

Choosing Diverse Sources

APSU Writing Center Handout

Why Include Diverse Sources?

Incorporating diverse sources in your writing assignments and research is crucial for several reasons:

- **Broader Perspectives:** Diverse sources bring unique viewpoints that may challenge your assumptions and enrich your understanding of a topic.
- **Representation:** Including voices from various backgrounds ensures that marginalized communities are represented in academic discourse.
- **Critical Thinking:** Evaluating a range of perspectives encourages deeper analysis and prevents a narrow focus on dominant narratives.

Mitigating Bias in Research

To ensure your research is inclusive and diverse:

- **Avoid the Obvious Choices:** Don't settle for the first few sources you find. These often represent mainstream perspectives.
- **Search Extensively:** Delve deeper into databases and search engines to find authors and resources that offer new and underrepresented viewpoints.
- **Review and Reflect:** Before committing to sources, take a step back and assess their diversity. Are multiple perspectives represented?

Brainstorming Your Research

When beginning your research:

- **Reflect on Your Own Views:** Understand your biases and consider how they might influence your research. List alternative opinions and perspectives.
- **Consider Your Audience:** Think about who will read your work. How might diverse sources benefit their understanding?
- **Identify Impacted Groups:** Who is most affected by the topic? Seek out sources from those communities to gain direct insights.

Conducting an Overview

Start with a general knowledge search, but make sure to:

- **Seek Credible Materials:** Ensure you're looking at reputable sources from a range of viewpoints, not just those that align with your preconceptions.

Finding Diverse Resources

Here are strategies for finding diverse sources:

- **Use Demographic-Specific Databases:** The APSU Woodward Library offers databases that focus on specific demographics. Take advantage of these to find diverse voices.
 - Example: African American Studies Research Guide
 - Example: Women's and Gender Studies Research Guide
- **Browse by Subject:** Use research guides to find sources by subject, type, or level. These guides can direct you to resources that might otherwise be overlooked.

Strategies for Identifying Diverse Authors

To find authors from underrepresented groups:

- **Search Academic Programs:** Look for professors in programs that focus on marginalized communities. Their work is likely to reflect diverse perspectives.
- **Consult Your Professors:** Ask them for recommendations on diverse scholars in your field.
- **Use Identity-Based Searches:** Conduct web searches using specific identity terms.
 - Examples: African American Authors Biography, Asian American Women, Transgender Men, Children of Immigrants.
- **Narrow Your Focus:** Once you have identified relevant identity groups, use subject heading terms to refine your search.

Conclusion

By thoughtfully selecting diverse sources, you'll contribute to a more inclusive and comprehensive academic environment.

References

Siew, C. (2022, August 23). *Lack of diversity in academia is driven by social search in academic networks: Some thoughts and what can be done about it*. Psychonomic Society.

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