Supporting the Changing Practices of Teaching in Business at Queens College, City University of New York

An Ithaka S+R Research Project
Summary Presentation of the Local Report

by

James Tasato Mellone
Historical, Cultural, and Social Sciences Librarian
james.mellone@qc.cuny.edu

Local Report Co-authors:
Edward F. Wall III
Adjunct Reference Librarian
formerly Business Research and Instruction Librarian
edward.wall@qc.cuny.edu

Qiong Xu
Data Services Librarian
qiong.xu@qc.cuny.edu

Local Report in CUNY Academic Works
https://academicworks.cuny.edu/qc_pubs/358/

Queens College Libraries
1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose
Shed light on the teaching practices of Queens College (QC) faculty in Business

Goal
Identify faculty teaching support needs in order to develop ideas for improving Library services to them

Departments & Programs Teaching Business
Economics, Accounting & Information Systems, Business and Liberal Arts (BALA)

Business Students: 3550 students per year (recent 5-year average)
200 BBA majors, 1050 non-BBA Economics majors, 1700 Accounting majors, 600 BALA minors

BBA Core Courses in Majors of Actuarial Studies, Corporate Finance, International Business
Business Economics, Business Law, Finance, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Statistics

BBA Majors: Required Courses
2. METHODOLOGY & DATA

Interviews
Conducted in-person audio-recorded interviews of QC faculty who teach Business courses

Faculty Interviewees
➔ Contacted 32 Business faculty, interviewed 7 faculty; used semi-structured guide from Ithaka S+R
➔ All are full-time faculty, teach core-required courses, a few teach 25-35, 100-200 students, most 40-50

Transcription & Analysis
➔ Professional transcription service transcribed the audio recordings of the interviews
➔ We anonymized transcripts, did close readings, used NVivo to analyze qualitative data, create Codes

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

3.1 Faculty Self-reliance
Commitment to Effective Teaching
General trait of Self-reliance in their approach to teaching, both in preparation and in actual practice

Insufficient Teaching Supports
One faculty summarized that the tradition at QC has been that “you’re on your own”

Department Colleagues’ Support
One or two people in each department who help with new teaching techniques, materials, or technologies

Student Preparedness in Decline for 3-4 years
Given student decline, and employers change what they want often, faculty focus on “what leads to effective teaching,” “constantly talking about...what we should teach...compare what we do”
3.2 Library Outreach on Current Supports

Current Library Supports
Faculty know about e-reserves & e-resources, the Library is “great,” has “a lot of info,” databases are “fantastic,” but students and faculty may not realize the what else the Library has or does, for instance:

Clickers
Available for student borrowing

Instruction
Library faculty teach sessions in course classrooms, or in teaching labs located in the Library or elsewhere

Monographs
Quality scholarly books are purchased in Business subjects

Research Guides
Routinely created for academic subjects or specific courses

Research Services
Widely available to students and faculty, via chat, via email, via phone, and in-person

Textbooks
Purchased at faculty request and placed on Library Reserve
3.3. Library Supports to Investigate

Besides Business faculty’s own knowledge, they also rely on others:

➔ *Publisher* materials (textbooks, online homework) are essential, faculty highly value customer support

➔ *Center for Teaching and Learning* has timely proficient resources & support which faculty highly value

➔ *Information Technology Services* could improve tech maintenance; increase spaces with new tech

Library support services can be investigated via more conversations with Business faculty and others about:

**Events** in Library spaces for Career Readiness, Global Fluency, Panel Discussions, Student Engagement

**Instruction** efforts expanded to include Advanced Software Skills, Business Research Skills, Course-Linked Research Assistance, Data Literacy Skills, Library Research Guides & Online Tutorials, Face-to-Face Tutorials

**Personnel** knowledgeable to serve Business, social science librarians and graduate assistants for Business

**Promotion** campaigns to encourage Attendance and Study Effort, Open Educational Resources (OER), Reading and English Language Proficiency, Research and Writing, Trading Competition

**Resources** to develop further, purchase anew; Data Analysis Software, Data Sets, Financial Software Systems, Laptops, Library Electronic Resources, Monographs, OER, Problem Sets, QC Video Platform, Required Course Material, Textbooks

**Spaces** for Teaching Labs, Data Analysis & Trading Lab, Study Spaces, Group Study and Tutorial Rooms
4. TEACHING FOUNDATIONS

To discuss improving service to Business, Library must understand pedagogy of teaching Business

4.1 Teaching Methods

Lecture and Discussion
Question and Answer
Flipped Class
Case Studies

4.2 Curricular Goals & Examinations

Useful Knowledge
Career Preparation
Core Knowledge
Midterm, Final, Prep Exam, Multiple-choice Questions, Essay Exam, Quiz, Certification Exam
Analytics Tools

4.3 Teaching Tools: Overview

Blackboard LMS, Email
Computer, Projector, Classroom Response System (CRS)
Whiteboard, SMART Board
4.4 Teaching Tools: Current Supports

*Information Technology Services (ITS)*

➔ Main issue is maintenance and currency of technology in classrooms and lecture halls
➔ Many spaces are not technology equipped, no built-in desktop console with projection
➔ Perfect classroom: “would already have the computer there and you just show up and click” to start
➔ In sum, faculty receive ITS support but the service can be inconsistent

*Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)*

➔ College office that faculty rely on most to support their teaching preparation
➔ They “were very helpful” providing one-on-one human help; “on top of things and ready there to help”

*Library Electronic Reserves*

➔ Library service most frequently referenced as consistently helpful and dependable
➔ Those who use it are pleased, one stating the “reliable” service “has never failed me”
➔ Rely on system & “very helpful” staff, for “the simple kind of things…the library has been great”

4.5 Teaching Tools: Library Supports to Investigate

*Teaching Lab Space:* how to increase it to support Business and other social science teaching; it would be “good if we had more computer labs or bigger computer labs, either in the library or somewhere else”
5. STUDENT OUTCOMES & CHALLENGES

5.1 Student Outcomes: Overview

Rote Understanding, Conceptual Understanding, Critical Thinking
Problem Solving, Data Literacy, Programming
Research, Writing, Collaboration, Global Fluency, Career Readiness Skills

5.2 Student Outcomes: Library Supports to Investigate

Career Events
Support Career Readiness Skills via collaboration on workshops (resumes, cover letters, mock interviews)

Data Analysis Software
Try to coordinate subscriptions, links, tutorials to Data Analysis Software, such as Stata, R, etc.

Data Resources and Instruction
Subscribe to data, problems, OER alternatives, etc. for Data Literacy, Problem Solving, and Critical Thinking;

Global Programming
Increase Global Fluency via exposure to geographies & cultures, via art, film, lectures, author readings, etc.

Partnering for Tutorials & Small-Group Activities (CTL, Writing Center, et. al.)
Make use of Library spaces, instruction, e-resources, etc. to improve Research, Writing, Collaboration

Required Course Material
Discover funding path for all required course material to support Rote and Conceptual Understanding
5.3 Student Challenges: Overview

Many QC Business students face learning challenges which affects how Business faculty teach. Library needs to understand average QC Business student to learn what supports benefit Business teaching.

Attendance

➔ One faculty takes Attendance, approximates trend others see; about 66% rather than expected 80%.  
➔ One faculty: students "very passive way about being in class," “just want to come, be in class, and leave.”

English Language Proficiency

➔ Affects sizeable portion of Business students; encouraged to bring copies of the Slides to class.

Reading

➔ Many faculty note students are not attentive to Reading the Textbook nor other course readings.  
➔ “Do not read”, “do not like to read,” “don’t read anymore,” nor “look at information,” don’t read Slides.

Watching Videos

➔ Many students do not watch “engaging” videos to prep for class, “solve the doubts,” etc.  
➔ Watching Videos could work well; those who did were “much better prepared,” “grades were better.”

Study Effort

➔ Attendance, Reading, and Watching Videos grouped together under one rubric called Study Effort.  
➔ Lack of Study Effort troubles & perplexes faculty most, some call it “general ability,” “basic tools.”  
➔ Still very good students, “new mass of students” of lower quality, “dramatic decrease” in level 3-4 yrs.  
➔ Students don't think they have "to prepare for class,” will not “devote an hour before class to get ready.”
5.4 Student Challenges: Library Supports to Investigate

"Big mystery – is figuring out how to effectively teach students in an age where students do not like to read, where they just like to see videos"

Library must understand student challenges to assess effectiveness of current supports for Business

Course-Linked Research Assistance
Library faculty subject specialists could give embedded research help via Blackboard LMS course sites

Graduate Assistants
Library can partner with departments for grad assistants to teach Advanced Software & Data Literacy Skills

Library Instruction Enhancement
Broaden and deepen Library faculty instruction; consider the desirability and practicality of teaching:

➔ **Advanced Software Skills** for MS-Office, “amazed how people don’t know how to use Excel”

➔ **Data Literacy Skills** for Excel, R, Stata, etc., “a one-on-one quick,” “a workshop,” or “walk-in hours”

➔ **Business Research Skills** using Library Electronic Resources so they know “these are the resources for the BBA” and that “research librarians are there to help”

Library Labs & Laptops
Can increase number & availability for Watching Videos, extended weekend & late night hours

Library Study Spaces
Could promote as best places to foster Study Effort, improve group study, quiet areas, create silent study area
**Promote Attendance, Study Effort, Reading**
Launch *Attendance & Study Effort* campaign, encourage ‘going to class’ and ‘studying in the Library’ as good & popular; promote *Reading* and *English Language Proficiency* via more fiction, non-fiction, graphic, bilingual

**QC Instructional Video Repository**
Continue support for *CTL* and *ITS* efforts to establish a Repository for easier access for *Watching Videos*

**Social Science Librarians for Business Support**
Expand & deepen Library faculty proficiency in providing business-related instruction and research support

**Student Engagement Events**
Host greeting events, lectures, pictures, discussions to meet alumni, employers, in finance & on Wall St.
6. TEACHING SOURCES

6.1 Teaching Sources: Overview

Syllabus, Textbook, Online Homework, Problems
Slides, Pictures
YouTube

6.2 Teaching Sources: Current Supports

Data Analysis Software, Financial Software Systems, Trading Competition
➔ Stata, R, Bloomberg, ThomsonOne, TD Ameritrade

Publisher
➔ All faculty mention Publisher support as intrinsic to their teaching

Library Electronic Resources
➔ Faculty also depend upon Library e-resources to assign newspaper, trade, journal articles to students
6.3 Teaching Sources: Library Supports to Investigate

Several sources to consider purchasing or subscribing to; might need creative ways to raise the funds

**Data Analysis & Trading Lab**
A multipurpose space to serve data analysis and trading for Business and other social sciences

**Data Analysis Software**
Provide easy access to R, site license for most up-to-date Excel version

**Financial Software Systems**
Subscribe to what respected Business programs have: WRDS, CRSP, S&P Capital IQ, Compustat, etc.,

**Library Electronic Resources & Research Guides**
Facilitate links via *Blackboard LMS* course sites for students; develop more Research Guides for Business

**Monographs**
Pursue creative ways to increase budget to purchase scholarly Business books for student research

**Textbooks**
Try to purchase more online and physical *Textbooks for Business*; broker better *Publisher* deals; find OER
7. CONCLUSION

Direct discussion with Business faculty is first step for Library to learn how to better support teaching needs.

Confirmations
➔ Experiences widely shared by social science & other faculty on student challenges with *Study Effort*
➔ Challenge in providing enough classrooms with built-in teaching tech, and sufficient *ITS* support

Library may consider how to prioritize support investigations outlined here; most, if not all, would entail additional human & financial resources; Library can partner with *CTL*, the Writing Center, and others

➔ **Events** in Library spaces to foster Business student engagement and career readiness

➔ **Instruction** efforts to expand Library teaching of Business-related information and skills

➔ **Personnel** knowledgeable to teach Business-related information and skills

➔ **Promotion** efforts to address student challenges

➔ **Resources**, new or improved, for Business-related information content

➔ **Spaces** extended for all kinds of teaching, and new spaces for data & trading