



*Evidence Summary*

**Investigation of Factors Affecting Information Literacy Student Learning Outcomes Fails to Undercover Significant Findings**

**A Review of:**

Detlor, B., Julien, H., Willson, R., Serenko, A., & Lavalley, M. (2011). Learning outcomes of information literacy instruction at business schools. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 62(3), 572-585.

**Reviewed by:**

Jason Martin  
Associate Librarian  
University of Central Florida Libraries  
Orlando, Florida, United States of America  
Email: [jason.martin@ucf.edu](mailto:jason.martin@ucf.edu)

**Received:** 25 Mar. 2011

**Accepted:** 25 May 2011

© 2011 Martin. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons-Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike License 2.5 Canada (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/ca/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly attributed, not used for commercial purposes, and, if transformed, the resulting work is redistributed under the same or similar license to this one.

---

**Abstract**

**Objective** – To ascertain the factors influencing student learning during information literacy instruction (ILI) and create a theoretical model based on those factors.

**Design** – Mixed methodology consisting of interviews and an assessment test.

**Setting** – Three Canadian business schools.

**Subjects** – Seven librarians, 4 library administrators, 16 business faculty, and 52 undergraduate business students were interviewed, and the Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills

(SAILS) test was administered to 1,087 undergraduate business students across three different business schools.

**Methods** – The authors used an interview script to conduct interviews with librarians, library administrators, business school faculty, and undergraduate business school students at three business schools in Canada. The authors also administered the SAILS test to undergraduate business students at the same three Canadian business schools.

**Main Results** – ILI works best when it is related to an assignment, part of the curriculum, periodically evaluated, adequately funded, timely, mandatory, interactive, uses handouts, provides the proper amount of

information, and favourably viewed within the school. ILI student learning outcomes are affected by whether the students find the ILI beneficial and relevant, their year in the program, gender, status as international or domestic student, and overall academic achievement.

**Conclusion** – Creation of theoretical model consisting of the three main factors influencing student learning outcomes in information literacy instruction: learning environment, information literacy components, and student demographics.

### **Commentary**

The authors of this research study set about to understand what factors influence student learning outcomes in ILI and develop a theoretical model for ILI. Their findings are basic; anyone who has experience teaching library instruction, or any subject matter, would be familiar with the factors the authors state influence learning outcomes. Sadly, many of these factors are out of the control of librarians and teachers. However, the basic nature of their findings works to their favour in that they add credence to the inclusion of these factors in a theoretical model.

If the authors had stopped with these findings, then they would have succeeded in developing a modest model, albeit one which

would need more research and evidence to bolster its credibility. Even “common sense” notions such as the idea that ILI should be given “just-in-time” and tied to an assignment benefit from credible supporting evidence. However, the authors include findings which seem to be not only outside their objective, but do not support their theory.

First, the authors included a discussion of the differences in perception of ILI between students and librarians, library administrators, and teaching faculty. While this discussion might make for an interesting article in and of itself, it adds nothing to the overall aim to create a theoretical model of factors influencing ILI. Second, the authors administered the SAILS test to the student participants in the three business schools. The overall scores for the three schools were not good, and only two scores of a possible 24 were statistically different. These results seem to not support the component of learning environment included in the authors’ model. The inclusion of this extra data muddles the true intent and purpose of the article.

The authors’ theoretical model provides a starting point for researchers looking to understand what factors influence student learning during library instruction. More research is needed to validate the model and possibly find more factors within the three areas that influence student learning outcomes.