

My process of doing academic research has changed significantly since the beginning of the semester by becoming more thorough and precise. In the beginning of the semester, I had never done academic research like this where real people are involved and you need to be certified. However, by getting certified I learned how to be a good, ethical, and respectful researcher to help prevent biased, negative items, and double-barreled questions. I have also learned in my time researching this semester that research is not easy, and you can plan all you want but something will always go wrong. Learning this has allowed me to become a better researcher because it allowed me to strengthen my problem-solving skills especially when something doesn't go as planned which I can use in future research and in life. Over this semester I also utilized the new skills and information I learned about research in my other classes when doing research and interviewing people. This allowed me to help my partners in those classes to avoid any biases and create questions most relevant to our research.

When evaluating and selecting sources for my research assignment I looked for sources that were relevant or had similar research to my research topic. I wanted to find sources that could help and guide me in my research, so I narrowed it down to the topics of Head Start, family involvement, and low-income families. Many sources came up with topics on Head Start but I narrowed it down to a select few by what kind of research they conducted. Instead of using research on how much funding the program got and used I focused more on the families at Head Start as well as what resources they offered those families. This is similar to the topic of family involvement and low-income families. I focused more on sources that highlighted more family involvement as well as sources that talked about low-income families rather than middle- and upper-class families. I chose not to use those because it was not directly relevant to my research and wouldn't have helped support my topic choice. When submitting my final annotated

bibliography, I thought it best to leave the sources I had and not add or take any away. I chose to do this because I felt the sources I had correctly and accurately benefited my research as well as my paper.

When doing research over the course of this semester I encountered challenges when it came to the Qualitative and Quantitative data. These areas caused a struggle because there were very limited responses to the surveys, which gave me little data to work with. However, I overcame this challenge by using data from past semesters research to help give me more data to work with, allowing to better understand the responses and data. After the research I have conducted this semester, I feel extremely more confident in myself as well as my research skills. Coming into this class I was nervous as I had never done real research before, and I had no idea what to expect. However, after spending a semester creating survey questions, researching past data and studies, as well as problem solving in my own research, I feel more capable of doing research. My perception of research has also changed after doing it myself. Before researching I thought of it as easy and pretty straightforward but instead, I found that it's not easy and most the time things don't go the way you want or had intended. For example, the low response rate and therefore having to problem solve to have more data to analyze. However, these challenges I have faced over the course of this research have allowed me to think like a researcher. To think like a researcher is to understand things aren't always going to go as planned or work out like you want. Your data might not even support your argument. Being a researcher however, you have to be persistent and curious allowing your mind to problem solve and do the best you can with the data you receive.