

## ***Mission of Instructional Services***

AS AN INTEGRAL PART of the teaching mission of the University of South Alabama, University Library Instructional Services has as its purpose the empowerment of students in their pursuit of knowledge through the use of information. Toward this end the library staff strives to help students recognize the need for information and construct a firm understanding of the processes of identifying, locating and evaluating information sources in both print and electronic formats. A good foundation in these processes should enable students to satisfy their immediate information needs as well as prepare them to be successful lifelong users of information in its many forms and contexts.

### ***Components***

The complexity of information access, the diversity of learning styles and the range of experience levels among USA students are all factors that can only be addressed through a variety of instructional strategies.

•**Course-Related Instruction.** The cornerstone of USA's library instruction program is the instruction session designed around the information needs of a particular course. Library instruction has proved most successful when done in collaboration with the teaching faculty. Therefore, the establishment and maintenance of a collegial and supportive relationship with the teaching faculty is critical to the success of the program. We encourage course instructors to schedule a library session at that point in the term when students are most receptive to our instruction and when their motivation is the highest—shortly after the paper or project is assigned. Interactive exercises, critical questioning, real-time demonstrations, as well as the introduction of assignment-related information sources are hallmarks of these sessions. The Library Auditorium has Internet and projection equipment for large classes, as does Room 305 with 13 computers for hands-on instruction. Or a Reference Librarian can come to your Internet and projector-equipped classroom. Advanced scheduling with a librarian is necessary. Call Jan Sauer at 460-6045 [or on campus at 6-6045] to schedule a library instruction session.

•**Reference Desk.** Where instruction stops and reference assistance begins is difficult to determine. Instruction is thoroughly integrated into the Library's Reference Desk assistance. Much of the interaction at the Reference Desk includes individual instruction in possible research strategies, the use of an unfamiliar information source, whether that be a printed volume, an electronic index, the catalog or the Web.

•**Freshman Seminar and the Library.** All freshman are introduced to the Library collections and services during their FS classes. The instructors may include other library assignments as they wish. <http://www.usouthal.edu/univlib/ewilson/fs/> Contact Ellen Wilson for more information. 6-2826.

***“Students should be given bibliographic instruction and be encouraged to spend at least as much time in the library--using its wide range of resources--as they spend in class.” Ernest Boyer***

•**Library Tours.** The library offers orientation tours of the facility every semester. These tours, currently scheduled every Wednesday at noon, are designed to give students a basic introduction to library terminology, location of resources, range of services, various copying technologies they will encounter and where to seek help when they begin a research project. In the past these tours have only been attended by the most motivated students or by students whose instructors require them. Therefore, we have mounted a photo tour on the Library homepage. (<http://www.usouthal.edu/univlib/sauer/tour>) Please encourage your students to take the physical tour, or at the very least, the photo tour. These tours are only a basic introduction to the University Library building and services. They are not a substitute for a class session on developing search strategies for library research.

•**Online Tutorials.** Links on the homepage will take the students to some online multimedia tutorials. Included right now are an overview of the University Library homepage and eight very brief sessions on how to use the library catalog effectively. These video tutorials can be viewed on any computer with speakers and the Flash player installed. Throughout the year we will be adding more multimedia instructional modules. <http://library.southalabama.edu/ewilson/tutorials/>

•**Guides and Bibliographies.** These handouts are carefully put together by the reference librarian subject specialists as independent research guides and also as memory aids in conjunction with a library instruction session. The selected lists of resources in disciplinary areas can include a variety of reference books, monographs, search examples and Worldwide Web addresses of particular value. They are on racks in the Reference area and are also linked from the homepage as “Topic Guides” or directly at: <http://www.southalabama.edu/univlib/guides.html>.

•**Individual Research Assistance.** Faculty, staff and students are encouraged to meet with subject specialist librarians to discuss particular research needs and difficult problems. To make this a more efficient process, individuals are encouraged to call ahead and make an appointment. The librarian will then have time to prepare a search strategy and list of suggested resources for a particular research problem which can be discussed at the appointment time.

•**EH 102.** All students taking this class have the opportunity to attend a library session which orients them to sources suitable for the course's required research paper. These include the catalog and three or four of the more general periodical databases. Since this may be the students' first experience writing an academic paper a webpage detailing the step needed is available. <http://www.southalabama.edu/univlib/sauer/eh102/>

## Talk to Us

• **Instruction Webpages.** Linked from “Instruction” on the library homepage are numerous webpages containing basic information about library research, course-related webpages, Internet evaluation, and information proficiency across the curriculum webpages. The WAC page has links to some suggested general library assignments as well as ones using disciplinary databases. Explicit instructions for students are provided. Faculty pages for each assignment contain tips and instructional objectives for these. This is a work in progress. <http://www.southalabama.edu/univlib/sauer/>

• **Course Webpages.** Linked on the Instruction page are webpages that we have developed to support classes that have come into the library for instruction. We will construct a webpage to support the students in classes we teach in the library.

• **BLOG.** The one thing we can say about contemporary libraries is that they are changing--almost daily. The BLOG, linked on the homepage, is an attempt to keep our users current with new library resources, services, issues that affect us, and useful innovations and websites on the Internet. It is updated several times a week, as new relevant information becomes available.

• **Library Newsletter.** The newsletter is published on the web near the beginning of each semester. It contains current information about library changes, database additions, new services, and library faculty news.

• **PETAL.** The Program for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning is housed in Room 312 on the 3rd Floor, South of the Library. It offers a variety of classes and seminars for faculty and graduate teaching assistants interested in expanding their knowledge and skills as teachers. PETAL offers insight into new pedagogical theories and technological strategies for improving students' learning.

The only way we librarians can be successful in our effort to help students become competent at articulating their needs, accessing information and evaluating it is if we have an active partnership with the teaching faculty. Today's students need to learn strategies to help them understand and process the huge amount of information available to them. We can work with you toward this end, if you let us.

Please talk to us about your needs and those of your students. We have an amazing number of information resources that we would like to show you. We can also help you develop library assignments that are appropriate for the developmental level of your students.

Call your subject-specialist librarian or Jan Sauer about scheduling a library instruction session designed for your particular course-related information needs. Information competence is essential for every college graduate. It is not instinctive; it requires instruction, practice and attention. We can help!

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