

Literacy Grant Final Report
Donna J. Simpson, KSOM adjunct faculty
Business Foundations for Entrepreneurs BUAD 362 and
Applied Business Foundations for Entrepreneurs BUAD 363
Spring 2012
Betsey Moylan, Librarian

Project Summary:

In order for students to understand entrepreneurship and create a business plan, excellent research skills are necessary. Research is often needed related to a particular industry, demographics, financial standards and more.

With proper training early in this minor, students will be well prepared to tackle a business plan as well complete weekly assignments and to serve as a consultant in the KSOM/SBDC's Women's Entrepreneurship Center.

Information literacy is a life-long behavior that will help students no matter where their studies take them. In the competitive business environment, information literate individuals will have an advantage over those who don't.

Outcome:

During the first week of class and 5 weeks later, the class attended a session in the library presented by Betsey Moylan. They received hands on training on the use of the library's data bases as well as reviewed many useful materials from the circulation desk. Sources of industry information, financial ratios, demographics and more were reviewed. Tips were provided on how to narrow a database search, how to cite materials and other practical tips for entrepreneurship research.

Each assigned project, from weekly case studies to the final analysis of a real life business plan, encouraged the use of library resources. Additionally students submitted weekly reflections on how they used the library.

I found rather quickly that students are not interested in the library resources and rely on Google for their research needs. I continued to show them specific uses for the databases the library provides and seemed to meet resistance at every turn. Then, after our second meeting with Betsey Moylan in the library, something clicked. The reflection papers start to show additional students using the library for all of their classes, not just this one.

For the first 5 weeks, there were 38% of the students complying and using the library. By the end of the semester that number rose to 77% of the students were in compliance.

This semester I also taught MGT 352 and COMM 100. I shared the library resources and encouraged these students to use the library as their go to source rather than Google. There was 85% compliance. I cannot determine why these students eagerly use the library, while the Entrepreneurship students were more difficult to bring along. Further, of the total students, 71% were juniors or above. I engaged the students in a question & answer session and the only explanation I received was that students believe they find everything they need using Google. They are not interested in going to the physical library and when reminded it was right on line, I got shrugs. I'll ignore this behavior for now, and save it for another research project.

Summary:

My goal to educate students to become productive members of the business world was met with resistance, however, by the end of the semester that began to change. I will be replicating this project with subsequent classes as I feel a library's resources are indispensable. Further, I feel confident the student who has signed on for the business consulting internship with the Women's Entrepreneurship Center (WEC) this summer, is prepared to meet the requirements of that position.

Finally, I want to express my appreciation for the opportunity to help change the research abilities of my students through the literacy grant. Hats off to Betsey Moylan for her assistance this semester. She is an excellent resource for our entire University community. Her professionalism, enthusiasm and dedication are inspiring to all.