MRU Library Awards for Research Excellence

Guidelines for your reflective essay
Your reflective essay should be 750-1000 words long and describe the specific process and strategies you used to discover, choose, and evaluate the information you have integrated into your work. Your reflections should provide the committee with an insight into how your process and strategies developed, the challenges you faced, the choices you made, and what you learned about (library) research and information along the way.

While the Awards are sponsored by the Mount Royal University Library, do not feel restricted to documenting only those processes that involved the resources at MRU – if you have used other libraries, archives, or online resources for your project, please include them in your reflections.

The following questions are provided only to help you reflect on aspects of your research process. DO NOT feel that you need to answer every one in your reflective essay! For one thing, not all them may apply to your work, for another it would take much more than 1000 words.

• Research question
How did your research question evolve? Did it narrow or broaden or change as you worked? What caused the changes?

• Library/Information Research process:
How did you determine what information you needed? How did you find what you needed? Which strategies worked, which didn’t and why? Did anything in the process surprise you? Which tools were most useful and why? Did you learn to use new tools – and how?

• Finding, evaluating and using information:
What information did you find easily and what was more challenging to track down? What information are you most proud of locating? Were there challenges in determining if the information you found was reliable or suitable for your project? Were there any challenges in integrating the information you found into your work?

• Overall reflection:
What did you learn about information in your field? About research? Which parts of the process did you enjoy and which were more of struggle than a joy? What has this experience brought you that you will use in your studies, your profession, and/or your life? What will you do differently in your next research project?