

The library was extremely valuable as it played a big role in the process of writing and developing my thesis for the Honors Program. The first step I took was to utilize the various research databases to search and brainstorm for interesting topics when I first began my thesis. With some helpful tips from my mentor, I used the databases to search for more detailed information and research articles pertaining to various topics in the area of Exercise Science and Sport. The library groups the databases according to subject, which made my search much easier since I was using databases that correlated with the same subject area. Many of the databases allowed me to search by keywords or subject which allowed me to find specific articles. It also helped me to come to the realization that certain topics did not have as much published literature, which would only make a particular topic even more challenging to write and develop my thesis.

I finally decided to examine the “Talk Test” which is a simple way to determine at what level of intensity an individual is exercising at. I began to really make use of all the resources the library had to offer. All of the databases listed under “Exercise Science and Sport” were extremely helpful especially Cinahl, Medline/Pub-Med, and Pro-Quest. It was so easy to locate these helpful databases since all were categorized by subject. I was able to save and print out all the research articles and published literature on the topic that was accessible electronically. The program “Ref-Works” was a huge help which allowed me to import the articles I found and save the necessary info I would need for citing references and generating a References page in my thesis. This was very useful towards the end of the paper since I had so many research articles and it allowed me to keep track of them. I only discovered the Ref-Works program after my Research Methods class attended an informational session directed by a library staff person at the request of my professor. It was such a beneficial experience which made me more aware of the resources our library had to offer. I was not expecting this since I went in with the notion that I am a senior and just “knew it all”. I quickly came to see that I had more to learn about the library’s resources which would make my life easier and alleviate some of the stress of writing a thesis.

Many of the articles I came across were available electronically online, but many were also only available in print. I was able to save the info needed to locate the articles in the library and obtain the hard copy, from which I made photocopies. Many of my older articles (2000-2008) were located in the bound periodicals section located on the first floor of the library. It was easy to find these articles as long as I had the name of the journal along with the volume and issue number. Some of the more recent articles were found in the periodical section on the second floor in their original journal. Again, I was able to use the name of the journal, volume number, and issue number to locate these articles and make a photocopy. I was aware of the interlibrary loan option that I had, but never had to use it since Weinberg had all the necessary articles I needed.

The library was also extremely helpful in allowing me to locate past honors thesis from previous students. The Archives and Special Collections allowed me to obtain the hard copies or manuscripts of two exercise science students who completed their honors thesis a few years

prior. This was so worthwhile since I was able to use their research as a guideline for developing and writing my own thesis. I later realized that their works were also available electronically which made them so much more accessible especially while writing my thesis. I could easily refer to them for a guideline of how to structure and format my writing. The research guides for exercise science and sport were also extremely helpful in locating other sources that would be particularly valuable. I was initially surprised by how simple it was to locate and obtain so many research articles that helped to support my thesis. I had expected it to be more difficult and was pleasantly surprised by the wonderful resources offered through the library and its helpful staff that were able to answer all of my questions.

I have had to utilize library resources to obtain journal articles for other classes, but I never fully understood the research process until I began working on my thesis. I realize that the library research databases are not as daunting as they first appear and began to really understand how to best utilize a search. For example, setting limits or using specific phrases really helped to narrow down beneficial articles. Ref-Works made it much easier to keep track of the articles I found so I could later return to them to sort out the useful ones. I did keep my own log of all the articles I used and info needed for their citations in the case that I need to locate them a second time. If possible, I always tried to obtain a hard copy or photocopy of the article which I could have in my possession and keep a file of all the articles used to refer back to.

Upon completing my thesis, I can reflect upon my experience and honestly say I have learned so much about the research process and the large effort that goes into formulating, carrying out, and writing a thesis. I have a deeper respect and appreciation for the library and all the resources it has provided me throughout this process. I grasp the notion that it is a privilege to attend a school that provides its students with the resources and potential to succeed. I am forever grateful to the resources provided by the Weinberg Library which allowed me to complete my thesis and assisted me in each step in the process. I will make the most of all the lessons I have learned about research projects as I enter graduate school. I have no doubt I will be utilizing the library's resources for another three years as I work towards my doctorate of physical therapy.