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Considering Oral History: Methodological Questions and Reflections

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This poster highlights some reflections on conducting oral history research in the context of developing and conceptualizing a proposed study of the historical development of the PhD in Nursing degree in Canada

Oral History

“History From Below”

What is oral history? How did it develop?
What are its social purposes?
Why is oral history important for nursing research?

Research Questions

What kinds of questions can oral history address?

How does oral history help us to explore the multiple historical conditions and contexts in which specific events occurred or social processes took place?

Relevance to Proposed Project

The purpose of the proposed study is to examine the historical development of the PhD in Nursing degree in Canada from the perspectives of those who experienced the introduction, implementation, and uptake of the degree.

Sources

Eye Witness Interviews

Selection Criteria?
Sample Size?

What are the implications of considering participants’ stories *and* archival documents?
What is privileged here?

Archival Documents

Newspaper Articles
Meeting Minutes
Policy Statements

Data Analysis

What are common strategies for data analysis?

Are Interview data text?
Can they be analyzed as such? How?

What Is This Story About?

Professional Nursing Identity?
(il)Legitimacy in Academia?
Resistance? Progress?

“Professional identity was so clear for me from the very beginning and I was feisty about it. I never had a question that I wouldn’t do a *Nursing Master’s* or PhD.”

“We were always fighting. Nursing faculty were always fighting for traction in the system.”

Common Challenges

“That’s Not What I Said”

Reliability of Memory?
(Mis)Interpretation?

Concluding Thoughts

Although interpretations and collected narratives are the most visible, accessible, and perhaps most interesting elements for consumers of oral history research, equal attention and care must be given to the design aspects of one’s own research endeavors.

Selected References

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