Oh, that is so easy — just come and talk to me! Really, it’s usually just that simple. Most students have no clue about what is involved in research, or how to go about getting started, therefore you are normal. Your professors were once in similar shoes, thinking the same thing. Knowing this, a lot of us have various levels of research experiences for our students. In my department our students jokingly refer to themselves as research “minions” on their first project.

When developing a research team, I need an experienced researcher to head it all up, but then I usually have many other students working on just a small segment of a project, often for the first time, themselves evolving into experienced researchers. It could be that they’ll be excitedly camping out on the Appalachian Trail one night to query hikers, wearily climbing Mt. Katahdin in Maine to do the same, boringly showing a participant to the computer to do a questionnaire, or even scandalously finding 20 curse words with the exact number of letters, syllables, and frequency of use to do a study on taboo. We have so many ideas, more ideas than students to do them.

We don’t expect you to know about anything about how to do research at first. After all, we professors are teachers too. We do want to teach you about research, to immerse you in the experience, because we love research and want to share that. And it all starts with a conversation with me or another professor. Just saying something like, “I want to get involved in research but I don’t know how to get started” is all you need to say to me to get started. I’ll probably get a weird starry-eyed look of excitement when I talk to you about research.

Forgive me, I’m talking about my passion. Just do not ask me about the tombstone study or you might find yourself making photos of tombstones in Texas or North Dakota…maybe we should include Canada…I’ll have to think about that.

-Larry Bates, Professor of Psychology, Ph.D.
Collier helps students achieve success in many ways

By Jennifer Maddox
Assistant Professor, Librarian

It’s important to prepare yourself for success at UNA and Collier Library is here to help you achieve it. While most students think of the library as the place to go for books and journal articles, we’re so much more.

Some of our most valuable resources are the people who work here. When your professor assigns a paper and requires you to research a topic, we can help. Schedule a research consultation and a librarian will meet with you one on one. We’ll help you refine your research topic and show you how to start your research.

What are some of the other things Collier Library has for students?

- Study rooms (You can reserve one through the library website!)
- Laptops for use inside the library
- Tech lending program, including a GoPro and a 360 Degree camera
- Computer lab with over 70 computers

More tips from the experts!

These students are seasoned researchers, and they have advice for you

If I were to give advice to freshmen students about getting involved with undergraduate research, it would be to jump in feet first and talk to your professors. I know it can be a little intimidating to approach a faculty member outside of class hours, but it shows initiative and dedication. It may take you a few tries to find a lab that is doing research in a field of your interest, but once you do, the opportunities are limitless.

Jason L. Floyd, Cellular and Molecular Biology

I fully recommend that all students get involved with some form of research, especially something that you are or potentially might be interested in. Professors at UNA are so willing and eager to help students advance their learning potential, and help students by working with them on perspective research. I suggest that students get involved with a couple different research projects over their time at the University. I wish I had shown interest in research earlier in my undergraduate career; I had a lot of fun working with Dr. Paulk and Title IX to help build my research for Research Days. There is so much for students to learn and gain when doing research; I am so thankful I had the opportunity and time to participate in undergraduate research at UNA.

Taylor Anders, Criminal Justice