

As an English major at Radford University, I could not escape from using the resources at the McConnell Library. From my perspective, an academic career would not be complete without acclimation to the collections, online databases, and various resources the library has to offer; however, this research project differed from any previous project I had finished. It required a higher level of scholarship and time that I had not previously encountered. By the end of the semester, the project developed into a unique learning experience that allowed me to better comprehend my role as an English scholar, improve my skills as a growing writer, and familiarize myself with the tools and organization of the McConnell Library.

I first stumbled upon the topic Richard Mulcaster in Dr. Gainer's ENGL433 Renaissance Literature class. Her guidelines provided a general topic, but the thesis originated from a broad spectrum of research, narrowed down to a specific aspect of Mulcaster's work. When I chose the topic, I had no previous knowledge of Mulcaster. I began my research by entering his name into the library catalog. To my surprise, the library did not house any books about him or any of his works. A little disappointed, but not discouraged, I searched 'Richard Mulcaster' in the Gale: MLA International Bibliography, a semi-full text database that I had never previously used. Through that search, I found several resources; however, in order to acquire them, I needed to use the Inter-library Loan system. I was hesitant to use the system before because I thought that the resources would take forever to arrive. To my astonishment, my requests were quickly filled. I received many of the articles within a few days. Through that initial MLA search, I was able to obtain the primary source that I would use for the entire paper, Positions Concerning the Training up of Children, an original work by Mulcaster outlining his views on education. Throughout my research, I consistently saw a pattern in the literary criticism on Mulcaster's work. Critics labeled him a Renaissance writer with modern ideas. I decided to focus on his

modern views because history always places people with fresh, unique thoughts in high regard. Later on in the project, the thesis proved to be of personal interest to me because I am concentrating in education.

I continued to look for more information by consulting JSTOR and Project Muse, even though I would eventually cite only Gale: MLA International Bibliography, JSTOR, and books. Part of the assignment required ten annotations, so many resources were necessary to fulfill the project guidelines. This method later proved to be helpful because it allowed me to thoroughly examine my resources and gauge which articles would be the most relevant to my thesis.

Even though most of my resources came from online databases and Inter-library Loan, I still enjoyed the quiet, work environment afforded to me by the library. At the end of the semester, I received an 'A' on the project, but by then, it had become more than about the grade.