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# Designing Research Projects for Student Success

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# Agenda

- Where do students struggle with research?
- Strategies for developing successful research assignments
- Checklist / evaluate sample assignment
- Collaborate and revise your own project(s)

# Discuss with your group:

What kinds of issues prevent your students from being successful with a research project?

# Student Perspective - PIL Study

- Beginning stages were the most challenging for students
  - 84% had difficulty getting started on an assignment
  - 66% had problems defining a topic
  - 62% had trouble narrowing the topic
  - 61% had trouble sorting through all of the information they found
- Students reported using techniques they learned in high school when approaching college research

# Procrastination

- Anxiety
- Uncertainty
- Fear of failure
- Perfectionism
- Lack of relevance
- Lack of ability (or perceived lack of ability)
- “Laziness”

Brown University. (2019). *Overcoming procrastination*. Retrieved from

<https://www.brown.edu/campus-life/support/counseling-and-psychological-services/index.php?q=overcoming-procrastination>

# Strategies

# Give Students a Written Assignment Sheet

- 76% of students considered written guidelines about assignments to be one of the most helpful materials an instructor provides
- Written guidelines help students understand your expectations
- Students will consult written assignments first when they need help

# Be Specific about Requirements

- Length and format of final product
- Writing style
- Number of sources
- Types of sources
  - Web / internet sources (watch your wording!)
  - Databases / journals / peer-reviewed
- Evaluation of sources
- Citation style & format



# Timelines / Scaffolding

- Set mini-deadlines and provide feedback
  - Topic selection
  - Source identification
  - Outline
  - Draft
  - Final
- For upper level students
  - Students self-identify deadlines
  - Designate times for feedback
  - Do “workshop” time for part of class

# Provide Guidance

- Instruct students on how to select a good topic
  - List sample topics in your field
  - For beginning students, pre-select topics that students choose between
- Identify important journals, authors, and/or databases in your field
- Demonstrate how to read academic sources in your field
- Show how to evaluate sources for authority and timeliness
- Describe how to avoid plagiarism
- Provide student models

# Grading

- Give feedback (and possibly scores) for the parts of the process
  - Parts of the process could be a percentage of the final grade
- Develop and share a grading rubric
- Provide examples of exemplary work
- Have students score and analyze a sample work using the rubric

# Link to Support

- Let students know how to contact you for help
- Include contact information for the Library and Writing Center
- Recommend / require students consult a librarian or tutor
- Invite a librarian to class / Request an embedded tutor
- Ask a librarian to create a [research guide](#) for your class
- Consult with a librarian when creating a research assignment
- Share your assignment sheet with the Library and Writing Center

# Checklist

- Use the checklist to evaluate the sample assignment (if time)

# Collaborate and Revise

Look at assignment(s) for your own courses

# Additional Resources

Egan Library Liaisons:

- Humanities / Social Sciences - Kaia Henrickson
- Education / Management / Sitka - Jennifer Ward
- Natural Sciences / Career Education - Jonas Lamb

Project Information Literacy - <https://www.projectinfo.org/>

Keys to Designing Effective Writing & Research Projects: Faculty Focus Report

<https://www.facultyfocus.com/free-reports/keys-to-designing-effective-writing-and-research-assignments/>