

## RESL 1500 - REFLECTIVE ESSAY

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As it stands, there have been few moments in my undergraduate degree that I can confidently say have changed my outlook on my future. The chance to partake in research is one of those moments. While I did not plan on engaging in research, I am extremely thankful that research found me.

When I was growing up, my mother introduced me to the world of geology and hydrology, as these were her fields of study both in her academic and professional careers. My upbringing along with the introduction to various natural resource fields from my degree, gave me an idea of which sector I wanted to work in professionally once I graduated; engaging in research, however, solidified my interests. Much like my mother, I enjoy learning about water, and all of its many different components – its effects on land, wildlife, and people.

As it currently stands, I have been able extremely fortunate to work in water or water-related environments. Not only have my research experiences provide me an opportunity to partake in field studies, gathering my own physical data, but has benefited me academically. I feel as though I got to show off my knowledge and field skills, while also showing my professors that I am reliable as a student with important tasks and maintaining deadlines. Such experiences also allowed me to network in the research community with many different people and groups ranging from the government to those in the private sector. I was able to work alongside both the British Columbia Conservation Foundation (BCCF) and the Secwepemc Fisheries Commission for my own research project, and provide findings to the provincial government with respect to a

fish stocking project I participated in. My work with BCCF has reaped many benefits, an ever-giving gift if you will, having been asked on many occasions to return to work for them.

With that being said, I believe the most valuable part of my research experiences have been the improvement of both my communication and leadership skills. The first year of my study, not only did I get to design the method of data collection, but then had to communicate with the other students and other field technicians who came out and helped with the project. I had to learn how to explain what the study required of us (in the field) by means of what needed or did not need to be done for data collection and in which manor to do so to maintain study integrity.

While the second year of the study also required leadership and communication to explain sampling techniques to all new people, it allowed me to improve upon what I had learned the previous year. Both years allowed me to present my research, in one form or another, sharing the value of what I had done and found. My writing skills and conversation skills improved with regard my studies; my presentations improved as I deepened both my understanding of my field of study and my ability to articulate my thoughts.

At the end of the day, I have learned that it is just as important to recognize opportunities as it is to say 'yes' when they present themselves. Research activities have bettered me as both a student and as a leader, for which I am forever grateful.