

As a student in the M.Ed. higher education leadership program at Mercer University, my area of interest is in assisting international students, particularly those wanting to study abroad. My professor invited a Mercer reference librarian to our class to provide some tips on getting started on our topic of choice for the end of term paper. After an initial research of the literature of my topic of intercultural sensitivity development of students in study abroad, I chose to narrow the topic to compare the instruments used to measure the intercultural sensitivity of those students.

To ensure relevancy, my sources had to be of empirical research published within the last ten years. I wanted to provide information from different venues of higher education for comparison: state colleges and universities, private institutions, and community colleges. To find these articles, I searched on the library databases ProQuest and ERIC (EBSCO). Though most of my sources were published between 2003 and 2009, my professor expressed an interest in having a more recent article included in my literature review paper. Through the use of Mercer's Interlibrary Loan, I obtained a copy of an article published only a year prior. This article also satisfied the community college prospective I had been searching for.

Because my literature review had to compare and synthesize various articles, I created a system to help refine an outline. I used EndNoteWeb and printed out the list of references of the articles being used. I cut the list's citations individually and taped them to the horizontal left edge of the articles (printed for the use of private study and research). With this "quick ref" I could recognize and organize the articles visually and move them around if needed. My articles were grouped according to the instrument the study used to measure, and then by the institution type.

Despite being away from academia for almost five years, I fell back into study and research habits well. I made use of the library's computers and private study rooms to give myself an environment conducive to study. Occasionally I would find an article that, though I found interesting and relevant to my field, did not apply to my topic. It was challenging to set the article aside for later perusal and refocus on my paper. The only difficulty in creating the literature review was a missing page from the article I requested through interlibrary loan. The loan coordinator provided most of the article on time and supplied the missing page while I was finalizing my draft, providing deeper insight into the outcomes of the research.

I enjoyed the process of creating something pulled from a lot of sources to make my literature review. I will further explore the topic of intercultural sensitivity in study abroad students in my Capstone project later this year. Furthermore, as a higher education professional in the field of study abroad, I could perform my own research on the topic and use the tools I identified with my literature review