**The Story of My Search**

Before I even begin researching, I find it beneficial to brainstorm so I can get my ideas out on paper. In class we did some brainstorming as a group first under the topic “...prejudice obscures the truth,” which is a major theme in the drama we read last month titled *Twelve Angry Men.* After this brainstorming session, I had a clearer idea of what I might want to look into further. All research must begin with a question, and in order to stay interested, I knew it would be important to pick a topic close to me. Initially I wanted to find out why so many people think my husband is from Mexico instead of Costa Rica. It is obvious to me now the major reason people respond this way toward him is due to his skin color. As I began digging deeper on the topic of skin color and connotations of different skin tones, I realized that my research question expanded and morphed into something much different.

I began my research on the databases, which I have been told is the most credible place to find information since Elkhart Central purchases the rights to use them. We were told to look at the Student Resource Center, SIRS, and Opposing Viewpoints first. I began with SIRS. I discovered that if I put too many words into the search box, then only a few articles would come up. The more general I was, the more articles I had to chose from. The first keyword search I did was “Stereotypes.” Even before I finished typing out the entire word, possible matches appeared, so I went with “Stereotypes, Psychological.” There were a few interesting articles, but nothing that really seemed to help me regarding my topic. However, there are some really great features to this database. For example, especially since we must do a Works Cited page, many of the articles had the MLA citation already created at the bottom of the page, so all I had to do was copy and paste it into a Word document. It made that part of the process uncomplicated! I also found out that under each article were suggestions of other keyword searches. Sometimes they yielded interesting results, and other times, not so much.

After doing similar searches on the two other databases, I found myself returning to SIRS, and I decided to try searching something a bit different. I typed in the word “Skin” and again got several ideas. Clicking on “Skin color,” I was intrigued by all of the different articles that appeared, and this is where my research question began to shift. I found articles on skin bleaching in Jamaica and the class struggles in India due to skin tone. Then I remembered something—I had a similar conversation with my good friend Varuun, who is from Mumbai, India. I decided it might be beneficial to interview him on this topic. In addition, I remember this being an issue Jose and I have discussed before as well. I lived in the city of San Jose, the capital, when I was studying abroad. There was an obvious difference between the people living in the city versus the people living in the more rural areas. That difference was skin tone.

At this point, I realize my research question has morphed into something a bit different, but I am confident I have enough information and resources to begin answering my new questions: *What can a person’s skin color reveal about them?* Based on the articles I have found so far, it appears that skin color can put people into groups, which can have negative effects.