INTERVIEW STORY GUIDELINES

Directions

1. By now you should have clearly established the major theme for the project with the profile and the document story. This is not just about the group you have identified, but should focus on some specific theme of this group. In some cases, this theme could have two separate dimensions. But try hard to keep it focused.

2. Review your two stories, especially the document story, to identify key pieces of information you should have but do not. This might be data on your group or a broader context or explanation of some problem. Use your interviews to fill in these gaps.

3. Also use your interviews to supplement information you already have. That's sometimes called "triangulation."

4. Now decide who is most likely to have the information you need. Identify those resources and arrange interviews with them as soon as possible. The main sources of information here should be experts in the field you have chosen. Faculty members at WMU or Kalamazoo College are possibilities, but I want most of your interviews to show you are also looking beyond campus. Look for public or private individuals whose work or training makes them knowledgeable. These experts are critical to giving a broader dimension to your story.

5. You should have a minimum of three interviews as the basis for your story. More is better. You may include other people who are similar to your profile subject. That can be helpful in some stories to show diverse perspectives in your group or simply to tell different stories. But I still want at least three experts. Think of these other profiles as additions to the pool of resources, not replacements for the experts.

6. Clearly the questions you ask are dependent on what you need for your story. But keep in mind that people are most likely to give you broad generalizations that turn out to have little content. Pursue those people for more specific information, data. Ask them if they can remember an example. That kind of information will add more life to your story.

7. Remember to tell them this is a story which could be published in the Western Herald or the Kalamazoo Gazette (or another place if you want to pursue this on your own).