

The research paper was one of the most difficult assignments I have ever done. When it was first discussed in class, I was anxious as writing has never been one of my strong suits. English, in general, is one of the many things I fear the most, due to the fact that I am not fluent and confident with speaking or writing it. Regardless, this essay will mainly answer 3 of the questions provided by Dr. Bunts-Anderson that I chose to respond on. The three questions relates to how I felt with the research topic I chose, adjustments of what I could've done better to improve the quality of my paper by stating the methods I used, and how my academic writing improved after writing this research paper.

First of all, finding the research topic for my research paper was difficult. Our topic had to be interesting to share, interesting for the instructor and for the researcher, of course. I figured my topic after 3-4 weeks of being in the class and I thought that it would be fun and manageable for me to write and research. If I had the chance to work on it further, I definitely would. In today's society, most of us use modern medicine to cure ourselves and we tend to pay little or no attention to the traditional medicinal plants that were used by our elders. This is the reason why I chose this topic. I was interested to learn more about the importance of readily available medicinal resources and medical alternatives that grow on our island, Saipan. In addition, I am happy that I chose this topic because it has a great amount of information that was obtainable from academic articles and newspaper articles found online and a book with lots of information from different traditional healers in the CNMI.

For my second question, what I have about the outcome of my research paper is asked. The first method I used to collect information is by distributing a survey. Based on the questions on my survey, I received vague answers in the form of one word answers and short answers that made it difficult for me to gain ample amount of data in the progress of the research paper. What I could've done better was to redesign the questions for the survey recipients to elaborate more on their answers; provide a more detailed answer. With an improvement like that, it would change the overall of my paper and I would have much more detailed information gathered from my survey.

Subsequently, the second method I used was to send letters to off-island and on-island experts. In this case, I have waited for weeks to receive a response from the experts. Luckily, I have received one response from a specialist in Canada. She provided very detailed answers from the 3 questions I have given about medicinal plants. What I could've done better was find more experts, so I would've been able to receive more than just one response. The third method was to conduct short-informal interviews within the community with a local medicinal plant specialist. I have only conducted an interview with one person because most of them weren't responding to my invitations and/or I wasn't able to contact them. Nevertheless, the person I interviewed was able to share his experiences, had vast knowledge and skills in making medicines out of traditional medicinal plant. Overall, it was a great experience with writing this research paper in spite of all the challenges I've had.

Lastly, the third question I have chosen is how my academic writing improved after writing the research paper. Honestly, my personal development grammatically has immensely improved due to an increased range in vocabulary. I was able to learn new words that I never knew before or have never heard of. In terms of essay writing, I think I still need some work on it and learn more about the basics of essay writing. Writing this research paper was stressful and fun at the same time. Working with limited time due to the fact that I was having a hard time with my other classes and organizing the information I have collected. Thankfully, I was able to get through all of it and everything went smoothly.

In conclusion, writing research papers is an important part of your college learning experience. It trains you to become an experienced researcher and effective writer. From my overall experience with writing this research paper, I was able to upgrade my knowledge on the topic I chose and increase my vocabulary effectively. The first few weeks may be stressing for deciding what my research topic would be; what I could've done better to improve the quality of my paper by redesigning the questions for my survey, sending out more letters to experts of my topic and searching for more local specialists on island; and how I improved my academic writing after completing this research paper by being able to develop my vocabulary. The final research paper I wrote for my advanced English Composition class scored the grade I was aiming for and I couldn't be happier.