

When initially being introduced to the final research paper required for my Ethnology of Immigrant Life course, the ten-page minimum seemed daunting and almost unachievable. However, once I found a topic I was deeply passionate about, my fear became based on whether I was going to be able to fit my findings within the page limit. My research for the paper started throughout the course with the collection of primary sources. As part of the course, we were given the responsibility to find a local organization that worked with the immigrant community. I found the Latin American Youth Center located in Riverdale, Maryland. I specifically worked with the Youth Empowered Towards Success (YETS) gang prevention program which worked with students in High Point High School in Beltsville, Maryland and Northwestern High School in Hyattsville, Maryland. Visiting with my supervisor, Gabriela Gonzalez, and the students three times a week I completed a series of fieldnotes based on my first-hand observations. From these fieldnotes, I was able to identify several themes and keywords that I then used to explore secondary sources. Some of the most occurring themes included language, economic status, family involvement, school environment, and perception of self, which gave me the tools and keywords to research these topics further.

Through my service learning with the Latin American Youth Center, I observed students within the program as well as the overall community surrounding the students. I also conducted several interviews with faculty from both schools and workers at the Latin American Youth Center in order to solidify my findings and own observations that I recorded through my fieldnotes. This was an introduction to collecting research from human participants rather than books or journals. In evaluating the content, I was using in my paper I had to use the strategy of establishing a strong foundation of my own observations with conversations from other individuals who had an even closer look at the program. I also was sure to note in my paper the importance of using primary sources when surmising the narrative of immigrants as their stories are a spectrum of narratives, not just a collective story. After establishing strong observational findings, coding my fieldnotes into themes and keywords, I was then able to use and explore the many research materials the library has to offer. Some of the ways in which I found the majority of my online sources was through the ANTH492 library guide which helped facilitate the best databases for the content of the class's papers. I was also able to narrow my search through research port, library database, and journal finder. In each of these searches I ensured to use the most pertinent databases and keep my search terms as concise and as possible to get the most relevant results. The part of the research process I enjoyed the most was the use of World Cat and classic catalog to find books related to my topics. In the process of reading through the physical material, I learned much more about my topic that I had set out and as a result of my interest and passion for my topic this part of the research experience I got the most out of.

One of the days for my Ethnology of Immigrant Life course included a library research day which was conducted by specialist Patricia Herron. After her presentation, I had several conversations with her which helped guide me in the right direction in terms of developing my main research terms and finding the databases which would produce the most applicable results for my service learning. My professor for the course, Dr. Freidenburg played a large role in the development of sources for my paper. I spent several office hours with her going over the direction of the paper's topic and thesis which then led to the assistance she provided in lending

me several books and journal articles she thought would be helpful for my topic. These discussions with Patricia Herron and Dr. Freidenburg played a huge role in the development of keywords for the topic as well as finding sources that were appropriate for the paper.

When searching through varying sources, it was a bit difficult to not be overwhelmed with information and materials. Fortunately, after Patricia Herron's presentation, I was able to get a much more succinct way in narrowing down my research material. Through the majority of databases I used, I was able to narrow down articles by the criteria that it "peer-reviewed" to ensure it had the most credibility. Furthermore, once I found an article or book I would examine the purpose and the audience of the author in order to get an idea of the intended use of the material. This helped ensure I was consistent in using academic and professional materials. I also made sure to examine the sources and citations gathered by the authors and the year of the article or book's publication date to establish the author's reliability and, therefore, the sources authority. Another key component I was aware of when evaluating sources was to check for any bias within the paper or book in order to avoid using materials in which the authors were not reliable.

The research skills I took away from collecting the sources for this paper are immeasurable in terms of preparing me for my future academic and professional career. This research paper and the topic were something I was deeply passionate about and as a result, when researching and sorting through the materials, I thoroughly enjoyed learning every aspect of it, even if it was not included in my paper. This process showed the immense resources the library has to offer in order to give students the opportunity to complete the most comprehensive research. Through this process, I found a new found enjoyment of research, something I had previously considered monotonous, which has prompted me to explore it further as I am currently a Research Assistant at the university's Center for American Politics and Citizenship.

While I had an overall great experience in completing my research using the University of Maryland libraries' tools, there are some things I wish I had explored further. My discussions with Patricia Herron really were instrumental in helping tie my topics and ideas together to start the research process. The librarians and specialists at the University of Maryland libraries are a key resource in aiding students with their research. Making their roles more publicized to students would be a great way for students to get the most out of their research experiences.