When figuring out what to research, I wanted to learn about something that had a personal impact. Being a finance and accounting major, I felt that female underrepresentation in finance would be beneficial to understand for the future. After researching banking and the lack of women, I felt this was too specific, so I decided to broaden the topic into female underrepresentation in STEM.

I used a variety of strategies to discover my sources. Often, I used the SU library database and used the subject tool to search for sources. The complicating my research activity allowed me to use new searching tactics, including cited in searching, backlink in searching, subject searching. Other times, I just searched keywords on Google to look for any relevant articles. The most critical element I wanted my sources to contain was for the authors to be well-respected. Therefore, I used a lot of scholarly articles. As a result, many of my sources have statistics backing up their claims, which I think is beneficial.

After researching my topic, I began to develop my own opinion surrounding the underrepresentation of women in STEM. Each source that I researched made me conclude that there is an infinite number of factors that play into our career decisions. Looking back on the exercises such as the flowchart and complicating sources, I believe each helped me develop my opinion. For example, at the beginning of the study, I thought that only social factors played a role in where we end up. After reading into sources that researched biological factors that impact our career outcomes, I realized that this was not the case. I hope that in the future, I can locate sources that go into workplaces where there is a proportionate number of women and research what steps they take to create a safe, inclusive environment.

The gaps that I currently see in my research are that there are no sources about other industries where female representation exists, and how they have created a safe workplace for women. I believe that if I found a source like this, I could research on if these steps could be mimicked in STEM workplaces.

This research has been interesting because it helped me learn about why female representation is important. Before this project, I felt as though the only reason that women were underrepresented in the industry was because of factors that were in their control. This refers to sociocultural elements, but this is not the case. Factors like time and biology play a role in determining our career outcomes. In turn, this made me realize that although something may feel insignificant, it may just have an huge impact on your life.

As far as this course goes, unit two helped shed light on an important topic. Ideas are not developed in a day, rather they are formed over time. The more research that we can do, the more questions come up. This unit also made me realize that the more research that I do, the more I can develop my own opinions, instead of accepting only one author's perspective. There are a variety of perspectives that we can take into account, and over time, they help create our own opinions on different subjects.