Mediums (What different interview mediums does your group plan to use. Will you just record audio and transcribe the interview in writing like *High Rise Stories* or *Working*? Or will you try to incorporate video like *This American Life's* "John Smith" or edited audio with other sound effects like the *NPR* report on slut shaming online?):

How can we help you? (List any resources/instruction/examples or support you would like us to provide your group/the class):

Voice of Witness Class 1st Quarter Project Rubric

Presentation Elements:

	A	B	C	D	X
Introduction	The introduction introduces and explains the group's essential question and background of the project in a clear, creative and engaging manner.	The introduction introduces and explains the group's essential question and background of the project in a clear manner while attempting to creatively engage the audience.	The introduction introduces and explains the group's essential question and background of the project, but the explanation may be unclear at times or may lack creativity or engagement.	The introduction introduces the group's essential question and background of the project, but the explanation may be incomplete or unclear. The introduction lacks creativity or engagement,	
Interview Excerpts	Interview excerpts from 5+ interviews are shared in a creative manner. The excerpts demonstrate a superior understanding of the elements of a "good story" as well as a superior mastery of the skills of interviewing, transcribing and editing.	Interview excerpts from 5+ interviews are shared in a creative manner. The excerpts demonstrate a solid understanding of the elements of a "good story" as well as a solid mastery of the skills of interviewing, transcribing and editing.	Interview excerpts from 4+ interviews are shared in a manner that attempts creativity. The excerpts demonstrate an adequate understanding of the elements of a "good story" as well as an adequate mastery of the skills of interviewing, transcribing and editing.	Interview excerpts from 3+ interviews are shared in a manner that lacks creativity. The excerpts demonstrate a deficient understanding of the elements of a "good story" as well as a deficient understanding of the skills of interviewing, transcribing and editing.	
Conclusion	The conclusion shares specific, thoughtful reflections on the interview/project process as well as the insights about the Stagg community gained from the project while bringing the presentation to a powerful and meaningful close.	The conclusion shares specific, thoughtful reflections on the interview/project process as well as the insights about the Stagg community gained from the project while attempting to bring the presentation to a powerful and meaningful close.	The conclusion shares reflections on the interview/project process as well as the insights about the Stagg community gained from the project, but these reflections may not be specific and lack the depth of thought expected. The conclusion brings the presentation to a close, but it may lack needed power/ meaning.	The conclusion fails to share reflections on both the interview/project process as well as the insights about the Stagg community gained from the project. The reflections shared may lack needed explanation and/or clarity. The conclusion fails to bring the presentation to a clear close. .	
Presentation	The presentation meets the length requirements, is well-organized and thoughtfully incorporates appropriate multimedia elements to successfully engage the audience.	The presentation meets the length requirements, is organized and incorporates appropriate multimedia elements to attempt to engage the audience.	The presentation meets the length requirements, is somewhat organized and incorporates multimedia elements, but it may fall short in terms of engaging the audience.	The presentation falls short of the length requirements and is disjointed. It incorporates multimedia elements, but these elements are not appropriately chosen and serve as a distraction rather than a tool to engage the audience.	
Practice/ Poise	All members of the group equally share presentation roles. All members of the group appear prepared and confident, speaking clearly with an appropriate pace, tone and volume to successfully engage the audience.	All members of the group share presentation roles. Most members of the group appear prepared and confident, speaking clearly with an appropriate pace, tone and volume to attempt engage the audience.	Most members of the group share presentation roles. Only some members of the group appear prepared and confident, speaking clearly with an appropriate pace, tone and volume to attempt engage the audience while others seemed rushed, visibly nervous and/or unprepared.	Some members of the group share presentation roles. The presentation is marred by awkward silences. Many members of the group appear rushed, visibly nervous and/or unprepared.	

Project Elements:

	A	B	C	D	X
Project Folder	All required elements (transcribed interviews, edited interviews, final presentation format and presentation outline) are comprehensively and thoughtfully completed and shared in one group project folder via the google drive.	All required elements (transcribed interviews, edited interviews, final presentation format and presentation outline) are completed and shared in one group project folder via the google drive.	All required elements (transcribed interviews, edited interviews, final presentation format and presentation outline) are completed, but may lack needed thought/detail and they may not all be shared in one group project folder via the google drive.	Most required elements (transcribed interviews, edited interviews, final presentation format and presentation outline) are completed, but many lack needed thought/detail and they are not shared in one group project folder via the google drive.	

Individual Reflections and Contributions:

	A	B	C	D	X
Completed Reflections	All typed reflections are honestly and thoughtfully completed using the proper evaluation labels along with clear, specific and concrete support.	All typed reflections are honestly completed using the proper evaluation labels but may lack needed thought or depth of specific and concrete support.	All typed reflections are completed but may be lacking proper evaluation label or needed thought or specific and concrete support. There may also be minor discrepancies in your explanation of your group members' contributions.	Most typed reflections are completed but may be lacking proper evaluation label or needed thought or specific and concrete support. There may also be more significant discrepancies in your explanation of your group members' contributions.	
Assessment of Personal Contributions	Your individual reflection illustrates a fair and honest understanding of your contributions to your group when compared to the reflections your group members have completed about your contributions. There are absolutely no discrepancies about your contributions and work.	Your individual reflection illustrates a fair and honest understanding of your contributions to your group when compared to the reflections your group members have completed about your contributions. There may, however, be a few minor discrepancies about your contributions and work.	Your individual reflection illustrates an understanding of your contributions to your group when compared to the reflections your group members have completed about your contributions. There may, however, be some discrepancies about your contributions and work.	Your individual reflection illustrates a poor understanding of your contributions to your group when compared to the reflections your group members have completed about your contributions. There may be significant discrepancies about your contributions and work.	
Overall Personal Rating	**Excellent**	**Adequate**	**Adequate**	**Deficient**	

Assignment 2: Interviewing Project with the Intent of Publication

Task:
Conduct and transcribe TWO long-format interviews with different school community members and edit both interviews for potential publication in our book.

Overview:
Everything we have done this semester has built to this final project--from getting to know ourselves and one another within the classroom, to coming up with questions about our larger school community and going out and conducting your own shorter format interviews that you then transcribed and edited for your group projects--we have attempted to scaffold the experiences and skills necessary for you to go out on your own and conduct, transcribe and edit your own interviews that thoughtfully explore an individual's experience and story as a member of our larger school community.
Remember the examples we looked at together, the guest speakers we had come in and your own learning curves on the first quarter project. Remember that there is not one question or topic we want the book to cover, but rather several questions, topics and stories.
Remember Cliff's sage advice—*this isn't a press release or a book about Stagg itself, but rather a book about the different people and experiences that exist within the Stagg community*.

Guidelines:
- You must **INTERVIEW TWO DIFFERENT** people from the school community (current students, current staff, alumni, retirees, parents, community members living in the school community).
    - You must also assure that no one else in the class has already interviewed these people. It is YOUR responsibility to ask your interviewee if they have already been interviewed or not. We also ask that if the person was already interviewed for a first quarter project, you let students from that group that already established a rapport with the person do a follow-up interview if they choose.
    - One of your interviews MUST be with someone you do not know. The other may be a friend or acquaintance, but does not have to be.
- You must **RECORD** both interviews and provide the full audio files as part of the final project submission.
- You must **TRANSCRIBE** both interviews and provide the full transcriptions as part of the final project submission.
- You must **EDIT** both interviews into narrative form fit for publication.
    - Each interview should be 6-8 typed, double-spaced pages in length.
    - Each interview should be in narrative form, which means all questions must be edited out.
    - Each interview should be edited down to the core story and contain the necessary elements of a "good story" that we have discussed throughout the semester.
- Each interview should include a brief introduction explaining who your interview is with and any pertinent information about that person and the circumstances of your interview (Look back at the excerpts we read from *Working* and the different Voice of Witness books for ideas on what to include).
- We will work together as a class to draft a collaborative rubric which will be used to grade the project.

Unit 4: How Do We Share Our Stories?

Collecting stories from your community can be a transformative experience, but we quickly realized that these stories are only powerful if shared. Our primary focus was to share the stories of our school community in a book, yet even our book had limitations in terms of reaching a wide audience and including as many stories as possible. While most of the materials below pertain directly to the writing and editing of 111th and Roberts, we also used many of the same techniques to publish additional stories online as well.

"By engaging with oral history, students discover their own voices, their capacity for authentic, compassionate listening, and their own relationships to social justice and human rights issues..."

—Dave Eggers

Part 1: Classroom Organization

Length: The organizational roles were implemented over the course of second semester in our class and can be seen in more detail on our planning calendar in the appendix.

Materials: The roles and sample assignments were completed through our students' use of 1:1 chromebooks that provided them access to Google Drive applications as well as our Google Classroom page. The use of this specific technology is not a necessity in completely these projects, but did allow for easier collaboration in and out of the classroom.

Context: Second semester our class focus shifted almost entirely to the publication of our book. In order to allow the students a real world experience that empowered them to make important content, format and editing decisions, we divided our class into "Story Teams" with the roles listed below. This team division proved extremely helpful in terms of organization and student responsibility and built nicely on the foundation of the classroom community and story analysis and interviewing skills we had built first semester. The student roles were assigned based on student responses to a survey asking them the areas and roles they would be most interested in.

Story Team Roles:

- **Team Leader:** Students that acted as lead editors for the group. These students assigned tasks and smaller deadlines to meet the larger class deadlines, managed team progress in different areas, facilitated relationships with outside art students and stepped in to complete any necessary tasks. These students also committed to weekly morning meetings before class with us to check in and make leadership team decisions to assure that content, format and editing decisions were uniform across the teams.

- **Interviewer:** Students that enjoyed and excelled at the interview process. These students conducted and/or helped the original interviewer conduct necessary follow-up interviews where needed and also reached out to conduct new interviews that brought missed voices into the book after looking at areas of deficiency in our first collection of stories from the first semester final.

- **Transcriber:** Students that completed transcriptions of recorded interviews to later be edited by story element and format students into a print-worthy story. Although this was probably the most tedious job, it was interesting to see the students that volunteered and truly enjoyed the process of listening and producing accurate raw transcriptions of interviews and follow-up interviews.

- **Story Element Editor:** Students that read through narratives to assure the story itself was powerful and compelling. These students excelled at analyzing various readings and examples first semester and helped immensely to organize the narratives and provide feedback about areas lacking needed detail or follow-up to assure the stories were as powerful as possible.

- **Grammar Editor:** Students that edited for grammar, essentially the copy editors of the group. These students met together with the other grammar editors to establish norms for editing, which at times was not always a clear cut task when taking narrator voice into account.

- **Format Editor:** Students that edited for format. This included formatting each interviewees biographical information, the use and format of headings within stories, and later also included formating the reflections that followed narratives. Our format students also helped to determine placement of art and additional materials as well as the overall organization of the book.

Part 2: Sample Editing and Reflection Activities to Prep for Story Publication

Length: The sample activities were implemented over the course of second semester in our class in conjunction with the and can be seen in more detail on our planning calendar in the appendix.

Materials: The sample assignments were completed through our students' use of 1:1 Chromebooks that provided them access to Google Drive applications as well as our Google Classroom page. The use of this specific technology is not a necessity in completely these projects, but did allow for easier collaboration in and out of the classroom.

Context/Adaptations: The sample activities included below were all centered around our class focus of creating and publishing a book of oral history stories from our school community. The wording included is the exact wording used in our class, but can easily be altered to fit your goals. While we were fortunate to have an entire year long course devoted to this endeavor, these activities can easily be modified for much smaller scale oral history projects within a classroom or community.

1. **Editing Oral History Stories for Publication**

   Assignment: Please choose any 5 interviews to read that are not your own interviews and not ones that you have read or seen before. Ideally we'd like you to read at least one interview from each sub-folder category (students, staff, alum, etc.). After reading each one, please answer the following questions. Your answers should apply to your impression of all 5 interviews overall. You do not need to specifically name each interview in your answers to questions 2-6, but should refer to specific characteristics.

   1. List the 5 interview narratives you read (list them by the title given and/or the specific name of the person interviewed):
      a.
      b.
      c.
      d.
      e.

   2. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being "it was difficult to get through and felt like reading something assigned for school" and 10 being "it was amazing, riveting, and I couldn't put it down!"), how would you rate your overall experience reading all 5 narrative interviews? Explain your rating.

   3. What specific aspects of the narrative interviews kept you engaged/wanting to read?

   4. What specific aspects of the narrative interviews do you feel could be improved or removed to make the narrative more readable/interesting?

5. Do you feel the narrative interviews you read demonstrate what we have discussed makes a "good story"? Why or why not?

6. Do you feel the narrative interviews you read are ready for publication? If not, what specific steps do you feel we need to take in order to get these narrative interviews ready?

2. Peer Edit Workshop

1. **First read through**--read as though you are an outsider to the Stagg community reading our book. Don't worry about editing anything, just read for the story. Then answer:

    a. Was the story engaging? Why? What specific parts were the most interesting?

    b. Was anything in the story confusing (especially think about someone that doesn't know anything about Stagg or someone no longer in high school).

    c. Was there anything you wanted to know more about? Think about needed detail or perhaps needed follow-up questions.

    d. What was the "empathic connection" moment in the story?

2. **Second read though**--read looking specifically at organization. Then answer:

    a. Does the story flow well? Is it arranged in a logical order that is easy to follow?

    b. Are there any areas that are repetitive or portions that are redundant? Cross out anything you feel could be taken out.

    c. Are there areas that would benefit from follow-up questions? Write follow-up questions you had in mind.

3. **Final read through**--read as an editor looking carefully for grammar, spelling and sentence structure issues. Make your edits right on the story.

3. V.O.W. Round 4 Draft Reflection Directions: As you read each story, place it in either the green, yellow or red light column depending on how much work you feel still needs to be done in order to make it publication ready. After each story you place, be sure to make a brief note as to why you put it there next to it.

Green Light It's ready to publish with only one more quick edit job for grammar!	**Yellow Light** It's almost there but may still need editing work for flow, format and more obvious grammar issues.	**Red Light** It needs major editing work or does not seem to fit the formatting, tone, purpose, etc.

Overall Reflections:

1. What are your thoughts on the order/groupings of the stories and the names of the chapters? Do the stories seem to fit well in each chapter? Would you move any stories around or come up with any other chapter? Are there some stories that don't seem to fit in any category?

2. How does it work having reflections for some stories and not all? How do the voices of the reflections work in the book? Are there some that should be cut? Are there some that work particularly well?
3. How do the survey responses fit into the book? Do you like their placement? How do you feel they help contribute to our overall purpose? Which responses can be removed? Whose voice is missing? Be specific.

4. How do the story titles and subtitles work overall? Are there stories where the title and subtitles are particularly well done? Are there stories that need to be changed?

5. In your opinion, what else needs to be done to get our book ready for publication? Please specifically outline the next steps you think we need to take to have our draft ready to submit to administration by March 29th.

Part 3: What Do Our Stories Teach Us About Ourselves?

As we mentioned before, from the beginning we knew that we didn't want the book to be our goal or our end; we wanted it to be a tool and in some ways a beginning to creating a sustainable change in the way we see and treat each other within our school community. While we are still in the process of measuring the impact of *111th and Roberts* on our larger school community, we did find ways to measure the impact of the class, the book and the process as a whole on our own students. It's one thing to talk about empathy within your classroom, but it's something entirely different to see what students have to say about it.

"Light a candle anywhere and it will challenge the darkness everywhere. One candle. We may not be able to do everything, but we can do something, and something is where we begin."

—Rick and Bill Ayers

A. Sample Culminating Student Reflection Activities:

1. Exit Interview:
As the final exam for second semester of the class, we had students sit down for 5-minute one-on-one exit interviews. We worked together with students the week before to discuss and create the rubric for the interviews after explaining that the interview was an opportunity to prove their growth and learning in all aspects of the class throughout the year. Students narrowed the rubric to three major categories and created the descriptors differentiating the "grade" in each category. During the interviews, students were expected to come prepared to drive the conversation and provide concrete evidence of their growth and contributions in each of the areas.

How has the Voice of Witness class impacted your writing skills?
Be as **thoughtful** and **specific** as possible. Here are some ideas to get you thinking:

- **Interview prep**—how did you grow in your ability to write effective, open-ended questions that helped further our larger purpose? How did you also grow in your ability to prep for follow-up questions that get at the needed detail?
- **Transcription**—how did you master this very technical skill? What did you learn about yourself as a listener and writer and also a "professional" responsible for meeting deadlines and helping a team on a writing task? What did you notice about the way people speak and traditional sentence structure, format, etc.?
- **Editing**—how did you grow in the technical skills of editing (grammar, sentence structure, wording, spelling, etc.)? How did you learn to manage and change the organization of an interview to help it become a focused story? How did you grow as a writer and editor in terms of stylistic elements like maintaining a narrator's voice, structuring a compelling story, knowing what details to cut and which to further pursue? Also think back to the many examples of oral history we read first semester—what did the excerpts from the *Voice of Witness* books and Stud Terkel's *Working* teach you about storytelling that you had not considered or been asked to think about in other English classes before?
- **Writing for a purpose**—how did your understanding of what it takes to produce a piece of writing for a specific audience meant to achieve a specific purpose change/grow? How were the writing "assignments" different from the essays you've had to write as a student in the past? What do you think were the most valuable "lessons" learned about writing overall that you feel you will take with you after high school?

Voice of Witness Class Exit Interview Rubric

Name: Grade:

	Book Writing Process & Production	Class Contributions & Post Publication Tasks	Overall Empathy Development
A	Student was highly involved with all aspects of the book writing process. Student interviewed multiple people, fulfilled his/her team role to a high level, and then continued looking for ways to benefit the book project. Student completed multiple close edits of all drafts of the book on time, going above and beyond what was expected. Once the book was "complete" student continued looking for ways to help the project and displayed an intrinsic motivation to help the project reach its full potential.	Student always participated in class discussions and shared thoughtful reflections on class readings or discussion topics. Student posted sophisticated, well-written, and timely responses to Google Classroom assignments. Student contributed to class content by bringing in outside articles, ideas, or videos. Student completed tasks independently in order to develop the perspectives of students, help our class, and/or publicize our book.	Student cites many specific examples of personal growth over the course of the class. Student was visibly involved in opportunities for personal growth, whether conducting extra interviews or activity stepping outside of his/her comfort zone. This student embodies the best characteristics of the class, helped others improve, and set an example for our class. Student embraced structure of class and looked for ways to improve.
B	Student was involved with all aspects of the book writing process. Student interviewed multiple people, and fulfilled his/her team role. Student completed multiple close edits of all drafts of the book on time, turning in all edits and suggestions on time. Once the book was "complete" the student continued looking for ways to help the project independently or with classmates.	Student sometimes participated in class discussions and/or shared reflections on class readings or discussion topics. Student posted well-written, and timely responses to Google Classroom assignments. When asked, student completed tasks in order to develop the perspectives of students, help our class, or publicize our book.	Student cites specific examples of personal growth over the course of the class. Student was visibly involved in opportunities for personal growth, whether conducting extra interviews or activity stepping outside of his/her comfort zone. This student did many things to enhance the class. Although not always a leader, this student made the most of opportunities to learn more and grow.
C	Student focused mainly on his/her own role in the book writing process. Student completed all tasks assigned. Student completed multiple close edits of all drafts of the book, turning in most edits and suggestions on time. Once the book was "complete" the student helped with side projects when asked.	Student rarely participated in class discussions and/or shared reflections on class readings or discussion topics. Students posts to Google Classroom were sometimes late and/or the minimum requirement. Student did not complete many specific tasks related to promotion of the book or further development of class ideas.	Student did not prove him/herself through examples of growth. Student participated in many class projects, but did not articulate growth in the areas of empathy or leadership. Student worked well in groups and completed tasks when asked, but did not prove more than an adequate growth in the area of empathy.
D	Student displayed minimal work on book project. Many assignments within the project were turned in late or incomplete. Student was observed in class working on other materials or not always taking part in class activities.	Student did not participate in in class discussions. Student's posts to Google Classroom were often late and/or the minimum requirement or incomplete. Student has not completed any specific tasks related to promotion of the book or further development of class ideas.	Many times during class student seemed uninterested or needed to be brought into the conversation. Student did not participate in class projects or did not articulate growth through these experiences. Student did not show interest in developing empathy skills or embracing class content.

Appendix

Course Syllabus and History

VOICE OF WITNESS CLASS
SYLLABUS, Mission, EXPECTATIONS

Mr. Chris Wendelin
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Mrs. Lisa Thyer
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"Light a candle anywhere and it will challenge the darkness everywhere. One candle. We may not be able to do everything, but we can do something, and something is where we begin."

—Rick Ayers

Stagg has never offered a class like this before. Mainly because it's not a class where we, the teachers, aim to teach you material that you will later be tested on. It's a project. We don't have a final exam, but an end goal of publishing a book together. We don't have worksheets that lead to a unit test, rather experiences that will hopefully give us the skills and perspective to do our best work. The answers aren't defined by us because we are working with the human experience, and the unique perspective you will bring to that process is exactly why we are happy you're here.

As you can see, it's difficult to explain the exact parameters to the class because in many ways, they are yet to be defined. What we do know is that what we are doing is very important, there are a lot of eyes on us, and at the end of it all, we will all be authors of a book about the complex and interesting people that make up our Stagg community.

We feel the best way to bring everyone up to speed on the journey of this class is to briefly go through its history. There is also a planning calendar at the end of this toolkit.

Fall 2014

A group of teachers, counselors, and administrators met to discuss replicating the sense of community at Stagg many people felt in the wake of Ms. Ogarek's death. Although many students and staff felt great heartache at this loss, there was a sense of reverence and togetherness as people shared stories and realized life is short and important, a universal idea every person in the building could appreciate. Discussion led to incorporating students into the group and possibly collecting stories to build empathy and find more of these unknown commonalities. Who would write these stories? Who would read them?

Winter 2014

The group reconvenes with a diverse group of students to brainstorm ideas about building a more empathetic community at Stagg. The group takes part in a workshop led by Voice of Witness (a group specializing in amplifying unheard voices). The workshop leads to many transformative ideas for our school: students want to be empowered and sometimes "school" gets in the way; when students see past stereotypes or labels, they open themselves up to more genuine experiences with peers; and students and teachers understanding there is a deeper story to everyone is the foundation for a community that is empathetic and optimistic. *[Sidenote, this process gains some attention and becomes the subject of a documentary.]*

Spring 2015

Mr. Olsen creates a class within English senior electives that students can collect, write, and publish a book of stories capturing the diverse identities that make up the Stagg community. The hope of the book is to give students a voice and allow that collection of voices to teach us about ourselves. Sixty interested students are needed for the class to run.

LATE Spring 2015

Thanks to some courageous students, a dedicated guidance department, and a determined principal, the class runs. We begin planning a curriculum and apply for a grant that would win our class Chromebooks.

EARLY Summer 2015

The class wins the grant for Chromebooks and is chosen by the district technology department to pilot a program where students get to take the Chromebooks with them. Mr. Olsen also allocates $5,000 to the class to help cover publication costs. The project begins to gain attention throughout the district administration.

Summer 2015

We continue planning the curriculum. Our vision for the class is to provide a rigorous learning experience (learning everything needed to write and publish a book [a good book]) while allowing the class the flexibility and freedom to take the wheel and go where we need to go. We hope to create a community more than a classroom, a goal more than a grade, and operate on an expectation that we all want to create something that will outlast us and positively impact the way Stagg students see each other. Oh yeah, somehow the class must be graded. We begin collecting examples of people who have done what we are trying to do always leaving space in the day for student ideas and changes in direction. We also research and select a publisher for our book.

August 14th 2015

Here we are. Time to get started.

Expectations
Beyond the standard class expectations that we will discuss and build a list of together, we have a few we would like all of us to follow:

- **Make empathy a habit, not just a philosophy.** In a course that was born from the larger values and goals of the school's "empathy committee" it is not just an expectation, but a responsibility of each of us to be examples of empathetic individuals and an empathetic culture. Therefore it is our expectation that there is empathy in everything you do, whether it is the way you listen and participate in our class discussions, the manner you treat your narrators during an interview, or even the manner you treat others outside the class and your class-related responsibilities.

- **Manage and meet deadlines!** A very real part of this class is publication. Our work is not just contained in the confines of our classroom; we are working with a professional publishing company with many other clients to manage. This process operates on **strict deadlines**. Managing your time is essential.

- **Be present every single day.** And no, we don't just mean being physically "present" in terms of attendance (although that is important), we mean being mentally present and engaged. Since the class itself has a larger goal of creating a publication under a deadline and working with groups, it is essential that you come to class every single day prepared and ready to engage with whatever task is at hand. As teachers, we understand that your days are long and extremely busy. We know that oftentimes you are being pulled in what feels like a thousand different directions, not just academically, but socially and emotionally as well which can make balancing class responsibilities difficult at times. With that in mind we have specifically designed plenty of class time where you are able to work on assignments and tasks individually and in your particular task groups where we are there to help you and/or offer feedback and direction. We want to respect your time and the work you are doing—all we ask is that you do the same in return. We will never be grading or doing work for another class during our time together nor will we ever come to class without having read/watched/listened to whatever we have assigned you to do. Please show us and your classmates the same respect by coming to class everyday prepared and ready to devote the full class period to whatever we are working on that day.

- **Share!** Whether it's your ideas or your stories, don't be afraid to contribute and make your voice heard. While we have a direction and materials in mind for the class, nothing is set in stone. We left plenty of room and opportunities to let you determine the direction we take. Don't ever be afraid to challenge, question, explore and share. also, don't be afraid to go home and share what we are doing and what you are doing in the class with your parents--this class is creating a product for the community and your parents are important members of that community. Share with them! We will also have opportunities for them to read, listen to and respond to some of our work as we go.

Class TimeLine and Components:

Semester 1

8/17-9/4 **Unit 1: Who are we and what do we want to accomplish?**
*First quarter project proposals due Friday, September 4th

9/7-9/25 **Unit 2: How do we start a conversation?**
*Special Guest Facilitator: Audrey Petty editor of *High Rise Stories*
*Practice interviews with Stagg staff and alum
*Narrator and Question prep for first quarter project due Friday, September 25th

9/28-10/30 **Unit 3: How do we tell a story?**
*Special Guest Facilitators: Cliff Mayoette & Claire Kiefer from Voice of Witness
*First quarter projects due! Presentations Monday, October 26th-Friday, October 30th

11/2-12/4 **Unit 4: What do we want to know about our community?**
*Potential Field Trip(s): Class exchange and/or trip to 826Chi writing workshop
*Proposal for 1st semester final project interviews due Friday, November 13th

12/7-12/21 **Final Project Work**
*Edited interviews for final exam due Thursday 12/10
*Final Conferences 12/15-12/21
*Reading of interviews and rankings must be completed over winter break

Semester 2

1/6-1/15 **Unit 5: Who are we as a community?**
*Potential Field Trip(s): 826Chi Writing Workshop?
*Roundtable discussion of winter break reading January 7th-8th

1/19-2/19 **Unit 6: How do we share our stories?**
*Potential Field Trip(s): Art Institute? Museum of Contemp Art?
*Final Drafts of Team Assignments due Friday, February 5th
*Revisions of Team Assignments due Tuesday, February 16th
*Roundtable on story order in our book: February 17th-18th

2/22-4/1 **Unit 7: What do our stories say about us?**
*Potential Field Trip(s): Quimby's or U of C Bookstore?
*Editor Bios due Monday, March 14th
*All finalized interviews and bios due for publication Thursday, March 24th

4/11-5/13 **Unit 8: How can our stories make an impact?**
*Potential Field Trip(s): Book promotion events?
*Task group work due Friday, April 29th
*Final Conferences 5/9-5/12
*End of class celebration 5/13!!!!

Class TimeLine and Components Continued:

In addition to the components mentioned above, we'd like to incorporate some "fun" activities that we make space for on specific days. Listed below are a few of the ideas we came up with:
Story Sharing Mondays
Out of Your Comfort-Zone Fridays
Weekly Reflections

Grading:

Because the class is aimed at creating an authentic real-world experience of publishing a book and includes the additional goals of increasing civic engagement and empathetic community connections, you will notice that there are not traditional assignments such as worksheets, exams, or even a traditional amount of "homework."

To mirror the unique philosophy and goals of the course, we have a created a skills-based approach to grading that relies heavily on reflection and growth rather than just collecting arbitrary "points." The grading for the course will be broken down into the following categories:

18 Weeks Grade Categories (80% of total Semester Grade):

10% "Class Participation" — Includes participation in online class discussion posts, group participation in assigned task groups, and participation in class discussion and roundtables.
10% "Journals" — Includes weekly written reflection assignments submitted online as well as group work and personal reflection components.
80% "Projects" — Includes quarterly group projects as well as individual tasks and project proposals.
"Final Exam(s)" (20% of Total Semester Grade):

As stated above, this class will not have "tests", instead your final exam grade will consist of both a written component related to the components of the book we are producing as well as a reflective one-on-one conference where you will have an opportunity to provide examples and reflection on your growth as it relates to the particular tasks and skills focused on in each semester.

August 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 **Institute Day**	12 **Institute Day**	13 **Freshmen Day-** record teacher responses to video from students? Our job or other empathy committee peeps or both?	14 **First Day!** **Icebreakers** **Getting to know you** **HW:** "Letter" assignment	15
16 **Unit 1: Who are we and what do we want to accomplish?**	17 **"Cool stuff Mondays":** model sharing and core questions w/ storycorps, single story, why, etc.?	18 Intro to the class, schedule and our shared goals. Class "rules"/ agreement.	19 **Team building** Partner interview	20 **Team building** Partner Interview	21 **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** Final team building activity First reflection **HW:** Complete reflection	22 ***Record some team building footage and a few student reflections on Friday to play for parents at back to school night?***
23 **Unit 1: Who are we and what do we want to accomplish?**	24 **"Cool stuff Mondays":** NPR cyberbullying? Student(s) share? Use chromebooks and have them look up examples? HW: Login to school gmail	25 **How can we use technology to achieve our goals?** Intro to the chromebooks! **HW:** Post responses to tech. question	26 Discuss tech responses and begin list of strengths/ usable ideas **What is "oral history"?** Working definition **HW:** read examples **Back to School Night**	27 **What is "oral history"?** Discuss examples of variety of forms/ purposes VOW, Studs Terkel, etc. Add to list of strengths/usable ideas	28 **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** Chromebook "chat" **HW:** Complete reflection	29
30 **Unit 1: Who are we and what do we want to accomplish?**	31 **"Cool stuff Mondays"** Introduce and explain 1st qtr project--groups					

September 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Unit 1: Who are we and what do we want to accomplish?		**1** **What makes a "good" story?** Moth forgiveness, etc. **HW:** More examples and responses	**2** **What makes a "good" story?** TAL TV episode? Truelife?	**3** **What makes a "good" story?** Discuss story strengths/ usable ideas. Narrow our goals/ideas.	**4** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** Share our mini stories? **HW:** Complete reflection	**5**
6 **Unit 2: How do we start a conversation?**	**7** **Labor Day** **No School!**	**8** **How do we start a conversation?** Humans of NY article and youtube video	**9** **Audrey's visit? (potentially)** **How do you earn the trust of a narrator/ community?**	**10** **What are the basics of interviewing?** Interview skills from Studs Terkel *Working* guide	**11** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** Interview practice activity **HW:** Complete reflection	**12**
13 **Unit 2: How do we start a conversation?**	**14** **"Cool stuff Mondays"**	**15** **What are the "right" questions to ask?**	**16** **What are the "right" questions to ask?**	**17** **Large group practice interviews with Stagg VIP's!**--Mr. Olsen? Micki? Lou?	**18** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** Interview practice activity **HW:** Complete reflection	**19**
20 **Unit 2: How do we start a conversation?**	**21** **"Cool stuff Mondays"**	**22** More interview practice! Recording the interview-- storycorps app	**23** Work in project groups to refine essential question and brainstorm potential narrators **HW:** ? and list due!	**24** **Project work time and feedback**	**25** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** Interview practice activity **HW:** Complete reflection	**26**
27 **Unit 3: How do we tell a story?**	**28** **"Cool stuff Mondays"**	**29** **How do we transcribe an interview?**	**30** **How do we transcribe an interview?**			

October 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Unit 3: How do we tell a story?				**1** **How do we transcribe an interview?**	**2** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	**3**
7 **Unit 3: How do we tell a story?**	**5** **"Cool stuff Mondays"**	**6** **How do we edit and stay true to the story?**	**7** **How do we edit and stay true to the story?**	**8** **Cliff and Claire Visit!** **Work with the class on editing and empathy committee meeting?**	**9** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	**10**
11 **Unit 3: How do we tell a story?**	**12** **"Cool stuff Mondays"**	**13** **Group project work**	**14** **Group project work**	**15** **Parent Teacher Conferences**	**16** **No School!**	**17**
18 **Unit 3: How do we tell a story?**	**19** **"Cool stuff Mondays"**	**20** **How do we edit and stay true to the story?** Examples of "good" editing	**21** **Group project work**	**22** **Group project work** **Projects due Monday!** submit electronically--be prep. to give mini presentation	**23** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	**24**
25 **How are we doing with all of this?!** **Group projects due!**	**26** **Present group projects--class feedback** 3 groups per day (10 min max each?)	**27** **Present group projects--class feedback**	**28** **Present group projects--class feedback**	**29** **Present group projects--class feedback**	**30** **Present group projects--class feedback** **HW:** Complete reflection	**31**

November 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 **Unit 4: What do we want to know about our community?**	**2** **"Cool stuff Mondays"**	**3** **What is the single story of Stagg and what other stories need to be heard?** Reflect on project presentations	**4** **What do we want to know about our community?**	**5** **Where can we go to get the stories we want/need?**	**6** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	**7** *****We need an event for November--Class exchange with Avi? or 826 FT?**
8 **Unit 4: What do we want to know about our community?**	**9** **"Cool stuff Mondays"**	**10** **What is your story as a member of this community?**	**11** **What do we all share as a community? What makes us different?**	**12** **"Opposite" interview assignment and explanation of 1st semester final-- google docs list of narrators**	**13** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	**14**
15 **Unit 4: What do we want to know about our community?**	**16** **"Cool stuff Mondays"**	**17** Interview assignment work Feedback	**18** Interview assignment work Feedback	**19** Interview assignment work Feedback	**20** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	**21**
22 **Unit 4: What do we want to know about our community?**	**23** **"Cool stuff Mondays"**	**24** Choosing the second interview--feedback day	**25** **Early Release No Late Start**	**26** **Happy Thanksgiving No School!**	**27** **No School!**	**28**
29 **Unit 4: What do we want to know about our community?**	**30** **"Cool stuff Mondays"**					

December 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Unit 4: What do we want to know about our community?		**1** Interview assignment work Feedback	**2** Interview assignment work Feedback	**3** Interview assignment work Feedback	**4** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	**5**
6 **End of semester summative assessments: Writing--two edited interviews (turn in orginal audio, transcript, final edit and reflection of value)**	**7** **"Cool stuff Mondays"**	**8** Interview assignment work Feedback	**9** Interview assignment work Feedback	**10** *****Edited interview portion of final exam due!*****	**11** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	**12**
13 **End of semester summative assessments: Reading--reading growth conference: prove that your analysis of various journalistic/oral history examples has grown.**	**14** **Explain winter break "assignment"**	**15** **End of semester conferences**	**16** **End of semester conferences**	**17** **Final Exams**	**18** **Final Exams**	**19**
20	**21** **Final Exams**	**22** **Happy Winter Break!**	**23**	**24**	**25**	**26**
27	**28**	**29**	**30**	**31**		

January 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 **Unit 5: Who are we really as a community?**	4	5 **Institute Day**	6 **Welcome back! Post-break check-in** **"Out of our comfort zones" fun!**	7 **What stories truly reflect us?** Roundtable on submitted interviews	8 **What stories truly reflect us?** Roundtable on submitted interviews	9 ***826 FT for this month? (help with editing for publication)***
10 **Unit 5: Who are we really as a community?**	11 **"Cool stuff Mondays"**	12 **What stories truly reflect us?** Roundtable wrap-up	13 **What stories truly reflect us?** Book vs. Online sharing	14 **What stories truly reflect us?** Division into task teams	15 **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	16
17 **Unit 6: How do we share our stories?**	18 **MLK Day** **No School!**	19 **How do you edit for print publication?**	2 **How do you edit for print publication?**	21 Task Team work time	22 **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	23
24 **Unit 6: How do we share our stories?**	25 **"Cool stuff Mondays"**	26 **What makes online publication different?**	27 **What makes online publication different?**	28 Task Team work time	29 **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	30
31						

February 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Unit 6: How do we share our stories?	**1** **"Cool stuff Mondays"**	**2** Task Team work time	**3** Task Team work time	**4** Task Team work time **HW:** Final drafts of team assignments due Friday!	**5** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	**6** **FT/cool event ideas?**
7 **Unit 6: How do we share our stories?**	**8** **"Cool stuff Mondays"**	**9** Reading Feedback Roundtable	**10** Reading Feedback Roundtable	**11** Reading Feedback Roundtable **HW:** Revisions due Tuesday!	**12** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	**13**
14 **Unit 6: How do we share our stories?**	**15** **President's Day No School!**	**16** **What impact does story order have?** Determining variety and order-examples	**17** **What impact does story order have?** Determining variety and order roundtable	**18** **What impact does story order have?** Determining variety and order roundtable	**19** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	**20**
21 **Unit 7: What do our stories say about us?**	**22** **"Cool stuff Mondays"**	**23** **What do our stories really say about us?** The importance of introductions	**24** **What do our stories really say about us?** The importance of introductions	**25** **What do our stories really say about us?** The importance of introductions	**26** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	**27**
28 **Unit 7: What do our stories say about us?**	**29** **"Cool stuff Mondays"**					

March 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Unit 7: What do our stories say about us?		**1** **How do we visually present ourselves?** Cover art and online design ideas	**2** **How do we visually present ourselves?** Cover art and online design ideas	**3** **Parent Teacher Conferences**	**4** **No School!**	**5** **FT to bookstore/graphic design/etc.? Even art institute or contemp art museum?**
6 **Unit 7: What do our stories say about us?**	**7** **"Cool stuff Mondays"**	**8** **How do we fit ourselves into our collection?** Creating your bios	**9** **How do we fit ourselves into our collection?** Creating your bios	**10** **How do we fit ourselves into our collection?** Creating your bios **HW:** Bios due Monday!	**11** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	**12**
13 **Unit 7: What do our stories say about us?**	**14** **"Cool stuff Mondays"**	**15** **Finalize Cover**	**16** **Student feedback on our intro**	**17** **Finalize Intro**	**18** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	**19**
20 **Down to the deadline!**	**21** **Edit, edit, edit!**	**22** **Edit, edit, edit!**	**23** **Edit, edit, edit!**	**24** *****All Finalized edited stories and bios due for publication!*****	**25** **No School!**	**26**
27 **Down to the deadline!**	**28** **Cool/fun stuff Wrap-up loose ends**	**29** **Cool/fun stuff Wrap-up loose ends**	**30** **Cool/fun stuff Wrap-up loose ends**	**31** **REAL SUBMISSION DAY!**		

April 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 **Submission celebration!** **Early Release**	**2** **This month is crazy--PARCC testing is in here somewhere "TBD" eek!**
3	**4** **Happy Spring Break!**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
10 **Unit 8: How can our stories make an impact?**	**11** **Welcome back from break!** **"Cool Stuff"**	**12** **What do hope to change?** Return to our original goals	**13** **How can stories create change?**	**14** **How can stories create change?** New task groups	**15** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	**16** **I'm thinking these new tasks groups will be focused on community/school events marketing the book?**
17 **Unit 8: How can our stories make an impact?**	**18** **"Cool Stuff Monday"**	**19** **How do we want to use our stories to make an impact?**	**20** Task group work	**21** Task group work	**22** **Prom!**	**23**
24 **Unit 8: How can our stories make an impact?**	**25** **Senior ditch day…?**	**26** Task group work	**27** Task group work	**28** Task group work	**29** **"Out of your comfort-zone Fridays!"** **HW:** Complete reflection	**30**