

Better Angels Society -- Students Teaching Teachers Forum
October 27, 2020

Unanswered Questions from Teachers

Question 1, for **Summer**: *The project about the space race and feminism sounds so interesting... how did you come up with the idea to research stories in LIFE, LOOK, and Ladies Home Journal? (PS - Great song by Leslie Gore!)*

Summer

Because I have been making documentaries for six years now, I have a sizable collection of periodicals from the 50s and 60s. I think I first turned to Life and Time magazines when I did a documentary on the 1956 Hungarian Counterrevolution four years ago. I have become a huge fan of Henry Luce. His photographers and editors turned in fantastic pieces. Now, I cannot imagine NOT turning to these publications.

Question 2, for **Summer**: *How and why did you decide to put yourself IN the documentary?*

Summer

If I remember correctly, I "put myself" in all of my documentaries. The first year, I made a documentary on Constantine the Great. Since there are no moving images or photographs from the antiquities, I had very little to work with. I turned to his coins to analyze his religious progression, but there were too many sections/sentiments that I simply could not illustrate. Out of necessity, I resorted to explaining these portions myself. I do have to say that this technique is not without risks. Not everyone appreciated seeing my 9-year old self on camera. Year after year, I felt that having myself in the documentary was very divisive. The same goes for forming strong opinions: there is an inherent risk. I cannot say that it worked for me every time. At the end of the day, we have to do what we are most comfortable producing. On one hand, we owe it to our own conscience to do what feels right, but judges and audiences will not respond well to anything that is not natural, something that is contrived.

Question 3: *How did you approach your writing process and what advice would you give other students to help with their writing process?*

Allison	Rishit	Caroline	Summer	Sophia	Giuliana
<p>The information in your thesis is supposed to be the most critical information put as briefly as possible; therefore, you should start there and then expand to include as many relevant details as possible. Also, think of what emotion you are seeking to invoke in the viewer.</p>		<p>I started with my thesis statement, then made an outline. After that, I made a rough draft, and kept improving my writing. I also had some teachers read over it, and give me feedback.</p>	<p>This is the most difficult part of the process. I spend much too much time researching every year. By the time I have to start writing the script, I have sticky notes covering half my wall. Last year, I painted our dining room door with whiteboard paint and scribbled notes all over it. I draw out (and wipe, wipe, wipe) the main chain of thought. After that, the next hurdle is to pare down the script to 10 minutes. Even after 6 years, it nearly breaks me to cut the words down until I'm within the time limit.</p>	<p>I made an outline/ timeline of the information I wanted to include in my documentary and then built off of that.</p>	<p>I wrote a really rough first draft. I think I did it in like less than an hour just to flesh out my ideas. Then I fine tuned it from there and asked a lot of people for feedback.</p>

Question 4: *How do you keep track of information, leads, images, and connections?*

Allison	Rishit	Caroline	Summer	Sophia	Giuliana
<p>I first gathered information and cited it immediately; then I wrote a script seeking to inform and captivate the viewer; lastly I searched for images that were relevant, compelling, and fit the narrative.</p>	<p>I keep a word document broken down into sources and media, once I find something I like it goes in the document.</p>	<p>As soon as I find a source and use information from it, I put it in my bibliography. I made sure to include links when I could so I could go back to the source when needed.</p>	<p>I set up a folder for the project with subfolders for photos, video clips, audio, articles, recordings, raw vf files, and rendered images.</p> <p>I still underline books that I read. If something is important, I'll put a * in the margin. If it's really important, I'll put **. The super-duper important details get ***. Later, I find it easier to skim through the already read books. I also use skinny sticky notes in books and full size sticky notes on my wall. After painting the door with whiteboard paint, I'm not sure what new crazy idea I'll come up with this year ...</p>	<p>I keep a folder of images and a folder of audio files. I also kept a word document of websites I looked at or wanted to look at.</p>	<p>Every time I added anything I would immediately cite it and do my annotation for the bibliography. Then if I wasn't sure about it, I would highlight it and come back to it later. But definitely writing down the source somewhere as soon as you decide to use it is very helpful.</p>

Question 5: *How do you think the skills that you learned/developed with completing your project will assist you in your future?*

Allison	Rishit	Caroline	Summer	Sophia	Giuliana
<p>I enjoyed the researching and writing portions of this project immensely. The knowledge I have gained about the process of researching a topic is going to be extremely important for me.</p>	<p>I would say time-management and effective research skills are great skills to have moving forward, which I grew while working on this project.</p>	<p>I learned a lot about research, writing, organization, and filmmaking while creating this project. These will help me in school, as well as in future projects.</p>	<p>For me, the single biggest gain was in honing my interviewing skills. The first year, I dreaded the prospect of the interview. As the years went by, it got easier and easier, and I started looking forward to the interview. No matter what we end up doing in life, we'll all have to interview for college admission/job s or defend a PhD thesis.</p>	<p>I am very good at big projects and retaining information. I'm good at planning out ideas and following through with my work. I have very good research skills which are very helpful in school.</p>	<p>I definitely learned a lot about filmmaking which I plan to use in the future. I also learned how to take criticism and turn it into my own work. A big thing also was how to write an annotated bibliography.</p>