

Reflective Essay – Dr. John Archer Library Award

Mary Chipanshi introduced me to the Archer Library and its services via my INHS 100 class. She discussed and demonstrated how to use Quick Find to find useful research. I planned to write about the health concerns of Aboriginals. When I typed in the keywords, such as “Health” and “Aboriginal” into Quick Find, I got more than 51,000 results. This proved to be too broad a topic so she advised us to break it down and focus on smaller topics. That is how I decided on a more specific research topic of the prevalence of diabetes within the Aboriginal community.

Approaching a research project and the library’s resources were daunting at first. However, a faculty of kinesiology librarian who knew what kinesiology professors looked for was a great support to have. I would have to say that faculty librarians are one of the most untapped resources at the Archer Library because they have so much information and help to offer. The librarians at the front desk were always a significant area of assistance in finding library material and information on citations, navigating Quick Find and generally brightening up the day; I believe most of them know my face by heart due to the amount of help I had asked from them!

Other library services like the Quick Find database and the library inventory were fundamental as well. The Quick Find resource was the center of my research for finding the specific information about the prevalence of diabetes in the Aboriginal community. Using Quick Find helped in constructing the majority of my essay while book resources offered more additional background information and broadened my understanding of the journal articles I found on Quick Find. From Mary’s in class lecture, I was introduced to Quick Find and the LibGuides that taught strategies to find relevant information on Quick Find – for example, explaining how to use “AND” and “OR” and what keywords to use. Another Quick Find feature that I found useful was the pinning features that saved resources to your account for later.

For my research topic, I needed to express pre-colonial medical conditions in the Aboriginal populations and current conditions. To find this specific material from the 1600s-1800s proved to be difficult. I wanted to find a resource that had the records of the historic diabetic information and this is when I sought the help of the librarian. We searched by the subject of Indigenous Studies and a number of databases came up that widely covered the history of the Aboriginal people. Although the sources were too wide for my topic, I was still able to find areas of information for other parts of my essay. I was afraid of not finding enough information at first but quickly realized that the library’s resources are very helpful in finding all the necessary information and then some.

I still have a way to go in terms of being a better researcher, but by opening up to the library and the resources it has, I feel more comfortable approaching research projects and starting them early.