I have a passion for designing user focused spaces and I am dedicated to using my skills related to design in order to enhance the lives of others. I am interested in improving the physical environments of others, and I believe I can do that through incorporating evidence-based design into my future projects. Noticing that I had an interest in pursuing research, my faculty advisor encouraged me to start a path in that direction. I ended up enrolling in one of his courses in which a research paper was required for the class. I used this opportunity to co-write an IRB approved research paper exploring the inherent and extrinsic values in design students by using Verbal Protocol Analysis and Functional Near-Infrared Spectroscopy (fNIR). This paper confirmed to me and my partner that design is not only creative, but by learning design tactics you can become more creative. From my first research project I have been provided very beneficial results, and the skills that I needed to expand my research further.

I developed my research topic through a process similar to what I would do to design an interior environment. I usually advance my own creativity by following a relatively ambiguous step-by-step process. I start by defining my restrictions, then I investigate similar ideas, after that I brainstorm several ideas through the use of diagrams, then I try to conceptualize the overall idea and how it may play out, and then to finalize the idea I try to work out all of the kinks. This research project was created as a class assignment, which required several guidelines to fit the course; this easily allowed me to define my restrictions. Then, I used popular databases provided by the Edmon Low Library such as EBSCO Host, Google Scholar, and ProQuest to find similar research topics to my ideas to see if there was any current research on the topics I had thought of, and if there was research that could be added on to. From this research I was able to brainstorm several ideas that I could expand on. My research partner did this same process. Once we each had a few ideas listed out, we created several iterations of drafts for the potential ideas. These drafts were shared with our peers in order to clarify others opinions on the ideas. Once we narrowed our ideas down to three main topics, we brought the ideas and potential projects to
our professor in order to get a more educated critique of the ideas. We finally chose the final idea based on the input I received from research, my peers, and professional opinion.

Originally, the plan for our research was to have several test subjects provide data. We would need to record several subjects hooked up to the fNIR while they were working on a made-up design project. However, the clock was ticking and time was running out. Due to time constraints, this was not plausible to acquire. To ensure that our research was still valuable though, we made sure to incorporate an in-depth literature review. By adding a more substantial literature review, our work had more credibility. So, if someone did not believe in our results, they would be able to fact check what our conclusions were, with similar conclusions. This ended up being rather beneficial to our research project, and from now on I will always try to ensure that my literature review is thorough.

The main way we accessed resources for references was by using online databases provided by the Edmon Low Library. By using databases such as EBSCO Host, Google Scholar, and ProQuest artifacts such as articles, journals, newspapers, magazines, and books can all be accessed through the internet. The library is very accommodating to students in that they have a majority of their library books accessible online, or at the very least they are able to checkout online to pick up later in person. The majority of my resources were found from the comfort of my home laptop. Quick access to peer reviewed material allowed me to do initial research, and allowed to me to do fast-pace investigations when I was further along in my project. Another useful tool that the library provides is Endnote. Endnote allowed me to store all my references in one place, which enabled me to use reference material I made during my initial stages of my research project all the way throughout the development of my project, and even to the bibliography process of my research. Endnote became an invaluable tool, as it allowed me to quickly draw on all of my sources, and create accurate citations for my bibliography.
The specific research topic that I explored, did not have a massive background of research already done on it. There was a sea of information on similar research though, which became a significant part of my literature review. To find resources that would be applicable to my own literature, I developed certain guidelines to guarantee that the sources I was going to be using were credible. The first check that I did was make sure that the sources I found were generated through a reliable database, all accessible through the Edmon Low Library; this was done to safeguard the information that I would be incorporating. Next, I made sure that the authors I would be including in my work, were knowledgeable in the area I was researching. Finally, I made sure that all of the resources that I did use were peer-reviewed. This made sure that any new sources that I added, were providing the most accurate information provided.

Without being provided access to the Edmon Low Library resources, I would have been completely lost attempting to find dependable sources for my research. The Library’s website is easy to use, and helps you understand how to acquire reliable sources. By following the Library’s tips and tricks, I was able to quickly and almost seamlessly find practical information, and incorporate it into furthering my own research.