

An essay consisting of 500-750 words is required that describes your experience in using the information resources and library services. Explain your research strategy and how you used and evaluated the resources found. The following questions should be addressed in your essay. If one or more of the questions are not applicable, please explain why.

- How did you begin your research? Explain how you came up with your research query/topic.
- How did you discover your sources? Which library or other information sources did you use? Explain particular techniques or strategies that you used while searching and discovering information.
- Did you seek assistance from a librarian, a professor, or someone else? If so, how this interaction impacted your research process? Was there anyone in particular who gave you the inspiration to turn your research in a different direction?
- How did you select and evaluate the sources you found? Explain which criteria you used for selecting sources.
- What did you learn during the research process that will help further your academic or professional career?

In spring 2010, I was assigned a research project for my Applied Animal Physiology course. Within the first few weeks of class, my professor had already posted a list of approximately eighty approved topics for students to choose from. At the time, I hadn't learned anything about any of the topics and so I had no idea as to which topic I should choose. However, after an hour of mulling over my options, I finally decided to choose "exocytosis of lung surfactants." While I didn't know exactly what this topic entailed, I noticed that it had to do with respiration and because I have suffered from upper respiratory allergies my entire life, I hoped thought that maybe I might find the research interesting and helpful to me at the same time.

I began my research first by opening up the required Principles of Animal Physiology textbook and I was surprised to find a few pages relating to my subject. This reading helped to provide me with basic information about lung surfactants, physics of respiration, and the lung environment in general. After acquiring a basic understanding of the terminology I decided to begin my search online. The first online source I went to was Wikipedia. While I understand it is not a peer reviewed source, it does however provide the reader with a list of peer reviewed references that are cited within the article. In addition, the article in Wikipedia on "pulmonary surfactants" helped to provide me with a variety of key scientific terms that I could use to further narrow my search on the library database.

Having learned the basics about surfactants, I began my research through the library catalog. For me, I always like to start my research the old fashion way by looking for books. I enjoy going into the library and sitting on the floor for hours with a multitude of books open all around me. I realize however also that in science, it may be very dangerous to do research using books because science is rapidly changing and by the time a book is published, it is already 5 years outdated. Thus, I was careful while researching the books, making sure to note dates of publication and areas in research that scientists were still uncertain about. There was one book in particular, Lung surfactants: basic science and clinical applications, by Robert H. Notter

that was extremely useful in my preliminary research because it had full chapters devoted to factors influencing exocytosis of lung surfactants.

Next, I continued my research process by searching through the library's online research port. I wasn't quite sure exactly where to start so I went to the information desk to ask a librarian for help. The librarian recommended I try EBSCOhost Medline, PubMed, and Google Scholar to start and they all turned out to be quite helpful. The librarian also showed me how I could narrow down my search to find only peer reviewed sources published within the past 10 years. Although I had used online databases previously, I had no idea there was an option to narrow down my search using these specific parameters. This bit of information made it much easier to evaluate all my sources and confirm them as reliable and up-to-date. It also gave me a smaller number of results thus making it easier for me to sort through the pages and pages of relevant articles.

This experience has greatly changed the way I conduct research for my both my current and future coursework. This was and has been the largest research project I have ever completed in my college career and going through the process has really taught me most importantly how important it is to stay organized. Maintaining organization was important throughout every step of the process; it was important in searching for sources, taking and compiling notes, and writing the final research paper. Secondly, I learned how valuable it is to ask a librarian for help in the beginning of the research process. In the past, I have waited until I am absolutely frustrated with the lack of research I have found and then I am always surprised at how easily librarians are able to find the exact information I need. By learning research techniques from the librarians I am hopeful that my research strategies will continue to develop and become refined so that one day I am just as efficient at research as they are.