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Finding Facts to Fuel My Inspiration

When I was a little kid, I thought that there was nothing in the world that could hurt me. I believed without a doubt that people were good, love thrived above any other emotion and everything that happened was fair. Then my parents got divorced, and all of that changed. Because my mother was in the military, she was considered to be in a more stable financial situation than my father who had just decided to become a graphic designer. In the end, my father received custody of me and my mother received custody of my younger sister. As I grew up and looked at the divorce papers more closely on my own, I found out that even though my mother was considered to have a more stable job, my father had to pay her more than she paid him each month for my sister and my child support. That got me thinking about why that might be and if gender role bias played a role in this or any other family court cases.

In this essay, I will specify the resources I utilized to help me investigate this thought and the criteria I used for evaluating the sources in my final research project. Following that, I will discuss what I learned during my experience writing and reflect back on this experience to provide insight and suggestions on what the library can do to improve its bank of online sources.

Google Scholar was a helpful tool in finding relevant and applicable information. Because most of the papers used other sources to back up their claims and research, one paper found on Google Scholars could also offer me a plethora of other relatable data to analyze and connect to my topic. The staff at Mckeldin were also extremely helpful in using the library's website and databases such as WorldCat and CQ Researcher. These tools helped me to narrow

my search topic and locate more specific cases and details that helped build a stable argument. In evaluating each of my sources, I made sure the articles I was including in my research were both relevant and peer-reviewed.

My English professor, Konstantinos Pozoukidis, was an excellent resource to go to in the construction process of my research project. He provided expertise on which articles would provide information that would enhance the flow and organization of my paper, thus making for a better and stronger argument. I maintained the path I'd chosen to take at the beginning of my research, but consulting with my instructor helped me produce the cleanest and most comprehensive work that I could have.

As mentioned and in addition to the criteria for evaluating sources that I touched on briefly in the beginning of this essay, looking for relevancy, peer-review and recognition as a scholarly article were three things that I paid attention to. Once this criterion was met in order to provide for the most accurate information, I began to look for counter-arguments to my claim in order to make sure my own argument was sound and so I was able to use the evidence I found beforehand to refute it.

I learned two things during this research project that I hope to use to further my academic career: be organized and be concise. Writing a research paper is a lot like drawing a map. In order for the reader to reach the same conclusion that you did, you need to explain everything. There needs to be a plan that lays out and organizes all of what you plan to say before you say it, so your reader can be prepared to follow you, and you need to speak in a simple way that can be easily understood. As someone interested in journalism, this is a skill that I will also take with me into my professional career.

Reflecting back on my experience, I think the library did a good job of providing ample resources in the form of both people that could provide you with one-on-one support and online resources accessible for individual consultation. If I had the opportunity to begin my research again, I would expand my results, browsing material that may explore topics related to but outside of my direct focus. This would have provided me with concepts I could work into my research that I may not have previously considered incorporating beforehand. Something the library should consider adding to their online browser is a list of counter-argument articles. If that had been an option in the search specifications, to show me articles that contradicted what I was trying to say, it would have been easier to focus my supporting evidence on points that generated the greatest controversy.