Library of Congress Research

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February 28, 2023

Professor

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**Directions:**

100-Day Submission

Write a 3-5 page document summarizing your experience in attending LOC. Include a section describing the benefits of the on-site research experience and how you think this experience assists students in growing as scholars.

My primary research goal for the Library of Congress trip was to uncover a faith-integrated approach to work engagement and job burnout with substantial social research supporting its claims. Yes, I was successful in accomplishing all three goals during this trip. For the first two goals, the LOC databases and e-resources allowed me to gain access to the required resources. I worked one-on-one with Dr. Ward to better understand the Lit Review outline. Second, I also had an extensive list of articles and books that I could not access full-text pdfs at home. So I wanted to obtain these sources through the LOC databases. Third, I needed to clarify the Literature Review outline to better distinguish which material belongs in which section.

I experienced a few challenges while conducting my research during the week. First, I marked two articles I could not find through other libraries or web searches before the trip. However, upon arriving at the LOC, I discovered these articles were in another language. I had assumed that an English translation was available. Unfortunately, the research librarians were unable to get me an English translation. Another challenge I encountered was becoming overwhelmed by the volume of materials I could access through the library. Though this may not seem challenging at first glance, I found it difficult to remain focused on my topic, keywords, and design constructs. I took much self-discipline to refrain from meandering through the library stacks and online databases at topics that piqued my interest but were of no value to my dissertation.

During this trip, I developed new personal connections with some students from other Cores. I made several connections with students by sharing ideas and dissertation topics. We were able to share resources and help one another out with research tips. I love sightseeing in new places. I was worried I would be unable to visit new places while in D.C. this week. Though I have been to the Capitol several times, there are always new spaces and some familiar ones that bring joy to this wandering soul. It so happened that another student had the same proclivities, Jim Strecker. Together we were able to take some time one evening after researching to roam around the D.C. area for a few hours. We had a great time sharing stories and eating together.

As I concluded my trip, I developed some next steps for my research. First, I need to continue developing my literature review in my constructs. This further research will allow me to understand how my topic constructs are used in other studies. Second, I need to organize the massive amount of sources I downloaded during the week. I felt as though time was hurtling by during this week. There were so many resources and so little time. After the second day, I began downloading massive amounts of research without giving much attention to its potential value in my dissertation. If the resource had any keywords or titles in common with my topic, I simply downloaded the resource and moved on to the next item. This download method produced about 175 resources on my flash drive. Now I need to sift through the volume of articles and book chapters for relevant research to build my literature review. One additional step I need to complete upon returning from the LOC is to write a formal request for my dissertation chair and committee members. I have hesitated on this item for too long. Since this group will be my primary resource for moving through the dissertation process, I need to get this checked off my list quickly.

Finally, I must develop the first draft for my Chapter 2 Literature Review. After I have sorted through the mountain of material I gathered on this trip, I will need to organize this material according to the literature review template. It has been challenging to grasp the differences between the three major sections of the literature review template. This trip was instrumental in helping me to differentiate between these three sections.

I look forward to pulling this newfound research into the appropriate literature review sections.

**Conclusion**

The physical space at the Library of Congress provides an atmosphere conducive to creative research. Students can glean personalized research guidance from the OGS faculty. One significant and unexpected breakthrough happened on the second day of the trip. I discovered a significant book by Armand Lavire (2004) After Sunday: A Theology of Work. Though the book is older, it provides significant research and development on a theology of work, which was missing in my current storyboard. Lavire (2004) states that the “theology of work has a peculiar bridge to cross. It requires a measure of theological sophistication, but also familiarity with those forces that uphold and drive the laboring world, forces like economics, management…and the many other specific ways that people make their livings” (p. 165). This quote helped frame my various and sometimes divergent research interests in an integrated, purposeful direction. When I went to the bibliographical page to record the reference details, the corresponding page read “for David.” I was floored. I felt like Holy Spirit was leading me to myself.

I would advise the next group of students to come prepared with research goals and a list of their research gaps so that they can use their time wisely while inside the library. I noticed that the students who were better prepared used their time wisely. In contrast, students who only had a vague concept of their topic came away with fewer resources. Also, it would be wise to ask the LOC research librarians for advanced ways to use search engines and databases so that your searches return better results. I was experiencing difficulty finding enough resources within a discipline field. I learned through consulting with one of the librarians that my keyword search needed to be broadened.