



the TUTOR



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University of Colorado at Boulder

Spring 1988

What You Ask For Is What You Get . . . Some Dos and Don'ts for Assigning Research Projects

By Deborah Fink, Instructional Services Librarian

Research assistance is available to students in a variety of ways through the UCB Libraries. Various workshops, advertised in flyers and newspaper ads, are offered each semester. Individual assistance is provided at reference desks in Norlin Library and in the branch libraries. Students and faculty may make appointments with reference librarians for more in-depth assistance. In addition, faculty may schedule a library presentation for courses that include a research assignment. Guest lectures by a librarian may include an overview of materials available in the field as well as how to use particular sources, such as the Public Access Catalog, bibliographies, periodical indexes, and computer literature searches. Strategies for organizing research, integrating traditional and electronic access, and evaluating sources are emphasized.

Based on the experience of providing these instructional services, reference librarians can pinpoint those factors which contribute to the effectiveness of a research assignment as well as the leading contributors to research frustration. The following suggestions are offered in the spirit of enhancing the research process and product for students, instructors, and librarians alike.

Dos

1. Do plan on spending the time and energy necessary to develop and implement an effective research assignment. Designing the assignment, assisting students throughout the semester, and grading the final products are all labor-intensive activities.
2. Do clarify and state your research objectives. What do you expect the student to learn as a result of the assignment, and how do the objectives for the assignment fit in with your course objectives?

Sample research objectives:

- (a) The student will be able to select and focus on an appropriate research topic in the field.

(b) The student will be able to identify and use the key reference resources in the field.

(c) The student will be able to locate and evaluate the information necessary to support an argument.

3. Do be sure the library can support your research requirements. Avoid subjects that are so current or so specialized that a limited quantity of materials may be available as well as topics that are beyond the scope of our academic departments.

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Graduate Teacher Program Spring Schedule 1988

All graduate students and faculty
are cordially invited to attend.

Spring Intensive

Friday, January 8
9:00 am-4:00 pm
UMC 157 & 158

Workshops and videotape presentations will take place.

Friday Forums

Lecturing and Discussion

Douglas Burger
Associate Professor, English
January 22, 3:00-5:00 pm
UMC 235

Training Graduate Students to Be Teachers

Thomas Mayer
Associate Professor, Sociology
February 12, 3:00-5:00 pm
UMC 235

An Evolving Philosophy of Teaching

Phyllis Kenevan
Associate Professor, Philosophy
March 11, 3:00-5:00 pm
UMC 235



GTP's TA Coaches

The GTP is developing a network of graduate part-time instructors and teaching assistants across academic disciplines. These **TA Coaches** will work with their home departments . . .

- to help disseminate information on the GTP and its services to all graduate students
- to serve as liaisons between the GTP and the academic department
- to assist the department chair and graduate advisor with TA training programs

If serving as a **TA Coach** next year interests you, contact your department chair and Denne Blanchard, GTP Graduate Assistant, 492-5474.

What You Ask For . . . (continued)

4. *Do consult with a librarian while developing an assignment to be sure it is appropriate for your objectives and for available materials.* Contact the Instructional Services Librarian at extension 8302 or the appropriate branch librarian to schedule a consultation.
5. *Do schedule a library presentation to provide your students with library use skills, an awareness of available sources, and the ability to develop a search strategy.* Call the Instructional Services Librarian at extension 8302 or call the appropriate branch librarian.
6. *Do specify the level of research expected.* Consider popular vs. scholarly sources, number of references, types of references (books vs. journal articles, etc.).
7. *Do specify a particular style manual, your stylistic expectations (e.g., foot vs. end notes), and the basic parameters (e.g., length, format).* Most students are unaware of the multiplicity of style manuals and baffled by the choices. Papers are easier to grade if all students use the same manual.
8. *Do discuss plagiarism.* Clarify your expectations about paraphrasing, footnotes, etc. A carefully structured assignment in itself will foster creative responses and discourage plagiarism.
9. *Do confirm topics early in the process.* Guide students to appropriate and manageable topics at the outset.
10. *Do structure the timing of the project and build in a period of response to the information gathered.* Assignments which are made early in the semester and never referred to again inevitably create last minute panic. Incremental due dates serve to structure the research process in manageable stages. An important stage to schedule as part of the process is a period of reflection on

the information gathered and ideas generated. Students are all too prone to perceive research as two steps: gathering the information and writing the paper. They need encouragement to react to, assess and organize the information they have gathered.

11. *Do develop mechanisms for monitoring progress.* Projects submitted in stages (outline, notecards, rough draft, etc.) provide ongoing interaction and feedback.
12. *Do refer students to the Libraries' self-instructional materials.* Printed guides are available throughout the libraries and slide/tape presentations are located at the entrance to the Norlin Library Reference Department.
13. *Do encourage students to ask for assistance at the Reference Desk.*

Don'ts

1. *Do not assume that your students will have any library skills or expect them to be able to locate information without a knowledge of the access sources.* Call the Instructional Services Librarian at 492-8302 or an appropriate branch librarian, to schedule course-related instruction.
2. *Do not give a student a sketchy reference to a particular item or a vague subject area and expect the student or the library staff to find what you had in mind.*
3. *Do not refer students to specific journals to find articles on their topics unless browsing will serve a purpose.*
4. *Do not limit research to a particular index.* Other indexes may be available which would be equally useful. A specific index designated for an entire class may not be the most appropriate for a particular student's topic.
5. *Do not limit research to a particular format, such as journals or books.* That particular type of source may not be readily available for a given student's topic. It is more useful to require a minimum of each type or a ratio of types in order to provide options.
6. *Do not ask for materials too current to access.* It generally takes at least three months to one year before materials are listed in secondary sources, i.e., indexes, bibliographies, etc., and browsing in current periodicals is often an exercise in frustration.
7. *Do not send an entire class in search of the same item or the same information.* This creates a run on materials, which is sheer frustration for both students and library staff.

Working together, instructors and librarians can develop assignments and provide assistance which will promote effective and satisfying library research.

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Graduate School Dates to Remember

Schedule of deadlines for Master's Degree Candidates expecting to graduate during 1987-88

	May 13, 1988 Commencement	August 13, 1988 Commencement
Last day for scheduling final exam or thesis defense with the Graduate School.	April 18	July 18
Last day for taking final exam or thesis defense with Graduate School.	April 25	July 25
Last day for filing thesis in Graduate School. At the time of filing, thesis must be complete in all respects and must meet thesis specifications in order to be accepted by the Graduate School. Candidates whose theses are received after this date will graduate at the following commencement.	April 29	July 29
Last day to submit grades for incompleting courses taken in past semesters.	April 29	July 29

Schedule of deadlines for Doctoral Degree Candidates expecting to graduate during 1987-88

Application for Admission to Candidacy must be in the Graduate School office at least two weeks before student takes Comprehensive Examination. Coordinate with home department.		
Last day to submit to the Graduate School a typed copy of exact title of thesis. This title will be printed in the Commencement Program.	April 1	July 1
Last day for scheduling Final Exam with Graduate School. Doctoral candidates should come to Graduate School office, Regent 308, to secure a leaflet announcement form.	April 12	July 12
Last day for taking Final Examination. Last day for filing thesis in Graduate School. At the time of filing, thesis must be complete in all respects and must meet thesis specifications.	April 26	July 26
Last day to submit grades for incompleting courses taken in past semesters. Thesis grades are an exception.	April 29	July 29

Words from the Wise



"And when is there time to remember, to sift, to weigh, to estimate, to total?"

Tillie Olsen,
Tell Me a Riddle, 1960

"The time of discipline began. Each of us the pupil of whichever one of us could best teach what each of us needed to learn."

Maria Isabel Barreno,
New Portuguese Letters, 1972

"The intellect is fueled by emotions. We're dead without them. Then why are our classrooms Valium valleys? You have to create the magic moment, and you have to make of it a sacrament, because communication is, if anything at all, a sacrament. It is as inviolable as any other sacrament . . . because when two people are making every effort to understand each other, when two people are exchanging confidences, when two people are grappling with each other's souls, I know of no more significant sacrament than that. And we don't deal with it as such often enough in the classroom."

John Rassias, Professor of French, Dartmouth College, quoted in *Compass*, Fall 1984

TOOTER'S TEACHING TIPS



The following tips are taken from the Friday Forum on "Performance Tips for Teachers", presented by Professor Lee Potts, Department of Theatre & Dance.

1. Rather than trying harder, think of giving more to your students. "Trying harder" often causes you to tense up and not be relaxed.
2. When teaching (even in a large lecture hall), think of communicating with individuals. Make eye contact with as many individuals as possible during each class.
3. Remember that when you talk to people, 38 percent of what is communicated is in the vocal delivery, 55 percent is in the body language, and only 7 percent is in the words you say.

Academic and Personal Support Services

TAs and GPTIs often need to know where to refer their students for assistance outside the classroom. The following list includes units on the Boulder campus that serve a variety of academic and personal needs.

Career Services, Willard, ground floor, 492-6541. CS provides career literature, vacancy information, placement services, cooperative education referrals, personal counseling, and group career workshops.

Financial Aid, Environmental Design 2, 492-5091.

Foreign Student and Scholar Services, Environmental Design, SW basement, 492-8057. The FSSS provides advice and support to foreign students on immigration matters and on adjustment to life at an American university. TAs can call the FSSS directly concerning questions about foreign students, or they may refer students to the FSSS.

Multicultural Center for Counseling and Community Development, Willard 134, 492-6766. MCCCCD provides personal and group counseling, as well as consultation and outreach services to students, faculty, and staff. MCCCCD offers groups a wide range of topics including *Time Management*, *Perfectionism*, *Choosing a Major*, *Coping with Grief and Loss*, etc.

Legal Services, UMC 328, 492-6813. Legal Services assists fee-paying students.

Norlin Library Reference, 492-7521 or 492-8705. Contact Deborah Fink in **Instructional Services, 492-8302**, for assistance in developing research methodology.

Nontraditional Student Center, UMC 414, 492-1536. NSC offers social support for students over 25; for single, married, and divorced students; and for single parents.

Office of Services to Disabled Students, Willard 18, 492-8671. OSDS provides information, referrals, and assistance to physically disabled, hearing impaired, visually impaired, and temporarily disabled students. **Learning Disabilities Office, Willard 305, 492-5611.** The LD staff provides diagnostic assessment and follow-up strategies for learning disabled students.

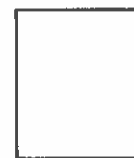
Ombudsman Office, Willard 302, 492-5077. The Ombudsman Office serves students, faculty, and staff. The Ombudsman staff provides information on campus policies, hears concerns and grievances, facilitates problem-solving as a neutral third party, and conducts workshops on conflict management.

University Learning Center, Willard 309, 492-5474. The ULC's **Academic Skills Program** helps students develop better study skills and provides consultation to faculty who wish to incorporate specific study skills into their classroom activities. The **Graduate Teacher Program** offers TA training workshops and individual, departmental, and videotape consultation to graduate students on the Boulder campus. The ULC's **Tutorial Services**, offers free individualized and small-group tutoring to CU Opportunity students and student athletes. TS also functions as a referral service to any UCB student by maintaining a list of available tutors.

Veterans Affairs, Willard 229, 492-7322.

The TUTOR Graduate Teacher Program Newsletter

University Learning Center
University of Colorado
Boulder, Colorado 80309-0107



TO ALL:
Graduate Part-Time Instructors
Graduate Teaching Assistants
Graduate Research Assistants
Faculty