

TEACHING AND LEARNING

It Takes a Team!

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In spring 2020, the pandemic caused many universities to move abruptly to online instruction mid-semester. This article is about the partnership of a core team of two librarians and a business professor and their efforts to provide seamless library instruction at that time.

Ongoing Library Instruction in the Business Curriculum

Over several years, the business librarian at George Mason University worked with faculty to develop an information literacy element in the Business School's Foundations Department. This information literacy instruction partnership evolved based on feedback from business faculty and library instructors. The University's Business School was experiencing a high-level of growth, and Business 103: Developing Your Professional Skills (BUS103) reached 20 sections with 600 students. The business librarian had been providing in-class instruction for each of these sections until the library's multi-disciplinary Teaching & Learning (T&L) team began assisting with the instruction load. Subsequently, the Business School appointed a new professor, a former librarian, as the library liaison to establish a strong working relationship.

Pivot! Designing Asynchronous Instruction with Librarian Facilitation

The uncertainty caused by COVID-19 led to the proactive decision to rework the current library instruction. The team collaborated to adapt the original in-person instruction to an online, asynchronous module. Library instructors created media pieces, repurposed exercises, and embedded the module in Blackboard (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xerBHXpipJA> for a preview). The assessment--online pre- and post-tests--remained the same. The team took the opportunity to beta test the new learning module with the BUS103 summer faculty and received feedback. The business professors reported finding comfort in the quality and consistency of instruction without interruption in an uncertain semester.

Mobilizing Librarians to Facilitate Fall Instruction

The extended BUS103 librarian teaching team, including the T&L librarians who had taught classes in past semesters, met to discuss the new asynchronous format. Given that the entire module was

embedded in Blackboard, librarians with Blackboard expertise became coaches for those who lacked experience. The professor on the team contacted each BUS103 faculty to share details of the new library instruction and determine their preferences for scheduling the sessions. With the establishment of the schedule, librarians selected sections and contacted professors to coordinate details. Business faculty added librarians to their Blackboard as "course builders." This allowed the librarians to add content and provide feedback to students as they completed the unit.

Analyzing Fall Library Instruction and Spring Planning

Feedback from the BUS103 faculty was positive, although many expressed a desire for more interaction between the librarians and students. Some uncertainty remains for the spring 2021 semester. The team is prepared for a mix of synchronous and asynchronous online sections, as well as in-person sections. The flexible nature of the content provides multiple options for delivering library instruction to the BUS103 classes.

Capitalizing on a strong, established relationship, the team was able to pivot successfully to new learning formats, ensuring consistent, high-quality library instruction now and in future semesters.