

Creating Effective Library Assignments

What do you want the assignment to accomplish?

What do you want your students to learn?

Consult with your liaison librarian while developing your assignment to:

- brainstorm about assignment possibilities
- insure availability of library resources to support assignment requirements
- determine appropriate level of library skills needed

Learning Objectives:

- **Clarify and state learning objectives.** Students should understand the purpose of the assignment and how it will benefit them.
- **Make the assignment relevant** to class content, goals, and other assignments.
- **Create assignments which promote critical thinking.** The assignment should encourage students to go beyond locating information to analyzing or evaluating the information content (e.g. comparing/contrasting).

Library Assignment Tips

- **Write clear and complete instructions.** Some obvious misinterpretations can be avoided by asking another faculty member or a librarian to read your assignment and then explain to you what *he/she* thinks it means.
- **Specify the level of research expected:** Popular vs. scholarly sources? Number of references? Types of references (books, journal articles, websites?)
- **Be specific about use of websites:** The restriction that students "may not use websites" can be confusing. Be specific about the limitations you are placing (e.g., "Electronic journal articles from Library databases are acceptable but websites are not.")
- **Try doing the library research for your own assignment(s).** This will identify areas of the assignment that work well and/or areas that don't work well or may be unclear. You may find that your assignment is impossible or excessively difficult to complete!
- **Plan the project to be realistic** in terms of time required for students.
- **Encourage students to ask reference librarians for assistance** (online or in person).