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Business Information Literacy in the Early 21st Century: An Analysis of Instructional Practices and Trends

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Business Librarianship in the Early 21st Century: An Analysis of Instructional Practices and Trends

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LG: Hello, my name is LuMarie Guth, and I'll be presenting today with Amanda Click on Business Librarianship in the Early 21st Century: An Analysis of Instructional Practices and Trends.

A Tale of 3 Studies

- 2003 Martha Cooney
  - AACSB Accredited US Institutions
  - Via Mail
- 2015 LuMarie Guth and Dianna Sachs
  - AACSB Accredited US Institutions
  - Via direct email to a library contact (preferably business librarian)
- 2019 Amanda Click, Claire Wiley, & Meggan Houlihan
  - Listservs: BRASS, BUSLIB, ACRLFRAME, INFOLIT, and ILI

LG: This presentation is derived from the data collected in 3 studies using a survey developed by Martha Cooney in 2003 and modified by LuMarie Guth and Dianna Sachs in 2015 and by Amanda Click, Claire Wiley, and Meggan Houlihan in 2019. A notable difference in the survey was the distribution method. In 2003 it was sent to library contacts at AACSB accredited US institutions via mail, in 2015 it was sent to library contacts at AACSB accredited US institutions via email, and in 2019 it was sent to relevant list servs.

Respondents

	2003	2015	2019
# of Responses	n=146	n=195	n=149
Institution Type — Bachelors	3%	17%	9%
Masters	40%	34%	20%
Doctoral	56%	49%	53%

LG: The number of responses were fairly similar for each study. You'll notice in the percentages of respondents by institution type that the numbers for the 2019 survey do not add up to 100. There were additional options included in 2019, including specialist (only 1 respondent), associates (5% of responses), and other (10% of respondents).

BIL Landscape

	2003	2015	2019	Difference 2015-19	Difference 2003-19
Average number of librarians providing BIL	2.4	2.1	2.0	-5%	-17%
Average number of BIL sessions annually	34.4	29.5	27	-8%	-22%

ABC: All three surveys asked questions about the general BIL landscape, including the number of librarians providing BIL at each institution and the number of BIL sessions taugh annually. You can see that there is a downward trend for both questions - fewer librarians teaching BIL and fewer sessions taught. LuMarie and I wonder if the decreasing number of sessions may be due to an increased emphasis on asynchronous tutorials in recent years.

Method of BIL Instruction

How is information literacy instruction provided to your business students? Please check all that apply.

___ In a general (non-discipline specific) information literacy program

___ In on-demand instruction sessions to business classes

___ Integrated in core business courses

___ Integrated in other (non-core) business courses

___ In a business information literacy course (for credit)

___ In a business information literacy course (no credit)

___ Via online resources (e.g., tutorials, LibGuides)

___ Other,(please specify)

40% → 78%

Online tutorial   Online resources

ABC: We asked HOW BIL is provided. Small changes to the survey instrument effected findings. For example, the 2015 survey used the phrase "online tutorial," while the 2019 survey updated this to "online resources" including the examples you can see on the slide. Specifically, adding LibGuides as an example is likely the reason that this number jumped from 40% to 78% between 2015 and 2019. Many respondents who selected Other in the 2015 survey specified by naming LibGuides. For both years, many listed one-and-one and group research consultations for Other, demonstrating the blurring of the lines between instruction and research support.

Method of BIL Instruction Responses

	2003	2015	2019
On-demand instruction presentation(s) to business classes	92%	93%	95%
General (non-discipline specific) information literacy program	38%	34%	41%
Integrated in core business program courses	35%	34%	39%
Integrated in other business program courses	17%	15%	20%
Print tutorial	~8%	6%	--
Business information literacy course (for credit)	4%	5%	5%
Business information literacy course (no credit)	3%	1%	2%

ABC: Aside from the online tutorial to online resources leap, the numbers weren't dramatically different between 2003 and 2019. On-demand instruction presentations, or one-shots, remain extremely common and dedicated BIL courses extremely rare. Note that the 2019 survey did NOT ask about print tutorials.

Adoption of the Framework

39% of respondents had incorporated the Framework into their Business IL instruction in 2015 and 52% in 2019.

Of those who had adopted...

	2015 (Agree)	2019 (Agree)	Difference
Framework brought more focus to my teaching efforts	52%	72%	38%
Framework made the assessment process easier	24%	34%	42%
Framework provides a good means to measure student learning outcomes	27%	36%	33%
Framework has positively affected the results of my teaching efforts.	35%	63%	51%

LG: The 2015 and 2019 surveys both asked about the adoption of the ARCL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. While the Framework was formally adopted in January 2016, it was first filed by ACRL in February 2015 and earlier drafts had been heavily circulated for feedback since early 2014. 52% of respondents had adopted the Framework into their business information literacy instruction by 2019, an increase from 39% in 2015. Respondents who had adopted the framework were asked to report on what value, if any, it brought to their instruction. All four value categories increased from 2015 to 2019 with the highest ranked being that "the framework brought more focus to my teaching efforts" at 72% agreement.

Reasons for NOT Incorporating the Framework

	2015	2019*
Have not done so yet, but plan to in future	58%	15%
Have no plans to incorporate	17%	11%
Not familiar with	14%	6%
Do not agree with	11%	7%

*2019 survey included an additional "Other" option.

ABC: Consider the context - the Framework was introduced in early 2015. By 2019, there had been MUCH discussion, excitement and push-back around the document. The 2015 respondents would have been just getting familiar with the Framework, and clearly many planned to incorporate it. By 2019, most of those who intended to use it had begun to do so. The 2019 version of the survey allowed and Other option for respondents to share their own perspectives on incorporating the Framework.

"Other" Responses

"I would describe the Framework as "in the background" of my instruction. My primary focus is to help students develop research skills that apply to their class."

"I only have one shots in support of specific assignments and I am teaching databases according to faculty request. Although I am aware of the Framework, and agree with many of its goals, I cannot include its precepts and satisfy the needs of the professor who invited me to the class."

"I just haven't needed it. I prefer to use the BRASS standards if I apply universal standards at all."

ABC: The quotes on this slide are representative of those who selected Other when asked why they had not incorporated the Framework. Time limitations, faculty expectations, and preference for other documents were commonly described. Also, respondents expressed the idea that the Framework is used "in the background" but not explicitly.

Use of the Frames in Business IL Instruction

Of those respondents who said they were incorporating the Framework into their instruction...

	2015	2019	Difference
Research as Inquiry	73%	71%	-3%
Searching as Strategic Exploration	73%	79%	-8%
Authority is Constructed and Contextual	72%	74%	-3%
Information has Value	**67%**	**86%**	**28%**
Scholarship as Conversation	**48%**	**33%**	**-31%**
Information Creation as a Process	42%	50%	19%

LG: Respondents who had incorporated the Framework into their instruction were asked which Frames they used and the changes from 2015 to 2019 reflect the relevance found in the framework as business librarians gained familiarity through application. Notably, the Frame Information Has Value increased 28% in utilization from 2015 to 2019 and the frame Scholarship as Conversation decreased 31%.

Information has Value vs Scholarship as Conversation

Information has Value has emerged as a highly relevant frame for business librarians.

> "Information possesses several dimensions of value, including as a **commodity**, as a means of education, as a **means to influence**, and as a **means of negotiating** and understanding the world. Legal and **socioeconomic interests** influence information production and dissemination."*

Scholarship as Conversation has receded in relevance for business librarians.

- Lower emphasis on peer-reviewed articles and academic texts in business assignments
- Higher emphasis on market research reports, industry profiles, and company financials

*https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework

LG: When analyzing the short summary of Information has Value from the Framework document you can see keywords that are strikingly familiar and relevant to business librarians. While socioeconomic issues were present in the ACRL Standards, the language choice of information as a "commodity," "a means to influence" and a "means of negotiating" are new to the Framework. I'd actually like to share my own experience in discovering the relevancy of Information Has Value. In spring of 2016 I conducted a cross institutional study of faculty perceptions of the concept of information literacy and the individual frames in regards to their impact on the success of their students. Although there were only 12 business faculty who participated in the study, they stood out from faculty in other disciplines by ranking Information Has Value as the most impactful frame, even higher than the concept of information literacy in general. These findings were reported on at LOEX 2017, and they really made me look at Information Has Value in a new light, finding that it spoke directly to the values of business faculty and students. In contrast, Scholarship as Conversation has receded in relevance for business librarians. Qualitative responses in the 2019 study indicated that this is because of a lower emphasis on peer-reviewed articles in business assignments and a higher emphasis on things like market research reports, industry profiles, and company financials.

Collaborative Practice

Respondents who describe their instruction as a collaborative effort with business faculty increased

- 21% from 2015 to 2019 and
- 13% from 2003 to 2019

% who describe their BIL instruction as collaborative

2003 - 78%
2015 - 73%
2019 - 88%

ABC: I'm going to go through the next couple of slides quickly. These surveys asked a couple of general questions about librarian-business faculty collaboration. You can see from the numbers here that the respondents who describe their BIL instruction as a collaborative effort increased 21% from 2003 to 2019, and 13% from 2003 to 2019 due to a slight dip in 2015. At the bottom of the slide you can see the percentage of respondents who answered "Yes" to "Would you describe the business information literacy instruction as a collaborative effort between your library and the business faculty at your institution?"

Assessment Practice

Respondents who said they assess IL in their business instruction increased

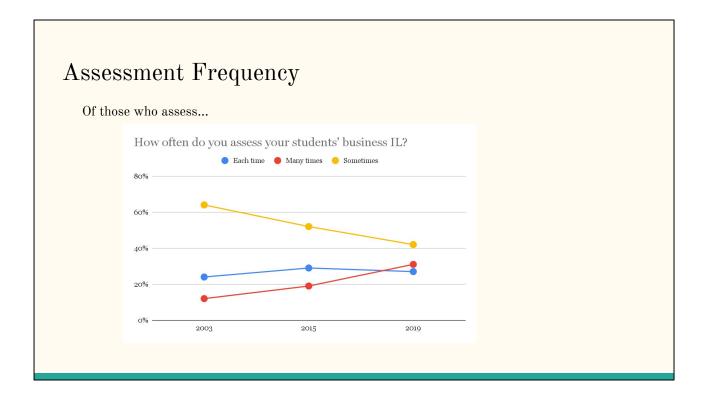- 14% from 2015 to 2019 and
- 56% from 2003 to 2019

% who assess students' BIL

2003 - 27%
2015 - 37%
2019 - 42%

ABC: Emphasis on assessment has also increased over the years. Overall, respondents who say they assess their BIL increased by 56% between 2003 and 2019. Again, the percentage of respondents who answered Yes to "Do you assess your students' business information literacy skills?" is at the bottom of the slide.

Assessment Frequency

Of those who assess...

How often do you assess your students' business IL?

● Each time ● Many times ● Sometimes

ABC: Here you can see that the number of librarians who report assessing BIL only "sometimes" has decreased, while those that report assessing "many times" has increased from 12% to 31%.

Assessment Methods

Big jump in assignments (31% to 45%) and post-tests (20% to 42%)

"Other" responses include:

- Faculty feedback
- In-class activities
- Student feedback

ABC: The use of post-tests and assignments for assessment purposes has increased. Respondents reported Other types of assessment as well, including faculty feedback, in-class activities, and student feedback. Faculty feedback tends to be informal, and student feedback generally occurs at the end of class. This often looks like a minute paper or plus/delta type of assessment.

Takeaways

- Decrease in average number of librarians and sessions
- Increase in online engagement with business information literacy (e.g., LibGuides, tutorials)
- Business librarians are adopting and valuing the Framework
- Business librarians are also using the BRASS Business Competencies and closely target instruction to the needs of the assignment
- Information has Value has emerged to become the most relevant Frame for business librarians
- Increased assessment and collaboration practices

LG: We attempted to step back and look at the data to find the most impactful takeaways. There was a continued decrease over the course of the 3 studies in the average number of librarians teaching business information literacy and a decrease in the average number of sessions. However, there was an increase in online engagement with business information literacy, some examples being LibGuides and tutorials. In regards to instructional guidance, business librarians are adopting and valuing the Framework, but they are also using other resources such as the BRASS Business Competencies. Librarians in both 2015 and 2019 felt it was especially important to target instruction to the particular needs of the assignment. Information has Value has emerged to become the most relevant Frame for business librarians and there has been a continuous increase in assessment and collaboration practices.

Study Citations

Click, A. B., Wiley, C. W., & Houlihan, M. A. (2021). "We're a little different:" Business information literacy perspectives on the ACRL *Framework*. *Communications in Information Literacy, 15*(1), 24-56. https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2021.15.1.2

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Guth, L., & Sachs, D. E. (2018). National trends in adoption of ACRL information literacy guidelines and impact on business instruction practices: 2003–2015. *Journal of Business & Finance Librarianship, 23*(2), 131-153. https://doi.org/10.1080/08963568.2018.1467169

LG: We've included citations for the studies and would like to thank you all for your interest in this topic.