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February 15, 2012

Essay

This research paper was a culmination of multiple assignments for English101 in the Fall 2011 semester. All of the assignments from this semester challenged my conventional research techniques. Traditionally I looked for the quickest and easiest ways to find information, even if it was not the most effective method. My instructor for English101, quickly proved to out entire class that this was not the most successful method.

Early in the semester we spent a class period in the library. Not only was I overwhelmed by the collection in the library, but the resources available. Soon after my session in the library, I learned how much more effective library based research tools were to completing multi faceted assignments. As a freshman at this university, I feel that the "introduction to the library" sessions are vital, because without this time, I likely would not have felt comfortable using the resources available.

Much of the research I did for this project was based off of print media. The online catalog was incredibly helpful in locating books that were relevant to my topic. Through this method, I was drawn to books both new and old, with each providing unique but helpful material for my paper. I simply typed in words related to my topic, and multiple books came up that helped me. I researched them further through the online catalog, and was exposed to important information including publication date, and a synopsis of the book as a whole.

In addition to using print media, I also used Research Port to direct me to different databases, journals, articles, and other medias. This resource brought to my attention my most valuable source, the “No Child Left Behind Act,” which was a vital piece in supporting my paper. Again, typing in important keywords directed me to a majority of my sources and the Research Port was very impressive in locating beneficial sources.

Not only did Research Port help me find sources, but it also directed me towards scholarly articles on my topic of research. Through these articles, not only was I able to learn more information, but I also used their bibliographies to find additional sources. Some of the sources that I located through using other scholarly articles proved to be most beneficial in developing the argument made in my research paper.

The staff in the library was also incredibly helpful in assisting me as I navigated myself around the many floors. The “ask us 24/7” link came in very handy during the late hours of the night when I worked on my research project. I was having difficulty recovering a source I had found previously on Research Port and this link was crucial in helping me recover it. The accessibility of the library is tremendous, and after completing this research paper, I feel as though I do not necessarily have to be physically in the library to reap its benefits.

My work on this research project and extensive use of the library’s resources has been very encouraging for my future endeavors. I now feel very comfortable in the library and using the resources at home and look forward to future research with the University of Maryland libraries.