Elder Research Project Documentary

Reading literature allows the reader to understand the experiences, trials, and tribulations of others and as a result we learn about ourselves. *Tuesdays with Morrie* is about an old man and a young man who develop a meaningful relationship in the midst of the busyness of American life.  Your purpose for reading *Tuesdays with Morrie* was to be more aware of the nuances of American life experienced by both Morrie and Mitch.  We know that Mitch was in conflict with how he was living his life as an American and we also know that even though he expressed a discontent, he also bought into the culture. By looking more closely at his culture and listening to Morrie’s advice, he was eventually able to understand how he contributed to his discontent and as a result, grow as a person.

It is *your* turn to be Mitch and learn from your elders. We, along with our elders, are all influenced by the times we live in, by the events around us, and by those who surround us. Your job will be to spend time with an elder and listen to that person’s (his)story. You may include photographs, mementos, and documents. You will also video record your subject with the final output to be made into a short film of your elder.

**PROJECT REQUIREMENTS:**

**Part 1. MOVIE**

Your “documentary” will focus on the human experience of your elder by video recording your interview.

You will take your video recording, photos, mementos, and documents and create a 10-12 minute “movie” of your subject. This movie will include background music as well (that might exemplify the time period)…but not overwhelm the message of the elder.

**Directions for completing the documentary:**

Ask a grandparent, great grandparent, or elder if they would like to help you with your project. Tell them you will be asking them questions about their childhood, memories, and what message they would like to leave. Tell them you will video recording the interview and be creating a movie from this recording and will be making a copy for them as a keepsake afterwards. You would also like to borrow photographs and might go along with what you will talk to them about. Finally, tell them that their stories and photos will be shared with your classmates. Be sure they understand this and agree to this.

There are “interview questions” available as a jumping off point but are not limited to asking and we will talk about interview tips that might be helpful.

Once you have conducted your interview, you will uncover a “theme” or “topic of interest”. That will become the focus of your movie. You will use family photos, audio recordings, movie clips, nature shots (if desired), news articles, etc. that tie in to your theme. You may take the four major areas we’ve covered: personal, social, family, and professional and ask how your elder was able to balance these aspects of their lives into something meaningful throughout his/her life. What did he/she learn about life? If he/she could pick a “symbol” to represent his/her life, what would it be and tell why? Your recording should be no more than 30 minutes worth of material with your subject. You can, however, take supporting shots to “add” to your movie.

Movie Requirements: Sample movie (<http://vimeo.com/5482487> )

1. Title of your work
2. Hook
3. Creative introduction of your elder (name, profession, birthplace)
4. Topics might include:
   1. Any of the topics you intend to research about your elder’s time period (values, religion, family, aging, money, love, marriage, culture, politics, business, education, environment)
   2. Significant event of the elder’s life
   3. Most impressionable memory that determined / shaped their life
   4. Focus on the four areas of their life: personal, social, family, or professional
5. Mapping out your movie to include a beginning, middle, end
6. Ending should include any words of wisdom that the elder would like to impart to young people today.
7. Closing should have credits (music, resources, primary sources), thank you, dedication, etc.

**Part II. RESEARCH**

You will ALSO select a topic for your flyer based on the time period of the elder with an emphasis on one of the following topics below and thoroughly research it. These include:

* Values / beliefs (core values, women, minorities, poor, opportunity, independence, etc.)
* Religion (tolerance, religion and politics, religious freedom, religious expression)
* Family  (parenting, recreation, disciplining, relationships, children)
* Aging / Death (attitudes towards older people, work, care, health, activity, retirement, mobility)
* Money / Economics (jobs, resources, employment, currency, savings, spending, opportunities)
* Love / Marriage (dating, trends)
* Culture (music, arts, sports, food, health)
* Politics / Government (democracy, two party system, elections, voting, freedoms, rights, courts, etc.)
* Business (regulations, ethics, work ethic, production, treatment of workers, worker’s rights, benefits, etc.)
* Education (public schools, charter schools, colleges, universities, school year, technology, etc.)
* Environment (EPA, forests, air, water, etc.)

**Part III. PRESENTATION**

You will be expected to present a five to seven minute presentation about your elder before showing your documentary. This presentation will include information about your elder (how do you know this person, any interesting or unique facts about your elder, how did your interview go, what did you learn, high points) and educate your public about one of the areas you’ve researched.

Tentative Schedule:

October 31st: Getting a commitment and setting up an appointment

Week of November 5-11th: Connect and complete interview with elder. MUST BE DONE BEFORE 11/12th!!!

November 12th-16?-Creation and devleopment of movie

November 19, 20, 26-29: Research on specific aspect of your elder’s time periods.

December 4th-11th: Presentations

<http://www.theeldersfilm.com/>