

BERNICE ANTOINE

LIBRARY RESEARCH PAPER

Coming from a developing country, the research process was intimidating to me. I thought research was relegated to academic scholars that spent years refining their knowledge on specialty topics. However, I understood the importance of data in building a strong foundation to solve the social issues the Caribbean continues to grapple with and to close the “implementation gap” of policies. This is why I always dreamed of becoming a researcher in the future. I did not know this was something “everyday undergraduate students” could have engaged in. However, the Theodore Hesburgh Library changed that paradigm of thinking for me by empowering me with the resources and perspectives to start my research journey.

My research process started with watching Father Ted’s documentary, “Hesburgh”, through which I was inspired to imbue everything I do at Notre Dame and beyond with the principles of justice. As such, when I was assigned to research a topic, I chose to research ultra-processed foods given that I knew many people can relate to it.

While I felt confident about my research topic, I struggled to develop research questions. That’s where my Writing and Rhetoric Library Workshop with Ms. Leslie Morgan was extremely helpful. She taught our class how to synthesize research questions and appropriately use search engines with the aid of Boolean operators. She empowered me to refine my research questions and thus allowed me to broaden my research topic. This

ensured that not only I would benefit from my findings, but there would be a collective benefit for society. Because of this, I settled on researching “Ultra-processed foods through an Intersectional Lens” to provide persons with a theoretical framework to understand food justice.

Armed with my research topic and questions, I started my research, however, I soon recognized that it was missing a key element: nuisance. In consultation with Ms. Leslie Morgan, I learnt that research is about adding your voice to a conversation, and also acknowledging varying perspectives. That is why search engines like OneSearch, Google Scholar and Access World News Research Collection were extremely useful to garner different views. For example, I used Kanopy to source a documentary on the relationship between ultra-processed foods and animal abuse. The impact of these search engines are unquestionable, not only was I able to add breath to my research by incorporating multiple perspectives from underprivileged persons to nutritionists, but I was also able to use various mediums to facilitate a conversation between my different sources. At the end of my research, I had a well-balanced paper where each side of the argument was equally represented.

Representation is something important to me, especially as an international student from the Caribbean. Through my work with the Navari Family for Digital Scholarship and the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, I learnt how to center underrepresented, underprivileged voices in my research. Albeit, I worked with them to help develop a virtual reality headset for Black Women, and not directly for this research essay, I applied the

principles of “design justice” I learnt to my research. The result is an inquiry essay that acknowledges the invisible forces that drive underprivileged persons to eat ultra-processed foods, despite its correlation with negative health implications. The Navari Family for Digital Scholarship taught me the importance of adding layers to my research so that readers can receive a more in depth understanding. This is exactly what I achieved by highlighting the impact of redlining and the food apartheid on underprivileged families. I am grateful for my experience with the Navari Family for Digital Scholarship because the design justice process I learnt through them is something I am committed to using as a budding researcher.

In addition to the aforementioned benefits I received from the Theodore Hesburgh Library, I was also able to overcome my accessibility challenges using the library’s resources. Unfortunately, I was unable to use my laptop to its full extent this semester. Nevertheless, I was still motivated to complete my research on ultra-processed foods, and so the Theodore Hesburgh Library 24 hour availability on weekdays, reading rooms and desktop computers allowed me the opportunity to fully immerse myself in the research process. To add, the culture of the library itself, from librarians enthusiastic to assist me with my burning questions, to students engrossing themselves in their work, encouraged me to persevere in light of my accessibility challenges.

Another way the Theodore Hesburgh Library allowed me to improve my research was through their subscription to New York Times. Through the New York Times, I was emailed interesting articles, while it did not always pertain to ultra-processed foods, I

referred these articles to my classmates based on their research interests. This eventually led to a collaboration between my classmates and I, where we sent each other articles related to our individual research. This process was streamlined by our Writing and Rhetoric professor, Dr. Whitney James. This feedback process, which was facilitated by the Theodore Hesburgh Library's subscription to New York Times, proved invaluable as I was able to ensure my ideas were being communicated effectively. Another source of invaluable feedback was the Writing Center of which I had several appointments with. Feedback is perhaps the most important step of the research process and a constant reminder of the purpose of research: to benefit society.

The Theodore Hesburgh Library is more than a building, it is an embodiment of our commitment to justice through discourse, an encapsulation of a Father Ted's passion for inquiry and to me personally, a home away from home as I was able to access information about my own country, Trinidad and Tobago. It is with great pride that I walk into the doors of the Theodore Hesburgh Library, knowing that I will be taken to a higher level of scholarly engagement. As a girl from a developing country, with many different perspectives to add to the conversation, I am grateful for the vast intellectual resources the library empowers students with.

