

**Oral History
Capturing Quarantine
Spring 2020
Final Reflection**

NAME: Christen Weeden

DATE: 5/16/20

1. How did you feel when you read the email notifying students the oral history project would change from *Interfaith Chicago* to *Capturing Quarantine* due to the transition to remote learning?

I was genuinely excited when the topic changed. I wasn't really looking forward to the CRLMC project. I was not against the topic, but it wasn't a topic that piqued my interest. I was very excited and a lot less nervous when we switched topics. I also feel that I was less nervous because I knew I would get answers when doing the pre-interview work. I knew that we were all doing this, so my narrator would be more cooperative and excited than my previous narrator was.

2. What were your initial thoughts about participating in an oral history project documenting your classes' experience during the first months of the global pandemic?

I thought it was a great idea. I was excited to learn about the experiences of people who have very similar situations to me. When I first found out that we would be interviewing each other, I was nervous about what I would talk about as a narrator.

3. How do you feel about the project now?

I loved the project. I ended up being more nervous to be an interviewer than a narrator, which was the opposite of my initial reaction. I really loved getting to tell my story and also to be able to document Amelia's story.

4. As an interviewer:

- a. How did you prepare for the interview?

I prepared by keeping a long list of interview questions. I decided not to edit my questions down because I wanted to have options for any way the conversation turned. I also tried not to prepare too much as I knew that would make me more nervous. I just tried to reflect on my previous conversations with Amelia.

- b. What was it like to interview a classmate?

It was really fun to interview a classmate. Especially because Amelia lives one town over from me. It was really interesting because we have a lot in

common. I struggled with wanting to respond to her answers. I had to hold myself back from starting a conversation.

- c. How did you feel after the interview?

I felt like I was very awkward in the interview because I was trying not to start a conversation. I felt like I came off as being very short and just moving on to the next question. I also asked a question in the middle of the interview that made no sense in the context because I got nervous and just picked a question.

- d. What is the most important thing you learned as an interviewer?

I learned to slow down and listen. Amelia was very good at giving me full answers, with which I would ask my next question. I also learned to take a step back and let them tell their story the way they want to.

- e. What advice would you give to future interviewers?

I would say to listen for the context clues and the common themes. These are often things they want to talk about that they will not just come right out and say.

5. As a narrator:

- a. How did you prepare to be interviewed?

I did not prepare at all. I knew that if I had prepared answers that I would have fumbled over my words a lot. After being an interviewer, I felt calm and ready to be a narrator.

- b. Describe your experience being interviewed.

It was really fun. La-Sheba was prepared with a lot of questions because we learned in our 2-minute interview that I do not give long answers. I really enjoyed getting to tell my story.

- c. How did you feel after the interview ended?

I felt like I could have helped La-Sheba a little more and given longer answers so that she did not have to ask as many questions. I felt that I was more relaxed and less awkward than I was as an interviewer.

- d. What would you tell someone who is hesitant to be interviewed?

It's not a big deal. You can answer the questions with as much or as little detail as you want. It is important to just be yourself and tell your story how you want to tell it.

6. (OPTIONAL) Questions about narrators' private lives and personal relationships were not included in the formal interview, how do you feel about this?

I feel that they are not essential as some people don't want to share that information, but I do feel that they can be very important in learning about a person's life.

- a. How has your gender, sexuality, race, and/or ethnicity affected your experience during the global pandemic?

I genuinely don't think it has. I am very privileged. I was also fortunate enough to have worked my way up in my job to put myself in a position to be okay financially and to qualify for unemployment. I also feel that I am fortunate to work for the company that I do because they were so quick to approve unemployment.

- b. Exploring and developing new relationships is an important part of the undergraduate experience, how has this aspect of your life been affected?

I do really miss my friends from school and I also miss collaborating with people in the fashion department. I don't feel that I have been as creative lately because I don't have someone in my field to bounce ideas off of at the moment.

- c. How are you dealing with the absence of physical contact?

I have not been affected by this. I personally live with my boyfriend, so relationships and dating have not been a problem for me either.

7. Is there anything else you would like to include?

Thank you for this class! I personally had no idea when I signed up for an oral history class that I would be interviewing a classmate and also being interviewed by another classmate. I really enjoyed the class and I learned so much this semester.