

## BEST PRACTICES

Library research assignments can be an effective method of enhancing your students' research and information literacy skills. Librarians at the Merrill-Cazier Library are ready and willing to help you create a great research assignment. Please contact them for additional information and help.

1. **RESEARCH PROCESS.** Construct research assignments that help students learn the research process, develop appropriate strategies, and evaluate and use resources effectively.
2. **SCHOLARLY RESOURCES.** Develop an assignment that necessitates the use of scholarly resources. Explain why scholarly resources are useful given the specific context of the assignment and the learning goals of the course.
3. **MAKE IT REAL.** Introduce students to what actual researchers do. Ask students to use discipline-specific library resources to address current issues and practice in your field. Consider a problem-based learning assignment in which students apply information to real-world problems. Ask your librarian to learn more about problem-based learning.
4. **MAKE IT INTERESTING.** Granted, library research may not be a student's first choice of fun things to do on a Friday night, but try to

make the assignment interesting by relating it, if possible, to the student's own interests or professional goals.

5. **SKILL.** Match the assignment to the skill level of students. To be safe, assume your students have minimal knowledge of library resources. Ask a librarian about ways to assess your students' library skills.
6. **INVOLVEMENT.** Involve a librarian in the planning or presentation of the library research assignment so he or she can suggest suitable resources and perhaps identify some potential problem areas. Contact Wendy Holliday, Coordinator of Library Instruction ([wendy.holliday@usu.edu](mailto:wendy.holliday@usu.edu), 797-0731) or your subject librarian (<http://library.usu.edu/coldev/subject-librarians.html>).
7. **OBJECTIVES.** Explain the objectives of the assignment to students and the relevance of research and library resources to course work and college education.

8. **DESCRIPTION.** Clearly and fully describe what the assignment entails, including the types of sources you want them to use and why. If you want them to use a specific resource, please contact the library to make sure we still own or subscribe to the resource.
9. **GIVE THE ASSIGNMENT EARLY.** Let students know from the beginning what will be expected of them and incorporate the library assignment early enough in the semester so that the skills learned may benefit other assignments.
10. **E-MAIL A COPY OF THE ASSIGNMENT.** Send a copy of the Assignment to Wendy Holliday ([wendy.holliday@usu.edu](mailto:wendy.holliday@usu.edu)) or your subject librarian. Knowing what to expect helps the library staff to be prepared and better able to help your students.

Adapted from: Gilson, Caroline and Stephanie Michel. "Fishing for Success: Faculty/Librarian Collaboration Nets Effective Library Assignments." In *Making the Grade: Academic Librarians and Student Success*. Eds. Maurie Caitlin Kelly and Andrea Dross. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2002.