



Supporting Learning Outcomes through Librarian Instruction, Tutorials, and Research Resources

By Dr. Erin Bell, Assistant Director of Educational Development

Courses at numerous levels of study often feature assessments that call students to discover and integrate credible source materials. The librarians at Detroit Mercy offer a wealth of knowledge and are well poised to assist professors in helping students develop effective research practices through hands-on guided practice and exploration of [research guides and databases](#).

The CETL recently spoke with Rebecca Tull, Assistant Librarian at the McNichols Campus, Library, Teaching, and Learning Center, about how faculty can best utilize the resources offered via the Detroit Mercy Libraries. Tull notes that faculty can set up an instruction session with a librarian by contacting their subject librarian via email or by using the [Request Instruction form](#), which can be found under the [Get Help](#) link on the library website. (This appears under Quick Links on the library homepage, leading to a Contact page, which has options for emailing a librarian, and scheduling an instruction session or one-on-one appointment with a librarian.)

“For students to get the most out of the sessions, it is helpful to submit instruction requests two weeks in advance – the sooner the better – and share as much detail as possible about the assignment, expectations, and level of library/research experience the class has,” explains Tull. “The more we know in advance, the more librarians can tailor the sessions to the specific needs of the students, ideally addressing an immediate need.”

Tull emphasizes that instructors can choose any number of areas of focus and designate if the session should highlight how to use specific databases to find scholarly articles or the catalog to look for books in print or eBooks. Other topics of focus for a guided session could include how to match information needs with appropriate information resources and/or evaluate information sources, as well as the importance of citing sources and how that contributes to the scholarly conversation. These are only some of the topics librarians regularly cover in instruction sessions that may connect to an array of assignments and projects.



Additionally, Tull and other librarians like to remind students that research is an **iterative** process. According to Tull, students can and will get better with practice and the librarians are there to help them along the way, explaining “often the best way for them to see this is when we are able to help with an immediate research need.” Tull likewise explains “if a student needs three peer-reviewed articles and they don’t know what a peer-reviewed article is, we can explain what goes into the peer-review process, the value of that process



and that information, where to find those articles, and how to read and evaluate those articles. This can be a lot to take in the first time around. We don't see our interactions as one-time events." Librarians see such first-time interactions as opportunities to build relationships with students and help them during the course of their time at the University, not just for one assignment.

[The Tutorials research guide](#) also has helpful resources that librarians have either developed or curated that would help develop scholarly research skills, including information on searching specific databases and evaluating resources. Such guides can be highlighted during class discussions about writing and research-based assignments or featured in links in the class Blackboard page(s). Librarians are also happy to work with faculty to create new research guides tailored toward specific subjects and classes.

Tull encourages the community to make the most of the library's many services. "We consider the library to be the heart of the campus. It's a place to research, study, socialize, make connections, print, borrow a book, or grab a coffee."