Module 3: Preparing for and Recording Interviews

Rationale: Interviews are pivotal in a documentary video project because they offer firsthand accounts, expert insights, and personal perspectives on the subject matter. They add credibility, depth, and human connection to the narrative, allowing viewers to hear directly from individuals involved or knowledgeable about the explored topic. Interviews also offer opportunities for storytelling, highlighting diverse viewpoints, emotions, and experiences that enrich the documentary's storytelling.

Standards Alignment | Grades 5–12

Michigan English Language Arts

- **SL.5.1–SL.8.1; SL.9-10.1; SL.11-12.1:** Participate in discussions, listen carefully, and build on others' ideas.
- **SL.5.3–SL.8.3; SL.9-10.3; SL.11-12.3:** Analyze and evaluate information presented by a speaker.
- **W.5.8–W.8.8; W.9-10.8; W.11-12.8:** Gather relevant information from sources and assess its usefulness.

Michigan Social Studies

- **P2.4 (Grades 6–8)**: Use multiple sources and perspectives to analyze issues.

ISTE Standards for Students

- **1.3.d – Knowledge Constructor:** Build knowledge by exploring real-world issues in authentic settings.
- **1.7.b – Global Collaborator:** Use collaborative technologies to engage with experts or community members and examine different perspectives.

Connection to Iconic Michigan: When producing documentaries, filmmakers look for experts who can lend their voice to provide credible, informed perspectives on the film's subject. Experts can explain complex topics and validate the film's claims, enhancing the film's overall reliability and educational value for the audience.

Media Literacy Connection: *Which lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented in, or missing from the message?*
What is missing? Consider how certain perspectives or voices might be missing from a particular message. By including (or not including) a certain perspective, has a particular stereotype been reinforced? What is the untold story?

Watch This Short Documentary From *Iconic America - American Crossroads* - https://tinyurl.com/35rk9ksd

- What do you notice about the camera framing for the people who were interviewed?
- Where is the interviewer during the interviews?

- Write an example of a question the interviewer asked one of the people they interviewed.

Practice Activity: Research one of the people interviewed as an expert on American Crossroads. Based on your research, what made them a credible expert on transportation in the United States?

Additional Resources from Student Reporting Lab
1. Evidence and Experts — https://tinyurl.com/4pdhue3n - Builds research skills and the ability to evaluate expert sources and supporting evidence.
2. Recording Oral History — https://tinyurl.com/z7hwucbw - Connects community memory with respectful interviewing and local historical storytelling.

Reflection:
1. What types of writing activities can you include in your classroom to help your students become comfortable asking questions to an expert on a topic for a documentary film?

- Possible Answer: I can include activities like question brainstorming, interview script writing, research-based question development, role-playing interviews, and reflective writing. These activities build confidence and improve the quality of their questions.

2. What are the best kinds of questions to ask to get a detailed response from the person being interviewed?

- Possible Answer: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How questions are the best types of questions to ask because they result in more than a "yes" or "no" answer. They also lend themselves to follow-up questions to get information from the person being interviewed.