CHANGING PRACTICES OF UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS TEACHING AT BGSU

ABOUT:

This report summarizes the findings and recommendations of a study of the changing teaching needs of undergraduate business faculty at Bowling Green State University (BGSU). This local project was conducted by BGSU librarians in the 2018-19 academic year as part of a national study coordinated by Ithaka S+R in conjunction with other institutional-level studies throughout the country. Ithaka S+R, a not-for-profit research and consulting organization that works with academic communities, will produce an overarching report on supporting the changing practices of undergraduate teaching in the field of business.

THE FULL REPORT:

https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ul_pub/59/

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FINDING 1: THE REAL WORLD

Faculty see the value in experiential and applied learning and strive to make the learning experience as close to industry conditions as possible. Participants placed great value in providing students with experiences that mirror what is happening in the profession, and the real world is brought to the students through a variety of teaching strategies, projects, and activities.

"So we're not just sitting in an ivory tower, but we're thinking, 'What do employers need from us?'"

FINDING 2: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Student engagement is highly valued among faculty and encompasses active student participation in course activities, interest in the course material, and assessment of their engagement using metrics and accountability measures. Faculty use technology tools to facilitate participation. Large class sizes and classroom limitations present challenges to student engagement.

"The biggest challenge is just keeping them engaged, so that's a constant struggle, trying to find the right activities"

FINDING 3: TEACHING MATERIALS

Faculty use teaching materials including textbooks and electronic publisher resources to illustrate course concepts through real-world examples. They struggle to keep up with new information and to find supplemental materials for courses. Faculty engage in limited sharing of course materials within their department/profession.

"it's important not only to have my own content, but to bring in, strategically, other content for the students to get diverse voices in what they're hearing"

FINDING 4: TEACHING SUPPORT

Faculty identified various resources, people and organizations that provide feedback, training and other material in support of their teaching. They frequently turn to their peers for teaching support. Faculty also rely on library services as part of expert teaching support, either sending students to the library for assistance or providing time for the librarian to teach during a class period. Faculty also refer students to the Learning Commons in the library for writing and tutoring and to the Collab Lab for technology and design thinking resources.

"it's an ongoing task to keep up on the new databases and the new sources of information."

In response to the major findings, the following are identified opportunities for University Libraries to consider in support of faculty teaching in the College of Business. The business librarian, Linda Rich, will consult with University Library and CoB faculty on the recommended actions to identify and prioritize implementation.

RECOMMENDATON 1: CURATED CONTENT

A support service that would deliver curated content, appropriate to individual course information needs, directly to the faculty member would be desirable.
Possible action steps:

- *Increase knowledge of business course content to improve ability to provide business faculty with relevant, curated content. Work with interested faculty to explore the best means of acquiring the knowledge and understanding needed to be effective.*

- *Implement a process for scanning current library database content/offerings/features for information to support classroom instruction. Establish an effective method (in consultation with business faculty) for sharing the resource content.*

RECOMMENDATON 2: REAL WORLD RESEARCH SKILLS

Explore options to interest and engage students in their classroom. Methods include using varied technologies and leveraging real-world connections.
Possible action steps:

- *To increase student engagement with library resources, make the real-world connection for students between resources such as MarketLine, Mintel and IBIS World and the information needed and used in the industry environment. Provide concrete examples of how business professionals use data and information, possibly including testimonials from BGSU CoB alumni.*

- *Consult with the CoB's CATL and individual faculty regarding classroom engagement strategies proven to be successful when working with business students.*

RECOMMENDATON 3: EXPANDED COMMUNICATION

CoB faculty and students would benefit from descriptions and guidance regarding services and resources that the library offers.
Possible action steps:

- *Establish regular and sustained communication (through emails, newsletters, or in-person) with CoB faculty to promote library resources and services.*

- *Investigate offering workshops related to library databases and resources that would be of interest to CoB faculty.*

- *Inform faculty of University Libraries' efforts regarding Open Educational Resources and advise them on the possibilities for textbook content.*

RECOMMENDATON 4: DIRECT STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Students may benefit from support for their library research skills and use of business resources through direct outreach. Students have varied experiences with research skills and faculty have less time to provide research instruction opportunities in class.
Possible action steps:

- *BGSU Librarians currently offer drop-in research support at the Library Research & Information Desk as well as Individual Research Appointments and are currently increasing promotional efforts. To add to these efforts, investigate additional ways to target business students, including via the Navigate system.*

- *With UL instruction librarians, explore opportunities to teach subject-specific (including business) research skills in addition to the "one shot" library instruction currently taught as invited by instructors for a specific class. This might include library workshops or credit-bearing courses.*