



Interviewing

Placing Identity
Spring 2018

Intro - Brandon Stanton (*Humans of New York*) Discusses Effective Interviewing



Research. Research. Research.



- Who is this person?
- How can we use their expertise to tell our story?
- Research can help us strategize effective ways to conduct the interview.
 - Use the interview to illuminate the key points that you **KNOW** need to be in your script.

Prepare your questions



- Create a list of questions that are relevant to the topic of the interview.
 - Put some of your lighter questions at the beginning of the interview and the heavy topics towards the middle/back.
- It's good, when you can, to give your list of questions to the person you will be interviewing in order to give them enough time to think about their responses before the interview.

Ask open-ended questions



- When did you move to Chapel Hill?
- Tell me about when you moved to Chapel Hill

Which one is the open-ended question?

Prepare, but be spontaneous



- Even though you have a prepared list of questions, don't stop the natural flow of conversation. If an answer that your interviewee gives you leaves you with a follow-up question, ask it and see where that answer takes you.

Get the interviewee comfortable



- Talk to you subject and warm them up before you interview.
 - It's easier to make someone feel comfortable before the camera ever comes out.
- Remind them that they can repeat themselves or start over any time.

Control your environment (as much as you can)

- Turn off any music or sounds that may interrupt the interview or making editing difficult
 - Direct the scene, it's up to you.
- Move furniture around and set up for proper lighting.
- Establish ROOM TONE record 45 seconds.

Have them repeat your question or their answers if needed



- It's great for editing purposes to have them repeat/summarize the question before they answer it.
 - Basically ask them to answer in a complete sentence.

Allow for pauses at the end of answers

(Breathing room)

- Don't rush to comment after the person answers your question.
- Leaving breathing room after each answer will make editing much easier.

“When you're interviewing someone, you're in control. When you're being interviewed, you think you're in control, but you're not.”

- Barbara Walters

Proper positioning of interviewee

- Position the interviewee at an angle so that they are not staring directly into the camera.
- Leave “looking room” and “headspace.”



Proper positioning of interviewee (cont.)



What makes this a good interview set-up?

Proper positioning of interviewee (cont.)



What about this one? The interviewee is centered in this shot, but what makes it work?

Stay silent



- Stay quiet when the other person is talking. You don't want to hear yourself in the background.
 - Watch out for the “hmmmm”, “Oh right.” Just ask the question, and then keep quiet.
 - It's good to nod, and make facial reactions, just no sound.

Keep track of time



- It is easy to lose track of how long the conversation lasts once it begins, but it's important to not let the interview drag on longer than it needs to be.
- “We’re running out of time. Let’s move on” is the perfect way to redirect the discussion to where YOU want it to go.

Don't stop filming when the interview is “over”



- Especially when you have someone who is nervous and never got quite comfortable with the interview.
 - When you're done with your official questions, say “OK, that's the end of my questions.”
- Make sure the camera continues to roll at this point because often the conversation will continue.
 - Psychologically, the person no longer feels the “pressure” of your interview questions coming one after the next and will loosen up.
- Ask for any final comments from your interviewee.

Person on the Street Interview



- Approach a potential interviewee w/o a camera at first. It helps break the ice.
 - Walking up to a stranger with a camera and mic in hand.
- Being out in the world rather than in a controlled environment gives you the opportunity to have fun with angles and framing.

Humans of NY



Why do you think Brandon chose this angle and framing?