Bridging the Distance: Research Guides

By Cheryl Davis

You’re a new or continuing student at Florida Tech. It’s past library hours and you’re working on a research paper. Where are the best sources for articles and other scholarly materials? Is there one place where you can find information on the best books/e-books, article databases, reference materials and government resources? Yes, there is!

Evans Library Research Guides

These research subject and course guides are especially created by our professional librarians to provide our students with the BEST in library resources and beyond …

Here’s what you’ll find:

- **Subject Guide**
  - Detailed and organized information on fields such as Criminal Justice, Human Resources, Humanities & Communication and others
  - Specific resources pertaining to your subject listed under the following tabs: Reference Sources, Books & e-books, Articles & Databases, Journals, Internet Sites, Citing Sources, and Theses and Dissertations
  - Links to News, RSS Feeds, blogs and more

- **Course Guides**
  - Links to resources for COM 1101, COM 1102 and other courses

Each subject and course guide contains contact information for the librarian who maintains the guide.

To access the Research Guides, go to the Library website at http://lib.fit.edu, and then look for the Research Guides box. >>>

Click on Research Guides, and you will be at the home page for research guides. On the left side of the screen are links to the subject guides. To see both the subject and course guides, click on “Browse all guides.”

Remember! If you have any questions, I am here to help. I can be reached at (321) 674-8766 or cdavis05@fit.edu. And, you can always use our Ask a Librarian service at http://lib.fit.edu/services/askalibrarian.php.
The Web Alliance

VA Base

Questions about your veterans’ education benefits?
Contact your VA representative, Andrea Morley, at (321) 674-8204 or amorley@fit.edu. For information on the different VA benefits, visit: http://www.gibill.va.gov.

Regional Processing Center Change
To improve our national service delivery and better balance the distribution of education workload, VA is realigning the processing of education benefits in the states of Florida and South Carolina. If you attend school (in a classroom or online) in South Carolina or Florida, your claim will now be processed in our Muskogee, OK office. You should continue to contact VA with general education benefit inquiries, questions about the status of your claim, and changes to your address or direct deposit information by calling 888 GIBILL-1 (888-442-4551), or by logging on to https://gibill.custhelp.com. These transactions will automatically be connected to the correct VA Regional Processing Office. Written correspondence should go to:
VA Regional Processing Office, P.O. Box 8888, Muskogee, OK 74402-8888

Automation of Post-9/11 GI Bill Benefits and VA-ONCE Remarks
VA has begun automating certifications submitted electronically by institutions of higher learning (IHL) for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The goal of the ongoing automation effort is to minimize the amount of time between when a school certifying official (SCO) submits enrollment information and the time of receipt of benefits by a veteran, including funds paid to the school on his or her behalf. As of May 29, 2013, we are automating more than 48% of the Post-9/11 GI Bill IHL certifications received electronically through the VA-Online Certification of Enrollment (VA-ONCE) system. We hope to increase the percentage of claims automation in the near future.

What is eBenefits?
eBenefits is a portal—a central location for veterans, service members and their families to research, find, access and, in time, manage their benefits and personal information. eBenefits offers:
• A personalized workspace called My Dashboard that provides quick access to eBenefits tools. Using eBenefits tools, you can complete various tasks. You can apply for benefits, download your DD 214, view your benefits status, in addition to other actions as needed. This workspace is available to you once you have created an eBenefits account.

Strategies and Skills for Online Learning Success By Danielle Maltese
Whether you are new to Florida Tech University Online or are a continuing student, there are several strategies and skills that can help you to succeed in online learning.

The first day of class, get motivated! Print and review the syllabus. Focus on course requirements, and what you would like to get out of the course. I encourage you to view the online calendar tool provided within your classroom. The calendar shows when all assignments and quizzes are due. I also suggest using your own personal calendar. This will help you to balance your course load with family, work and other activities. Remember, it’s important to stay on schedule. Each term is accelerated and moves at a quick pace.

Next, make sure to have a time and place dedicated just for your studies. This can be at your home, library or Internet café. Chose somewhere you will not be distracted with plenty of light and room to spread out your books and other learning materials. It’s important to make the most out of the time you have allotted to your course. Know what learning styles are most effective for you, so you can play off your strengths and work on any weaknesses. You can complete the Learning Style Inventory Questionnaire at www.vark-learn.com.

Lastly, don’t hesitate to ask for help. There are many resources available to students as well as faculty and staff who are available to help. Your student services representative is your “Friend for Life.” You can contact your Student Representative at any time throughout the term. Also, Florida Tech University Online has developed an Online Resource Center. Make sure to check this out. There are tools, interactive exercises as well as Smarthinking, a free online tutoring service.

For more tips on student success, contact your student success specialist, Danielle Maltese at onlinesuccess@fit.edu.
Helping Students Understand the Benefits of Study Groups By Maryellen Weimer, Ph.D.

Would your students benefit from participation in a study group? Are you too busy to organize and supervise study groups for students in your courses? I’m guessing the answer to both questions is yes. If so, here are some ways teachers can encourage and support student efforts to study together without being “in charge” of the study groups. Be welcome to add more ideas to the list.

Promote study groups — First, include a list of reasons why students should join study groups in the syllabus or on the course website. Maybe there’s a short podcast available in which you talk about the usefulness of study groups. Better yet, if you’ve got some students who studied together in a previous course, ask them to make some comments about their experiences. Second, talk regularly in class about study groups. You can repeat all the benefits, suggest activities that involve good group study strategies, or propose some things they could study together (like problems they could solve, questions they could discuss). You also can solicit feedback from study groups in class or mention content you discussed with a group during office hours.

Make study groups an option — Encourage students to organize their own groups, but offer to help with the process. Nudge them with reminders, such as “Send me an email if you’re interested in being part of a study group.” Have study groups “register” their members, and then report on meeting times and activities. Suggest study activities for the group (ideas like those offered in the next item). Invite the group to meet with you during office hours or to send questions electronically. Offer registered study groups that report regular meetings a bonus point incentive depending on the average of their individual test grades. Let all students know that joining a study group is an option throughout the course.

Demonstrate the value of a study group — Too often when students study together, it’s pretty much a waste of time. If they’re reviewing for a test, they talk about how it can’t possibly be that hard and thereby relieve themselves of the need to study. Or they “go over” their notes, reading what they’ve written but never with deep understanding of the assigned material. The group devotes a specified amount of time to each question, looking for relevant content in their notes and the text.

1. Everybody takes three minutes and writes a question about some content they don’t understand or wish they understood better. The group devotes a specified amount of time to each question, looking for relevant content in their notes and the text.

2. Everybody takes three minutes and writes a question about some content they don’t understand or wish they understood better. The group devotes a specified amount of time to each question, looking for relevant content in their notes and the text.

3. The group has 20 minutes to make one crib sheet that everyone in that group can use during the exam.

Offer proof that study groups improve performance — Compare the scores, points or grades of those working in study groups with those who aren’t. These are data which should be collected across several sections of the course.

Define study groups broadly — Students tend to think of study groups for exam preparation, but that isn’t the only kind of student collaboration that promotes learning. If there are regularly assigned readings for the course, students can get together to discuss the reading. Again you might let them do this first in class with a good set of prompts so they see how dialogue can enrich and deepen their understanding of the assigned material. Readings are easily discussed in virtual environments, which means the group doesn’t have to find a time when everybody can meet. If various writing assignments are required in the course, students can form peer editing groups. Rubrics, checklists and prompts can help them get beyond superficial feedback (“you might need a comma here”) to the kind of helpful critique that improves the writing.

For students to get the most value from their study sessions, you’ll need to help them come up with a different set of strategies. You can do so by holding a review session and asking students to form potential study groups (it’s up to them if they want to meet as a group more often). Give the groups tasks like these:

1. For three minutes everybody reviews their notes and lists five things they think will be on the test and then for five minutes they share lists and create a group list of the items most often mentioned. During the exam debrief, students revisit their list of things they expected to see on the exam. Were those things on the exam?

2. Everybody takes three minutes and writes a question about some content they don’t understand or wish they understood better. The group devotes a specified amount of time to each question, looking for relevant content in their notes and the text.

3. The group has 20 minutes to make one crib sheet that everyone in that group can use during the exam.

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