



# Learning Oral History



## How do you conduct oral histories?

1. Define Objective of Study
2. Prepare an Interview Guide
3. Plan the Project in increments
4. Contact Narrators
5. Schedule Interviews
6. Conduct Interviews – Listen carefully and pay attention to body language
7. Conclude and Transcribe

Narrators should always know what will happen to the information they provide.

Questions:  
Excerpt from Ethics Application (page 1 of 11)

My project entitled Learning Oral History will involve a literature review to learn the practice of oral history and will then conduct a series of oral histories in the community of Kitigan Zibi. The UROP Project will link into these overall objectives. I will learn how to carry out oral histories by researching what they are, how they are done, how they are used and the advantages and disadvantages of such a method. I then hope to conduct a series of oral history interviews with Elders and teens from the Kitigan Zibi First Nation community, contingent on approval by the community and the Research Ethics Board.

The UROP project will link into a Faculty of Education Educational Research Unit, Making History: Narratives and Collective Memory in Education/Faire de l'histoire: Recits et memoires collectives en education. This unit has four main objectives. It 'aims to: 1. document how factors of linguistic identity, disciplinarity, gender, place, culture, race and class influence the experience of schooling and the collective memory of it in a site like Ottawa, 2. explore how oral history can influence the narration of educational history, 3. create a collaborative model that will assist in the education of new scholars and of new teachers of history, 4. make use of new technologies to bridge such partnerships'. (Cook, Making History

Questions:

1. Are you currently involved in any projects career in the community?
2. Please tell me a little about your experience as a student (overall was it a positive or negative experience? What were the strengths or weaknesses of your schooling? Follow up:  
When were you at school?  
Were you at a residential school? If so did your experience conform with today's view of cruel treatment?  
Were there any advantages to that style of schooling, from this perspective of age?
3. What impact(s) has your schooling had on your life? Your family's life? Your community?  
Follow up: Why did it have that impact?
4. What should the children in your community expect from education today?
5. If your community isn't quite there yet, what suggestions would you offer to improve the situation?
6. What would you say to the children in your community today about the role that education can or should play in their lives?
7. Do you have any questions or comments?

Excerpt from from ethics review board.

Dear Researchers,

Your application for ethics approval of your research project was examined by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board (REB) and received a Category III (Deferred decision). The REB was unable to evaluate your project as the file is incomplete and a lot of very important information is missing. The ethics application therefore needs to be submitted again, in its entirety, including the required number of copies, for an evaluation by the REB. If you would like the REB to review your project during its February meeting please submit it by Thursday, February 17, 2011. Please see the REB members' comments hereto appended for your guidance.

You mention in section 2.1 of the application form that teenagers will participate in the research but nothing is said about them in the rest of the file. The REB needs information about them (age range, recruitment, participation, parental consent, assent).

The REB needs more information regarding the recruitment of participants. What are the inclusion and exclusion criteria?

The REB needs more information regarding the participation. For example how many interviews will be conducted and at what time of the day?

The REB needs information regarding the consent process.

Please provide the approval from the Band.

You say that there is no risk associated to the research but if the questions in section 2.1 are part of the questions that will be asked to participants there is a risk of psychological or emotional discomfort.

Please provide the interview guide.

Please provide details on the disposal of the data.

Please answer all questions. You haven't, for example, answered questions 3.9, 3.10, 7.5, 9.1, and 9.2.

For some items there are text boxes that appear for the researcher to provide additional required information. For technical reasons related to the electronic application, these sometimes do not appear. Would you please re-visit items 3.8, 4.5, 4.6 and 7.4 to provide the requested additional information?

## What is Oral History?

*An account of the past transmitted [orally]*

Used to Collect Information from non-elite groups



An organization from Concordia University, I attended a workshop run by them.

## Objectives

To study the use of Oral History and conduct 3 interviews at Kitigan Zibi First Nation's Reserve.

The original plan was to conduct interviews with Kitigan Zibi Elders about their educational experiences, but the length of the ethics protocol did not fit within the timeline of this project. So instead I went to Kitigan Zibi with another group and learned about their current school system.

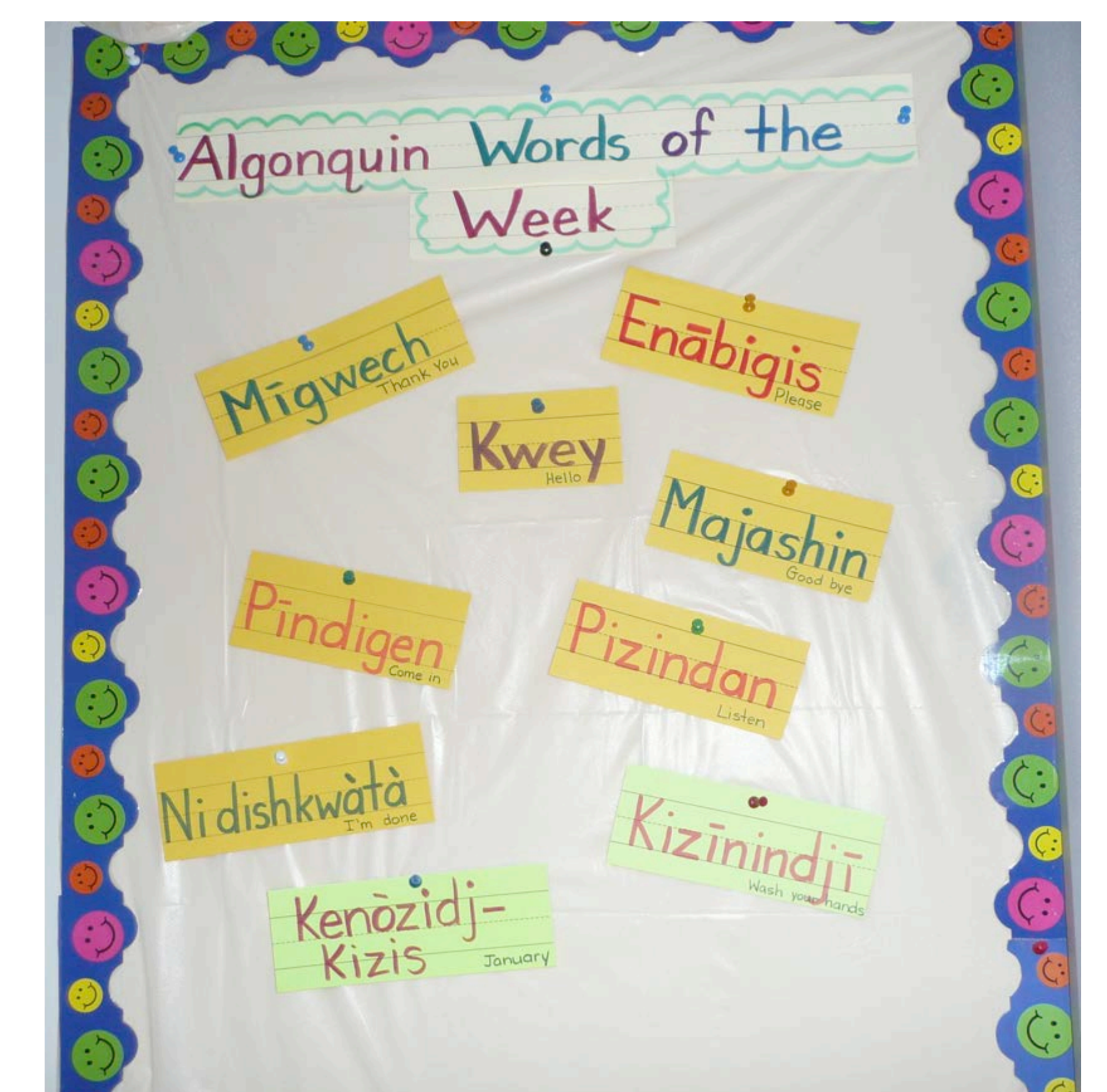


Kitigan Zibi is part of the Algonquin community. The school has students from Kitigan Zibi and surrounding communities.

## Kitigan Zibi



Kitigan Zibi Elementary and High School  
Principal: Shirley Whiteduck  
The school currently has 184 students. All but two teachers are Native and all have their MA.  
The school is independent of the provincial board and makes their own curriculum, allowing for emphasis on Algonquin culture.



From a Gr. 2 classroom, the school also runs an Algonquin immersion program.