Experience shows that teaching students how to conduct scholarly research is a daunting task in any environment, but this task can prove even more difficult when conducted completely online. Providing students with library instruction greatly enhances their ability to produce quality research projects but providing this instruction in the online environment can prove challenging. This best practice session will look at how DePaul University, Chicago IL, provides embedded librarian services to both its online graduate and undergraduate research classes.

The University has found that the embedded librarian model requires a high level of cooperation between the librarian and the instructor of record. In this model, each online class is assigned a librarian who is embedded into their course. This embedded librarian is responsible for grading and providing students feedback for a number of library assignments that guide the students toward making good choices for both keyword and database selection. Close coordination and role delineation between the librarian and the instructor of record has been found to be essential to the success of this type of integration.

To foster a greater sense of support and community, the embedded librarian also monitors a discussion forum and is available via instant message for additional questions and problems that students may face as they go through identifying and evaluating materials to be used in their final research projects. This model has allowed for greater integration of library instruction concepts into the research curriculum and the instructors of record have reported higher quality of student work as a result.