When I first began this project, I was unsure how useful the library resources at the Monroe F. Swilley, Jr. library would actually be. My area of research was the fast-paced area of educational technology, so I wondered if Swilley could provide up-to-date journal articles, dissertations, and books. To my delight, I found the library resources to be extremely up-to-date and useful in developing the conceptual framework of my project and especially for conducting a thorough literature review.

To begin my project, I needed to find a research problem that pertained to higher education and that was of interest to me. I had been intrigued with asynchronous online e-learning and instructional design for several years, so I wanted to investigate issues in those areas. I used Google Scholar to find recent articles on my topic; however, I found that most of the articles were owned by publishing houses who charged a premium to access those articles.

It was Peter Otto at the circulation desk who told me about the Galileo website, so I signed on to that website with the Mercer password and used Galileo to obtain many of the initial articles that I was interested in reading. What I would do is use Google Scholar to do the initial search, and then I would use Galileo to get full-text files of the articles to download. I soon found a study problem that I wanted to investigate and acquired some useful literature in the process.

The next thing I needed to do was to develop a thorough literature review. I wanted to find seminal works on theory. Swilley was great with providing the seminal works I needed. Books by Vygotsky, Kolb, and other scholars were available, and I ended up purchasing several books after first checking them out at Swilley.

When it came to finding recent literature, one of my favorite resources was the ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. It was extremely helpful that the Swilley library had a full online subscription. I would find recent dissertations related to my topic and download the full-text files. What a great immediate service, and I did not have to pay UMI $35 for a copy! The reference sections of many of those dissertations were a goldmine for finding even more references to recent journal articles. In turn, I would go to the Swilley website and see if the articles were available. Most were.

For the articles that were not available, I would use the interlibrary loan service and usually have the articles emailed to me in a day or two. This service was very convenient and allowed me to focus on my research instead of waiting.

The online subscriptions at Swilley are much more complete than what was available to me at the last university which I attended. I now consider myself an online-resource power user and feel that I can find and acquire just about any source that I desire. That is a great feeling when doing serious research.