Stacy Torian
LIS 635
PSA Reflection

(NOTE: The name of the interviewee has been changed to protect his privacy.)

I know the work involved with creating videos. I have been a video project manager and an online video discussion facilitator, but never a video technician. I did not know if I could pull off a video all by myself. Fortunately, I did not have much time to dwell in self-doubt - the video was due in a week, so I had to come up with something quickly. My first idea was to address the importance of libraries in bridging the digital divide, but I had trouble figuring out how to make it work visually. Thinking back to my days as an oral history volunteer, I chose to focus on one person's library experiences instead. My audience is black teenage males in low-income neighborhoods. The call to action is "Go to the library - a lot - and let it shape you."

I asked a local teacher, Randall, to be the star of the PSA. I gave him some talking points to review (i.e., childhood library experiences, favorite book, and the importance of libraries to his work) but invited him to come up with his own as well. I also set up a time to interview one of the library managers in the county where I volunteer, in case things did not work out with Randall. An online article on creating PSAs provided useful tips which guided my work:

http://www.thestar.com.my/news/education/2015/05/10/producing-a-psa-video/.

Creating a storyboard outline on paper for a visual end product was exasperating. I spent hours drafting two storyboards (one for the personal story theme and another for the digital divide theme), but both felt incomplete and silly. My resiliency instructor's words came back to me: *When faced with a difficult task, approach it as play.* On Wednesday evening, I stopped stressing and started playing. I downloaded Wondershare Filmora and as well as stock photos and royalty free music. I pulled out my digital camera just to see if I could video anything on it. I could, and, to my surprise, it did not look too bad and the sound was good. I started imagining what I wanted the video to be like, hearing the voices in my head. I shifted the stills around with the audio until I had a 30-second clip. It was awful, but it was a start, and it gave me confidence that I could finish the project.

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       I did not have the guts to wing it all with my digital camera on this one, so I broke down and bought a camcorder after work on Wednesday. The camcorder was missing a memory card, so I bought one Thursday night. I practiced using the camcorder at home on Thursday night so that I would be ready to film the next morning.

       As with the previous projects, keeping the moving parts moving was super difficult while working a full-time job. I took practically the whole day off on Friday to videotape a library manager in Mebane (in the morning) and Randall (in the afternoon). The filming in Mebane went smoothly, considering my inexperience. I got some good shots of the books and one of a library staff member at the computer. Later that day, I filmed Randall outside. Fortunately, it was sunny. Unfortunately, it was noisy as heck with all the cars. I tried editing out the car noise on Wondershare Filmora with limited success. I think the end result is still quite audible.

       Randall was an incredibly cooperative subject. I tried to minimize his discomfort by not keeping him out in the sun too much, though he insisted the heat did not bother him. I had meant to film him for about 30 minutes but ended up filming him for an hour. I became overwhelmed when thinking about the sheer volume of editing I would have to do to get it down to three minutes.

       Even though I had a storyboard plan, the plan changed drastically after I shot my footage. I looked through it and found the clips that I thought would interest people. I considered using statistics to illustrate Randall's points, but they did not mesh with the personal-story approach.

       On Friday night, I tweaked the 30-second clip I had done on Wednesday and added about four minutes of Randall speaking. I worked at a snail's pace due to my limited technical knowledge but enjoyed myself. I figured out how to cut footage and detach audio from video. I learned how to show still photos while retaining the sound of Randall's voice. I replaced the stock images I had with ones that would complement the audio. By 2:30 am on Saturday, I knew I had something I could work with. During the day on Saturday, I tweaked the video even more, experimenting with transition

effects, redoing the opening shots, and finetuning the visuals. By midnight on Saturday, I had produced a video that I enjoyed watching and that I hope others will enjoy as well.

The video I ended up with is quite different from the one I had envisioned. Rather than staying stuck in a plan, I let Randall's story guide me. In retrospect, I should have interviewed Randall before taking pictures. Most of my photos did not work well with his story, so I ended up using several stock photos. I shot all the video footage myself and created the Wordle with an online Wordle generator.

I learned two important technical lessons from this project: import your video file before editing it and watch out for background noise. I also learned how important it is to stay true to your passion when making videos. When I told a local librarian that I wanted to do a video on the digital divide, she dismissed my idea and advised me to do something else. Had I gone the route she suggested, the video might not have turned out as good. Instead, I did what I was passionate about while staying open to experimentation and improvisation.