

For-Credit Library Instruction: Exploring the Experiences of Academic Librarians Serving as Instructors of Record

Elizabeth Nelson and Angela R. Davis

This article shares the initial results of an exploratory project to both survey and speak to librarians who serve as instructors of record at a variety of North American institutions to understand the perspectives and experiences of those teaching for-credit instruction. Particular attention was given to how well librarians feel they are supported as for-credit instructors of record, and if they find for-credit instruction to be of value for themselves, their library, their students, and their institution. The exploratory results can be used to shape future directions of librarian-led instruction and related research.

Introduction

Academic librarians provide instruction in an increasing variety of ways, both integrated into courses and as stand-alone sessions, such as workshops and webinars. Within courses, the “one-shot” instruction session may be the most familiar, with the librarian visiting an ongoing course to provide instruction on information literacy, research methods or skills, available resources, etc. Embedded librarianship typically broadens this interaction from a few classroom or virtual visits to librarian integration into the course learning management system (LMS), daily or weekly attendance of class sessions, roles in creation or assessment of assignments, and so forth. This research project focuses on another form of instruction: “for-credit library instruction,” which this article defines as courses in which a librarian serves as the instructor of record for credit-bearing courses within their institution; they are not supporting an instructor, but are themselves the primary faculty or staff member responsible for delivering the course, assessing the students, providing grades and feedback, etc.

The “library” piece of “for-credit library instruction” does not require that the courses only deal with information literacy or research skills. At some institutions, a librarian might only be permitted to teach library-coded courses that focus on information literacy skills valuable for all students. At others, a librarian might be able to teach research methods courses for students in particular disciplines, or archive-focused courses for students in programs that deal heavily with primary sources. Additionally, librarians at some institutions may take on a secondary

*Elizabeth Nelson is Reference & Instruction Librarian at Penn State University Libraries, email: ezn80@psu.edu; Angela R. Davis is Reference & Instruction Librarian at Penn State University Libraries, email: ard21@psu.edu. ©2025 Elizabeth Nelson and Angela R. Davis, Attribution-NonCommercial (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>) CC BY-NC.

assignment—generally with separate pay and status—as an adjunct instructor to teach a wide variety of potential courses. Because respondents to this project fell into all of these categories, this article uses “for-credit library instruction” to indicate any experience in which a librarian is acknowledged as the instructor of record for a for-credit course, regardless of whether the course is a) related specifically to the library or library-adjacent areas; b) related generally to information literacy or research skills; or c) assigned to them in their job responsibilities as a librarian or under secondary employment as an instructor outside of the library.

A series of internal discussions at Penn State University Libraries about the benefits, challenges, and needs for librarians teaching for-credit courses motivated the authors to explore how academic librarians perceive and accomplish this activity more broadly. The research sought to investigate the following research questions:

- What is the perceived *impact* of for-credit instruction taught by librarians on the librarian, their library, and their institution?
- What is the perceived *value* of for-credit instruction taught by librarians for the librarian, their library, and their institution?
- What are the experiences of the librarians teaching for-credit courses?
 - What were their goals in taking on for-credit instruction and do they feel that they are meeting those goals?
 - Are they receiving adequate support for this work, financially or otherwise?
 - What challenges do they face and what kind of support do they (or would they) find most helpful?

With these questions in mind, the authors set out on an exploratory project to revisit and refresh a conversation that has been happening for decades throughout the literature.

Literature Review

Although the format and terminology vary over time and between institutions, library instruction of any kind is not a new development in librarianship. According to Shirato and Badics (1997) in their 1995 redistribution of a 1987 nation-wide LOEX survey, 61% of libraries in 1995 indicated that they provided some form of library instruction to their institutions. Approximately 30% of these libraries reported offering specifically for-credit courses through the library (pp. 228–230). A 2016 survey found that 19% of the 1,758 institutions located in all 50 of the United States that responded indicated they offered credit-bearing information literacy courses (Cohen et al., p. 567).

However, much of the academic literature produced in the 20th century on the topic of library instruction focused on “the teaching of generic skills related to the general process of retrieving and evaluating information, as opposed to the skills required for acquiring knowledge or doing research in a specific subject area” (Grafstein, 2002, p. 197). This approach may align best with the time constraints associated with one-shot information literacy instruction. Mery et al. explained, “A fifty-minute face-to-face session can focus on information retrieval but not on the more broad and complex concepts of seeking background information, identifying key terms, and the exploration needed to complement the writing process in a recursive manner” (2012, p. 369).

Supplementing the one-shot session with information literacy skills woven throughout a course via partnership between instructor and librarian can improve the success of deeper learning goals, but challenges remain. Saunders (2012) showed that, although many faculty

state support for information literacy as a vital competency for their students, the follow-through in designing courses to develop the required skills is not always there. Instead, Saunders stated that “many faculty members appear to be reluctant to collaborate or otherwise engage with librarians in instruction and assessment of information literacy” (p. 227). Many librarians have shared examples of their own work collaborating with instructors to create learning experiences for students that fall along the spectrum of embedded librarianship (Stellwagen et al., 2022; Granruth & Pashkova-Balkenhol, 2018; Egan et al., 2017). Embedded librarianship is an effective option for increasing engagement with information literacy throughout a course; however, the librarian still must work within the allowances provided by the instructor of record for the course.

Schlesselman-Tarango and Berecca (2022) discussed the value and importance of information literacy skills being taught by a course’s dedicated instructor because “faculty have direct and sustained access to students and, in turn, students’ perceptions and performance related to new content and pedagogical approaches” (p. 846). This “direct and sustained access to students” is one element that makes most forms of library instruction challenging. Librarians who teach only one-shot sessions may, due to lack of consistent contact with students, struggle to cover complex concepts that require multiple exposures. Embedded librarianship eases some of that challenge by ensuring more access to students but it also requires the librarian to secure a compatible and respectful collaborator among the faculty.

But what happens when a librarian steps into the role of the instructor of record and gains that direct and sustained access to students themselves? One benefit may be greater insight into students as researchers and as patrons of the library. Cunningham and Donovan reported, “As teachers, librarians can inform and improve upon other areas of their work, based on the understanding that comes from facilitating and observing information seeking and use in authentic contexts, such as the classroom” (2012, p. 186). Donnelly noted, in reflecting on their and their colleagues’ experiences with teaching for-credit courses, “Because we lead students on a journey through a complete research process, we see the cognitive, technological, emotional, and physical roadblocks that they encounter when performing research tasks” (2000, p. 47). MacDonald found through her experience at University of Rhode Island that “teaching a for-credit course provides the opportunity to ... [demonstrate] information literacy is a worthy and valuable subject for the overall university curriculum” (2010, p. 30). Additionally, librarians serving as instructors of record may gain a better sense of the experiences and needs of instructional faculty. As Kemp pointed out, “Walking in the shoes of the teaching faculty certainly increases sensitivity to student concerns and needs, administrative requirements, and teaching faculty workload” (2006, p. 19). By actively experiencing the demands on teaching faculty, these librarians can be better prepared to support their needs.

For-credit instruction conducted by librarians also comes with drawbacks. For example, students may not be inclined or able to fit a course into their schedule that does not directly translate into credits toward graduation requirements. As Davidson recounted from an internal survey of Oregon State University students, “approximately 63 percent of student respondents indicated they would consider taking a credit class as a means of learning library research skills. In contrast, 72 percent indicated they would take one of the described classes if it were relevant to their major” (2001, p. 157). This sentiment was echoed by MacDonald who noted “enrolling students in the [Special Topics in Information Literacy] course became logistically difficult due to the numerous other requirements for [the student’s] program of study” (2023, p.

31). With rising tuition and falling enrollment since those studies, it seems safe to assume that students' reasonable reluctance to take on "unnecessary" credit-hour costs will only increase into the future, and it is difficult to justify a course if one cannot expect sustainable enrollment.

Another potential drawback is the amount (or lack) of training and preparation needed for librarians to be successful classroom teachers. For example, "most librarians have not received instructional training and may find developing assessment tools daunting" (Burke, 2012, p. 169). It is important to also note that it is relatively uncommon for any academic faculty to receive a similar level of formal training in pedagogy as compared to their K-12 peers, prior to their first teaching assignments. However, although Davis et al. reported that more than 50% of surveyed librarians who teach for-credit courses identify as teachers, and 44% further consider themselves "as much of a teacher as those who teach outside the library," that opinion may not be shared by the institution (2011, p. 693). As a result, librarians may not be targeted by outreach from campus bodies that provide instructional design support, pedagogical training, and other services for teaching faculty. This leads to the issue of workload and compensation for librarians who teach for-credit courses. Cohen et al. shared that many of the 691 librarians responding to their survey mentioned difficulties in starting or maintaining for-credit instruction programs related to lack of staff, budget, physical instructional spaces, and more (2016, p. 575). Perret summarized that librarians expressed concerns related to "excessive burdens on library staff; insufficient, non-existent, or inappropriate financial compensation; and the perceived demand to meet all expectations of professional staff and all expectations of teaching faculty simultaneously" (2018, p. 328). Regarding workload, Auer and Krupar shared that "although teaching a for-credit course provides valuable opportunities not yet available to all librarians, such as developing long-term relationships with students, it can also turn out to be costly in terms of time lost for other projects or from the librarian's personal life" (2005, p. 51).

The current exploratory research adds to the conversation by sharing the results of a survey and follow-up discussions with North American university and college librarians who serve as instructors of record. Particular attention was paid to potential gaps the authors saw in the literature: how librarians perceive the support they receive as instructors of record for for-credit courses and whether they find for-credit instruction to be of value for themselves, their library, students, and institution as a whole.

Methods

The authors developed a survey of 26 questions using Qualtrics software. The authors ensured the privacy of survey takers by allowing them to skip any questions that they felt were too sensitive to answer. All the data was kept anonymous by not requesting specific institution names, locations, or enrollments; library's names or sizes; or respondents' titles. The survey was submitted to Penn State's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and was declared exempt. Most questions were multiple choice and gathered either demographic data or information on the amount and type of for-credit instruction the respondent personally participated in and/or was aware of taking place at their current institution. The survey also included four open-response questions to gather information on the impact of librarian-led for-credit instruction on the respondent's library and institution, as well as on the support, recognition, and/or compensation they receive as a for-credit instructor. The survey questions can be found in full in the Appendix.

An invitation to participate in the survey was sent to listservs for several communities within the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), specifically the College Libraries, Instruction, and University Libraries sections and to the all-member listserv for ACRL. These communities were invited to reach both librarians with specific focus on instruction and any ACRL member who might be at an institution where for-credit instruction is conducted by librarians. Invitations to participate were sent from early December 2022 through January 2023. The survey was closed in February 2023 with 107 responses, resulting in 87 usable responses for this research. Seventy-three of the respondents completed all survey questions, and 14 of the respondents completed all but the four open-text questions and were included in the result set. Twenty of the respondents did not complete the survey beyond the introductory questions and were removed from the results before analysis. While these 87 usable responses cannot be generalized to all librarians, they are useful in providing trends and experiences of active librarians who frequently use the mentioned listservs. This convenience sample is useful for the exploratory nature of this research and the identified trends can be considered for future research.

At the end of the survey, the authors provided respondents with an option to self-select into participating in focus group or interview discussions. This option linked to a separate survey in Google Forms to ensure that no identifiable information would be connected to the Qualtrics survey responses. Interviews were offered in addition to the focus groups to allow participants that preferred a more private discussion to participate in the research. In total, 26 survey respondents volunteered to participate in 60-minute virtual discussions, all conducted through Zoom and held either as individual interviews with the authors or as small focus groups of two to four participants. To ensure the privacy of the discussion participants, the authors allowed them to choose to change their displayed name on Zoom, turn their camera off, and be as selective or specific in their introductions and comments as they preferred. The sessions' video and audio were not recorded, but each author took notes independently during the sessions.

The discussions consisted of five overarching questions (see Appendix), prompting participants to elaborate further on their experience with teaching for-credit courses; the impact it may have on their position, library, and/or institution; what support, compensation, and/or recognition they have received for this work; and their perception of the value of librarians teaching for-credit courses. Discussions were scheduled over a few weeks at the end of February and beginning of March 2023. Because of the focus on participant privacy, the data gathered during the discussions is not generalizable but still provided deep insight into the personal experiences of the librarians that agreed to participate. At the conclusion of the discussions, the authors individually analyzed and coded the survey open-ended questions and focus group discussion notes before normalizing the data to develop the final dataset to analyze and draw conclusions.

This exploratory survey and the follow-up discussions focused on gathering perceptions of academic librarians involved with for-credit instruction. It did not gather wider perceptions of librarians *not* teaching for-credit courses, library administrators, or disciplinary faculty. It also focused more on gaining an understanding of the issues at play, rather than attempting to prove specific points about this work, which may be undertaken in subsequent research projects by the authors.

Results and Discussion

Survey Responses: Multiple Choice Questions

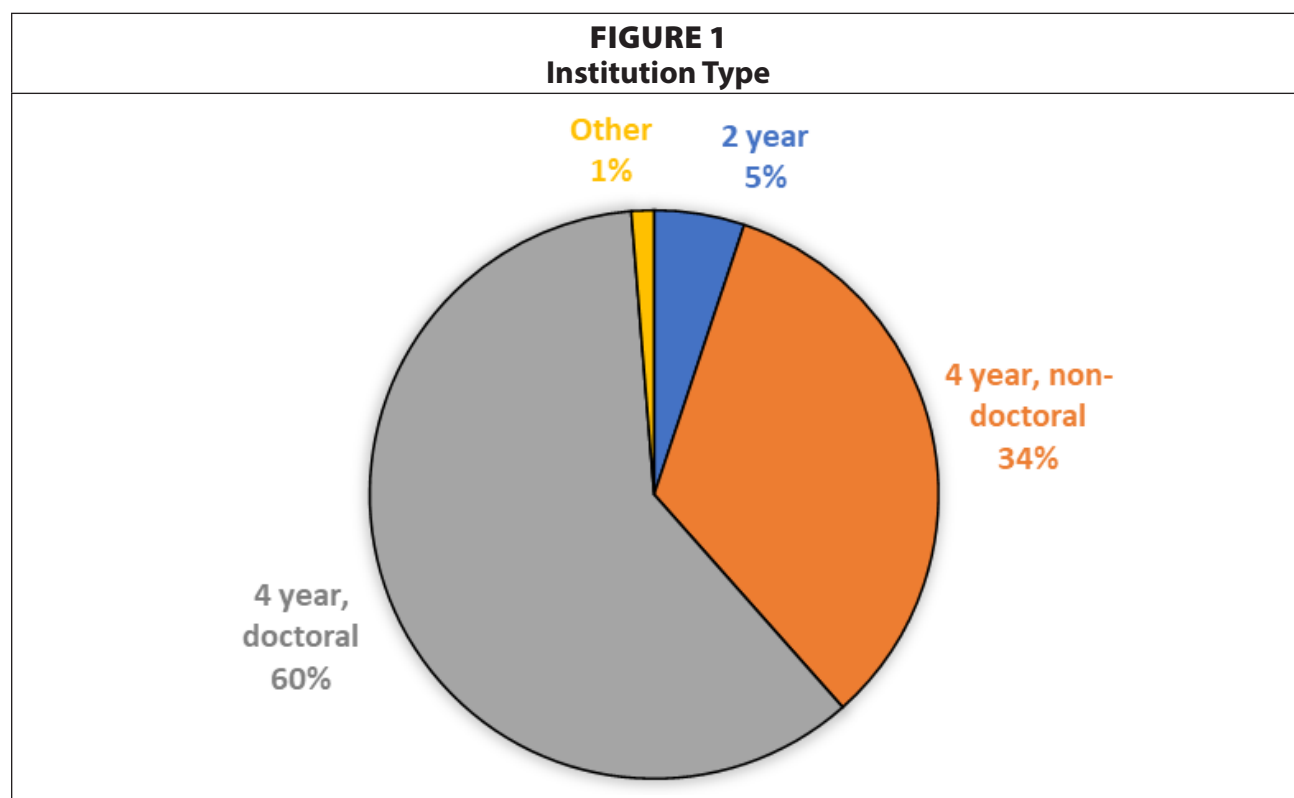
Full demographics of respondents can be found in Table 1. Most respondents were female (80.52%); Caucasian or White (88.89%); and between the ages of 30-39 (30.77%); 40-49 (33.33%); or 50-59 years old (23.08%). Most had at least four years of experience working as a librarian: 23.08% had four to seven years of experience, 34.62% more than ten years of experience, and 29.49% more than 20 years of experience. The length of time working as a librarian may suggest that most librarians pursue, or are only able to pursue, teaching for-credit once they become established in their careers. While some respondents indicated they were hired into a position that required for-credit instruction, it was typically not at an entry-level position.

TABLE 1
Demographics

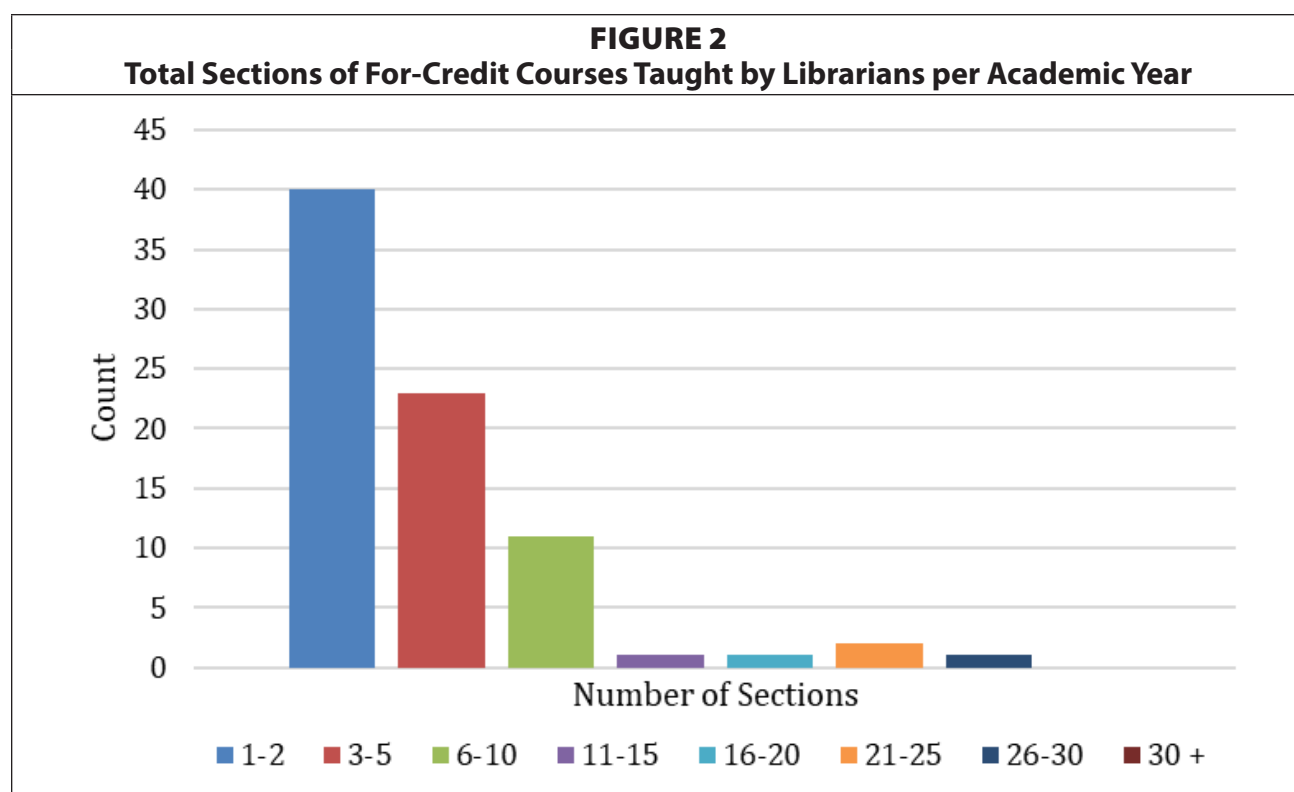
<i>Gender identity</i>		<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>		<i>Age (Years)</i>		<i>Years employed as librarian</i>		<i>Current employment type</i>	<i>#</i>
<i>Male</i>	12	<i>African-American</i>	1	<i>Less than 20</i>	0	<i>Less than 1</i>	0	<i>Tenured faculty</i>	29
<i>Female</i>	62	<i>Latino or Latina, Hispanic</i>	6	<i>20 - 29</i>	3	<i>1 to 3</i>	2	<i>Tenure-track faculty</i>	15
<i>Non-binary</i>	3	<i>Latino or Latina, non-Hispanic</i>	0	<i>30 - 39</i>	24	<i>4 to 7</i>	18	<i>Non-tenured faculty</i>	18
<i>My gender is best described as...</i>	0	<i>Asian</i>	2	<i>40 - 49</i>	26	<i>8 to 10</i>	8	<i>Adjunct faculty</i>	2
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	0	<i>Native American</i>	0	<i>50 - 59</i>	18	<i>More than 10</i>	27	<i>Temporary or short-term contract faculty</i>	0
<i>Total</i>	77	<i>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</i>	0	<i>60 - 69</i>	5	<i>More than 20</i>	23	<i>Staff</i>	11
		<i>Caucasian or White</i>	72	<i>70 - 79</i>	2	<i>Total</i>	78	<i>Temporary or short-term contract staff</i>	0
		<i>Other</i>	0	<i>80</i>	0			<i>Other</i>	3
		<i>I prefer not to answer this question</i>	0	<i>Total</i>	78			<i>Total</i>	78
		<i>Total</i>	81						

In addition, most respondents held full-time (98.72%) faculty (82.05%) positions, with 37.18% being tenured faculty, 19.23% tenure-track faculty, 23.08% non-tenured faculty, and 2.56% adjunct faculty. The number of respondents with full-time faculty status may indicate that this role or status could grant librarians the authority to teach for-credit courses. This could also be an indication that faculty status empowers the librarian to pursue additional duties, such as serving as a for-credit instructor.

As seen in Figure 1, 93.59% of respondents were employed at four-year institutions, with 33.33% at four-year, non-doctoral granting institutions and 60.26% at four-year, doctoral granting institutions. These results are similar to those found by Cohen et al. (2016) who noted that for-credit courses were more often offered by doctoral granting institutions. The authors surmise that four-year institutions may have additional resources to support, and/or more available opportunities for, librarians teaching for-credit courses. Due to the nature of this survey and the anonymity of respondents, the number of students enrolled at each respondent's institution cannot be collected for further comparison, but this would be a valuable addition for future research.

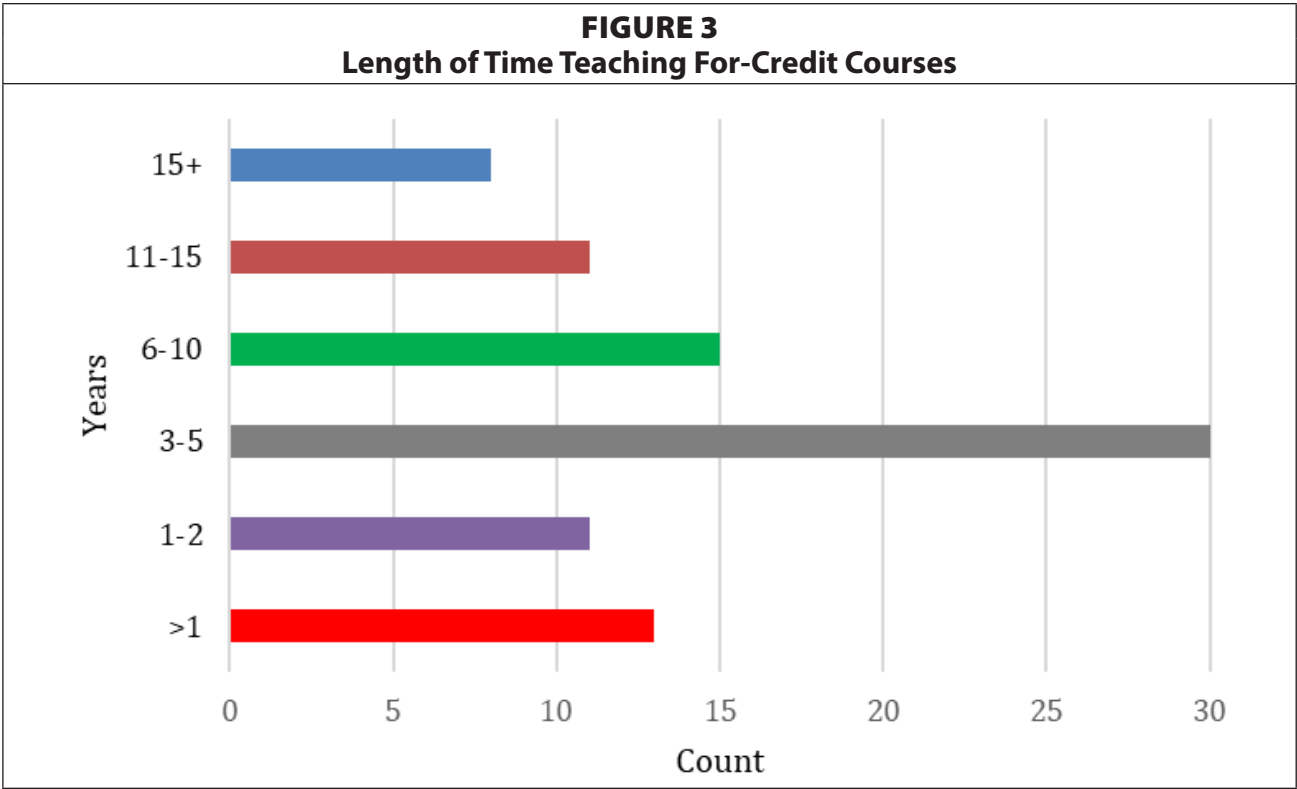


Next, the survey gathered information on the amount, type, and academic level of for-credit courses taught by librarians, as seen in Figure 2. Half of respondents (50.63%) indicated that librarians at their institution only teach one to two sections of for-credit courses per academic year; 29.11% indicated three to five courses, and only 6.34% indicated 11 or more sections per academic year. These results are similar to those of Sobel et al. (2018). Of the 30 respondents to the Sobel et al. survey, 33% taught one course per semester and 33% taught one course per academic year for a total of 66%. This is comparable to the 50.63% reported in this survey and suggests that most librarians only have the capacity to take on a small number of for-credit courses on top of their library responsibilities.

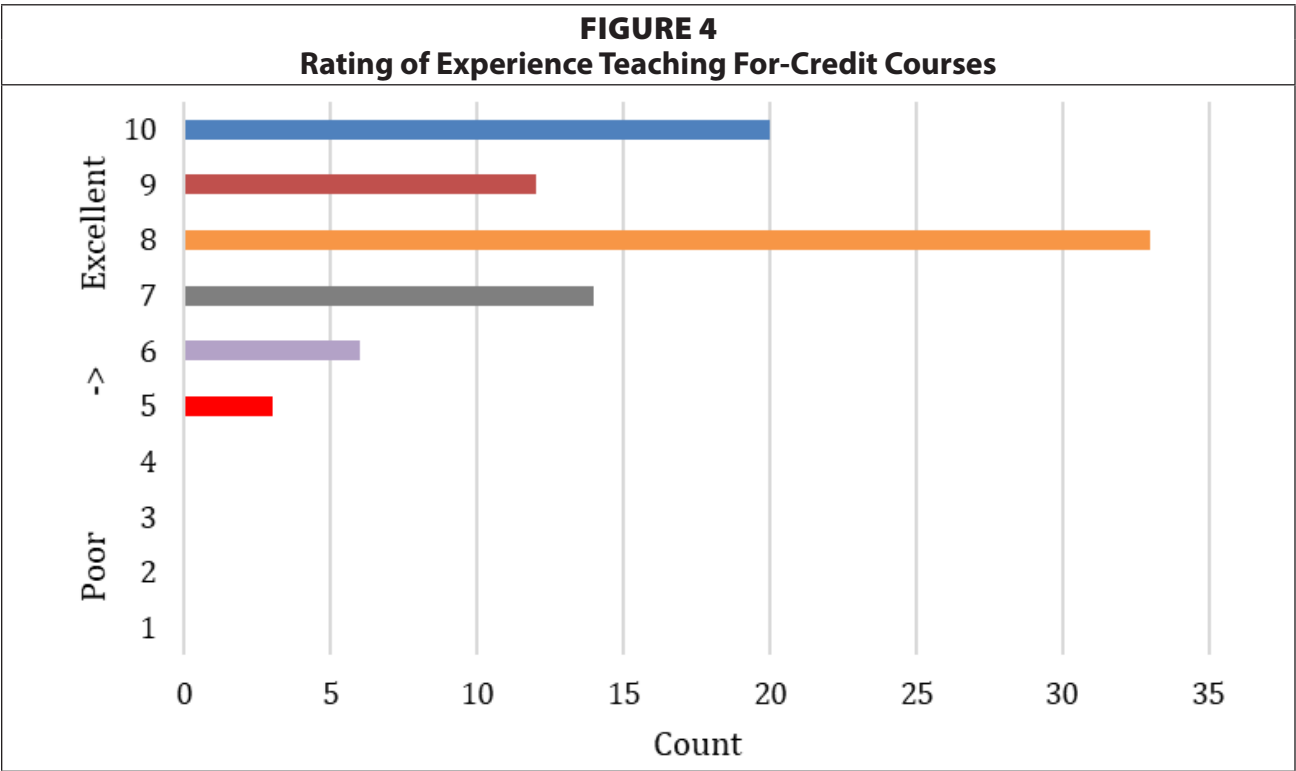


These for-credit courses were almost evenly split between those that were considered an “elective” (53.78%) and those that were “required” for at least one-degree program (44.54%). Of the 66 librarians surveyed by Burke (2012), 39% indicated that for-credit courses were elective and 61% indicated that they were required. Davis et al. (2011) found that of the 36.9% of 276 survey participants, only 11.2% reported they taught required for-credit courses. While these findings are not consistent with the results found in this survey, it could be an indication that some institutions have come to rely on librarians and/or others outside of the typical teaching faculty as institutional priorities and budgets have changed over time. Finally, most respondents indicated that they are teaching at the undergraduate level (83.67%), with only 14.29% teaching at the graduate level. Burke (2012) also found that 58% of courses were offered at the undergraduate level but did not provide details on the courses that fell outside this percentage. This data indicates that there may be limitations placed on the level of for-credit courses librarians are permitted to teach, which may be partially determined by the librarians’ academic qualifications. It also suggests that instructor-librarians may feel that information literacy skills are best taught at the undergraduate level, or that they may have greater access to teach undergraduate courses.

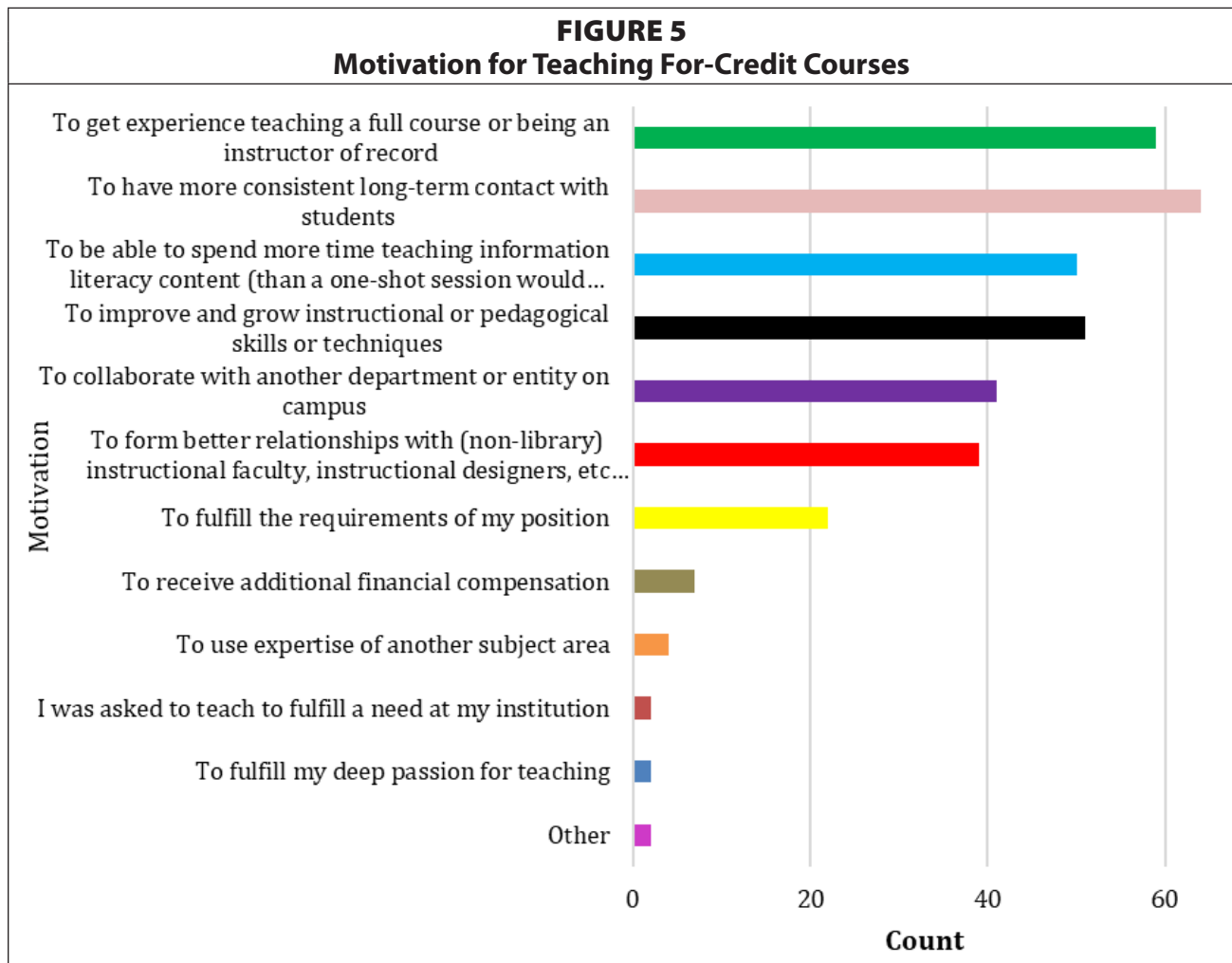
Many librarians (34.09%) had been teaching for-credit for three to five years, while only 9.09% had done so for more than 15 years, and 14.77% for less than one year (see Figure 3). Jardine et al. (2018) found similar results although that study’s sample size was much smaller with only seven participants. In the Jardine study, 29% of respondents reported teaching credit-bearing courses for three to five years and 14% had done so for six to ten years. This data may support the earlier results indicating that most often this type of instruction is a mid-career activity, but there is not enough of a causal connection between these two questions to prove that here. However, it may instead suggest that for-credit instruction has begun to be a more common responsibility for librarians over the past decade.



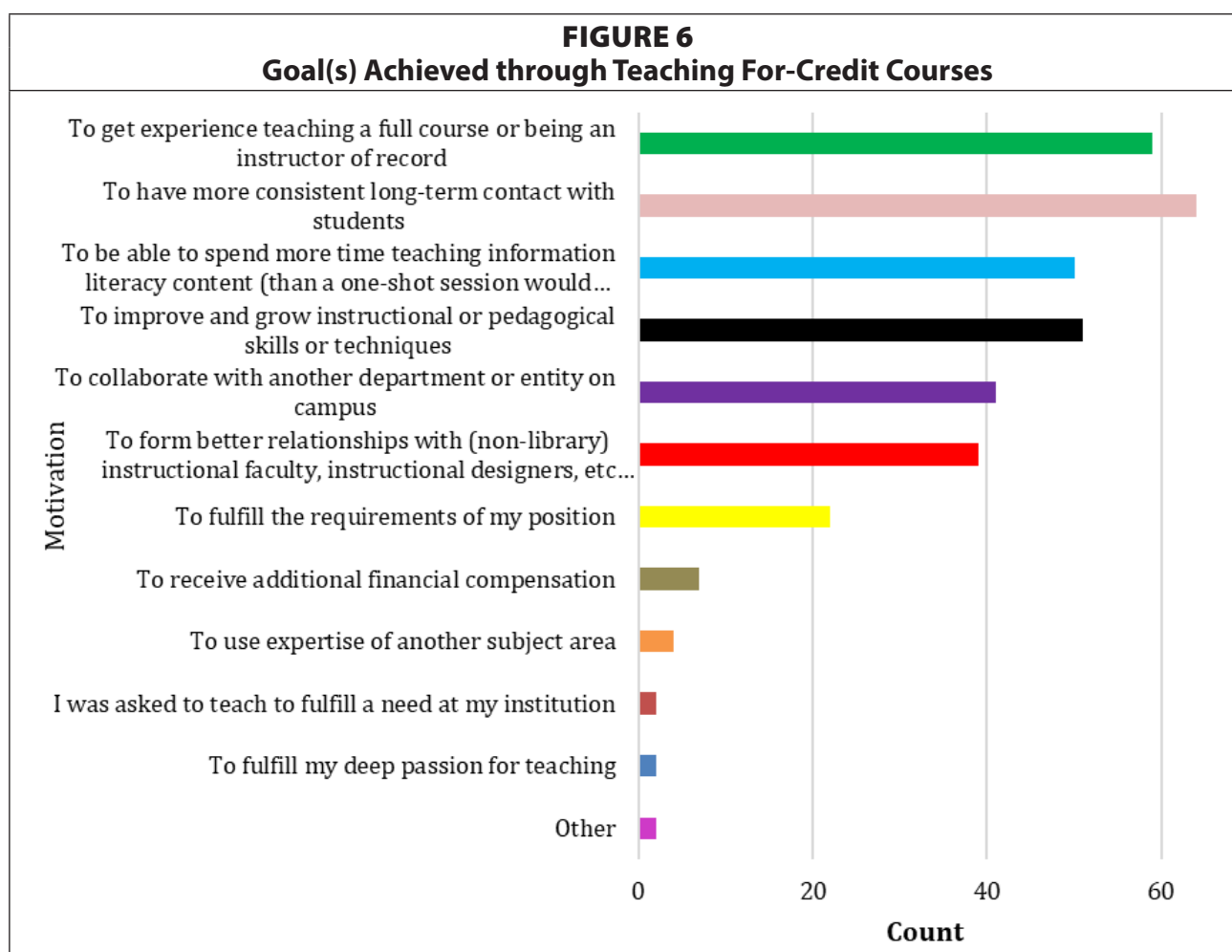
When asked about their experience teaching for-credit course(s), all respondents indicated a positive experience, with most rating eight out of ten on a ten-point scale and 22.73% rating the experience as excellent (10 out of 10) (see Figure 4). This is a strong indication that those who are involved with for-credit instruction find it beneficial, at least in terms of their own experiences. The specific benefits are explored in detail in the open-ended survey questions.



The survey asked respondents to describe their motivation for teaching for-credit course(s) (see Figure 5). The question was multiple choice, but participants also had the option to write in an “other” open-text response. The motivation was nearly evenly split within the categories, with the most chosen motivation (18.34%) being to have more consistent long-term contact with students and the least chosen (11.17%) to form better relationships with (non-library) instructional faculty, instructional designers, etc. through shared experience. An additional 6.30% of respondents wrote in other motivations that were again nearly evenly split, from 2.01% motivated to teach due to receiving additional financial compensation to 0.57% to fulfill a deep passion for teaching. The distribution of responses shows that there are many possible motivations for librarians to teach for-credit courses, and that each librarian may be motivated by a combination of factors.



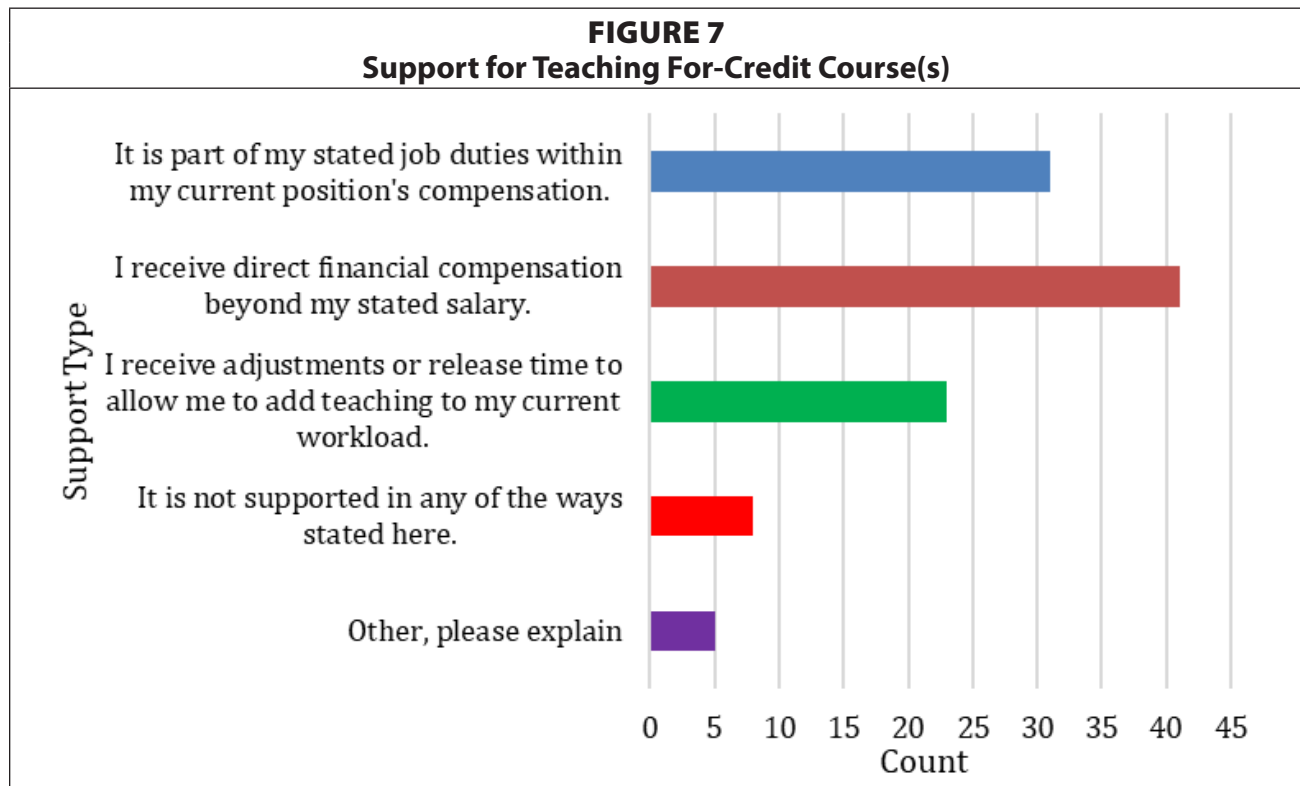
As a follow-up question, respondents were asked whether they had achieved the goals that had motivated them to teach for-credit courses; all responded positively (see Figure 6). The majority, 17.79%, met their goal of having more consistent long-term contact with students, and 10.43% met their goal of having better relationships with (non-library) instructional faculty, instructional designers, etc. This data seems to confirm that these personal motivations and goals are driving factors in the decision of librarians to teach for-credit courses.



The final multiple-choice question of the survey asked respondents to indicate how their motivation to teach for-credit courses was supported by their library and/or institution (see Figure 7). The majority (37.96%) indicated that they were supported through direct financial compensation beyond their stated salary. This result is nearly identical to Cohen et al. (2016), who found 36% of their respondents received an additional cash stipend for their for-credit instruction work. This is a much higher percentage than found by Davis et al (2011), who found that only 8% received extra compensation for their for-credit instruction work.

Conversely, 28.70% of respondents to the current research's survey indicated that for-credit instruction was part of their stated job-duties and fell within their current position's compensation (in-load). This is a much lower percentage than the 40% of respondents who taught for-credit instruction considered in-load found by Sobel et al. (2018). Finally, 21.30% of this study's participants noted that, while there was no financial compensation for their teaching, they received workload adjustments or release time from their stated job duties to allow for-credit instruction to be added to their workload. Sobel et al. (2018) found that only 15% of librarian for-credit instructors receive release time and Cohen et al. (2016) reported 5% of their respondents received release time. In the current study, 4.63% provided 'other' examples of support for their for-credit courses. The most frequent 'other' example was indirect financial compensation for activities, such as professional development the librarian had pursued to improve their teaching. Some participants noted that for-credit instruction was seen as a reward itself in that it was considered a positive activity to boost tenure or annual review performance.

These data indicate that a shift has occurred overtime to move from direct financial compensation to other means of compensation. While not studied, this could be a result of declining higher education budgets and/or indicate a change in priorities for librarians.



Survey Responses: Open-Text Questions

The final four survey questions asked for the respondents' perceptions of the impact of the for-credit instruction on themselves, their library, and their institution. This section of the survey also gave respondents space to elaborate on support, recognition, and/or compensation for their work as a for-credit instructor and librarian. Responses to these questions were coded into multiple categories and subcategories based on areas of their work related to the question. The authors used these areas to create categories and identify themes. Similar comments made by five or more respondents were coded into theme(s) or subtheme(s). The authors individually analyzed and coded the open-text responses and then met to discuss discrepancies. These differences were resolved and categories were agreed upon by both authors. These categorized responses are discussed with each question below. It should be noted that a single response to a question may be counted in multiple categories if the respondent mentioned multiple themes within their response.

Survey question 16 asked, "How does your teaching for-credit course(s) have an impact on your overall work as a librarian in your current role?" Respondents of this question noted that teaching for-credit courses increased their own job satisfaction, motivation, and engagement with librarianship (see Table 2). They also felt that it demonstrated the value of the library, helped them build connections across the institution with faculty, staff, and students, and increased student and faculty engagement with and understanding of the role and services of the library on campus.

TABLE 2
Survey Question 16: How Does Teaching For-Credit Course(s) Have an Impact on Your Overall Work as a Librarian?

Total	#	Category	#	Category	#	Category	#
Total responses, coded into multiple categories	74	<i>Positives</i>	67	<i>Building Connections</i>	57	Connecting to non-library faculty	41
						Connecting to students	42
						Students more engaged with library	9
						Better understanding of the whole institution	15
				<i>Improves librarianship</i>	32	Demonstrates value of library or librarians	15
						Increases motivation or engagement as librarian	18
						Directly contributes towards promotion and/or tenure	5
		<i>Negatives</i>	43	<i>Improved as a teacher</i>	21	Improved as a teacher	16
						Improved one-shot or other instruction	7
				<i>Negatives</i>	43	Increased workload and/or time at work	43
						Increased stress	12

Five responses (6.75%) mentioned only negative impacts that teaching for-credit had on them. Most others (90.54%) noted at least one positive aspect to their work as a for-credit instructor, and 50.35% noted a mix of positive and negative aspects. The positive aspects were categorized into themes of “Building connections,” “Improve[d] librarianship,” and “Improved teaching,” which were then subcategorized. Under the theme of “Building connections,” “Connecting with students” (56.76%) and “Connecting with non-library faculty” (55.41%) had the largest number of responses. These positive impacts echo those found by Kemp who found the “benefits for librarians [teaching for-credit courses] include closer interaction with students ... deeper understanding of faculty workloads, student needs, and administrative requirements ... [and] enhancement of faculty status” (2006, p. 5). These results indicate that respondents feel that consistent and long-term contact with students results in students becoming more aware of and connected to the library. Blakeslee also found this to be true through her own experience teaching a for-credit course by stating, “My better understanding of the

students stems from having had extended opportunities to see what motivates and interests them ... this was not possible when I saw students for one class session or met them briefly at the reference desk" (1998, p. 77). In addition, MacDonald (2023) noted the positive efforts of working across campus units to increase the awareness of librarian impact on student information literacy education. This suggests that librarians who teach for-credit courses are able to interact with, and relate to, both their students and non-library faculty counterparts in a more positive manner.

Over half (58.11%) of respondents indicated at least one negative aspect to teaching for-credit, with all the negative responses noting an "Increased workload and/or time at work." Of these negative responses, 16.22% also indicated that teaching for-credit "Increased stress." These negative responses could be due to librarians teaching for-credit as an additional responsibility and without reduction of other librarianship duties. One of the respondents summed up the overall response to this question by saying, "Yes, it is extra work, but is a wonderful addition to my job and energizing."

Question 17 asked respondents to indicate how teaching for-credit course(s) affects their library or library department (see Table 3). Many respondents noted that their teaching helped to demonstrate the value of the library and better integrate the librarians and the library as a partner to the rest of campus. However, it also created some pressures on the respondents' library and co-workers.

Of respondents, 43.06% indicated that their work teaching for-credit course(s) improved the status of their library "As a campus partner," and 33.33% noted that their work raised their personal standing on campus as well as increasing the value of the library. Davis et al. (2011)

TABLE 3
Survey Question 17: How Does Teaching For-Credit Course(s) Have an Impact on Your Library or Library Department as a Whole?

Total	#	Category	#	Category	#
Total responses, coded into multiple categories	72	None	19	Little to no impact	19
		As campus partner	31	Raises profile and value of library and/or librarians	24
				Helps promote library or library services	10
				Helps library better understand campus context	7
				Builds relationships across campus	9
		Focus on teaching	13	More focus on deeper instruction and engagement	7
				Reduces engagement with one-shots	7
		Reduces library services	24	Creates difficulties with shared responsibilities, projects, or staffing	16
				Limits or reduces ability to engage with library responsibilities	21

found similar results with 72% of their survey respondents indicating for-credit instruction by librarians was important to the standing and reputation of the library on campus. However, 37.50% found that their involvement with for-credit teaching “Reduces library services.” Respondents noted it “Creates difficulties with shared responsibilities, projects, and/or staffing” (22.22%) and “Limits or reduces ability to engage with library responsibilities” (29.17%). Several responses also mentioned this causing friction among their colleagues. These negative aspects were found in the experience of Donnelly and her colleagues providing for-credit instruction. She noted that “changed roles [for librarians to teach for-credit] may make our staff members feel abandoned” which can lead to “relationships between library faculty and staff [to] be irritated by a gap between the two groups of workers” (2000, p. 49). These findings suggest that there must be a balance struck between for-credit and library duties to ensure the success of both.

Respondents also reported that for-credit instruction allowed them to “Focus on teaching” (18.06%). Within this category, there was an even split (9.72%) for respondents that noted they had “More focus on deeper instruction and engagement” or “Reduce[d] engagement with one-shot information literacy sessions.” Finally, 19 of the 72 respondents (26.39%) indicated there was “Little to no impact” on their library and/or library department due to their work teaching for-credit courses. The fact that almost one third of respondents shared no impact could be due to their for-credit instruction taking place completely outside of their librarian duties. For example, some respondents indicated that they are employed as an adjunct instructor in another department and that the library is not involved in or impacted by the work they do outside their librarian position/hours for this department. Additionally, some respondents indicated that they did not have complete enough information to feel comfortable assessing the impact of their teaching on the library.

TABLE 4
Survey Question 18: How Does Teaching For-Credit Course(s) Have an Impact on Your Campus or Institution as a Whole?

<i>Total</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>#</i>
Total responses, coded into multiple categories	69	<i>Institutional impacts</i>	36	Builds connections across campus	18
				Connections to or collaboration with faculty	11
				Raises profile of library or librarians	19
		<i>Student impacts</i>	36	Better course offerings for students	15
				Students feel it is valuable	7
				More students learning information literacy skills	24
		<i>Library impacts</i>	11	Better campus awareness of library resources	11

Question 18 asked respondents to focus on how their for-credit instruction impacted their campus or institution. These impacts fell into three categories (see Table 4). The largest percentage (27.54%) noted that teaching for-credit instruction “Raise[d] the profile of library or librarians” and helped to “Build connections across campus” (26.09%). One respondent illustrated this by saying, “Teaching for-credit courses has ... helped change perceptions of the librarians as educators and not simply service providers.” These positive aspects were similar to Perret’s (2018) results; that study found that 84% of the 139 responses indicated for-credit teaching “enhances the perception of librarians” (p. 325).

Additionally, just over half of respondents (52.17%) indicated that their teaching for-credit course(s) had positive “Student impacts.” Of these, 34.78% reported that their work led to “More students learning information literacy skills” and 27.74% noted that their for-credit courses provided “Better course offerings for students. As noted by Tedford and Pressley (2010) librarian-led for-credit courses can meet students’ scheduling needs by providing options that easily fit within their major’s rigid schedules. Several respondents also mentioned that institutional assessments had shown that students who had taken their courses had higher retention rates than students who had not.

Of respondents, 15.94% noted positive impacts to the library, such as “Better campus awareness of library resources.” In addition, these activities also had a reciprocal impact of making the library more aware of processes, systems, and daily interactions across their campus or institution. Librarians teaching for-credit are engaged first-hand with learning management systems (LMS), grading, student-instructor interactions, course assessment, etc. The knowledge gained by these instructor-librarians can then be shared with their colleagues to improve library decision making in collections, outreach, and other library responsibilities. Only a small number (11.59%) of respondents indicated that either there was no impact on their campus or institution or that they were unable to provide an answer.

Question 19 asked how these instructor-librarians perceived the support, recognition and/or compensation they did or did not receive for this work (see Table 5). The survey used the terms “support” and “recognition” without definition, which may influence results as these terms can be subjective. For example, what one respondent may see as “support” another may see as “overbearing supervision.” Overall, there was an almost equal difference between the “Inadequately” (69.12%) and “Adequately” (55.88%) “recognized, compensated and/or supported” responses.

TABLE 5
Survey Question 19: Do You Feel That You Receive Adequate Support, Recognition, and/or Compensation for Your Work with For-Credit Instruction?

<i>Total</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>#</i>
Total responses, coded into multiple categories	68	<i>Adequately recognized, compensated, and/or supported in for-credit work</i>	41	Recognized enough	18
				Compensated enough	18
				Supported enough	26
		<i>Inadequately recognized, compensated, and/or supported in for-credit work</i>	48	Not recognized enough	17
				Not compensated enough	33
				Not supported enough	22

The largest number of negative responses noted a lack of adequate financial compensation (48.53%) and/or a lack of adequate support (32.35%). While Cohen et al. (2016) did not provide specific percentages, they reported that most comments about barriers faced by librarians teaching for-credit courses centered on lack of support and budget shortages. In this study, the respondents that noted negative aspects were also more likely to mention stress and/or burnout due to their for-credit activities. As suggested by the responses to prior questions, this could be a result of the librarian being tasked with taking on additional duties without reductions of their other librarian work.

The positive responses were spread evenly between those that felt adequately supported (38.24%), recognized (26.47%), and/or compensated (26.47%) for their for-credit instruction activities. It is interesting to note that many of those who felt adequately compensated for their work also felt adequately supported and recognized. However, twice as many respondents felt they were inadequately compensated as those that were adequately compensated. Many respondents who felt inadequately compensated mentioned that inappropriately low financial compensation was a problem for all adjuncts or instructors, not just for librarian-instructors.

Focus Groups and Interviews

In total, 26 survey respondents volunteered to participate in 60-minute virtual discussions, all conducted through Zoom and held either as individual interviews with the authors or as small focus groups of two to four participants. To make it impossible for focus group and interview participants to be connected to their anonymous survey responses, no demographic data was collected from the focus group and interview participants. Additionally, the participants were asked to not share identifying information about themselves while speaking to protect their privacy from each other while still fostering open conversations. Discussions were not recorded or transcribed word-for-word: rather, the authors took notes independently. Individual interviews were offered in addition to the focus groups to allow participants that preferred even more privacy to participate in the research as well.

The discussions consisted of five overarching questions, listed in the Appendix (along with example sub-questions for each main question, which were provided to clarify the scope of each question for participants). These questions prompted participants to elaborate further on their experience with teaching for-credit courses. At the conclusion of all the discussions, the authors collaboratively coded the conversations into themes.

The first theme focused on assessment and organization of for-credit instruction by librarians. Most discussion participants reported that the course(s) they taught were designated as general education (GenEd) or first-year experience (FYE) courses. The type of courses taught reported by focus group participants is similar to those found by Sorbel et al. (2018). Of the 30 participants in the Sorbel et al. study, the three most common responses to the department that housed the course(s) taught by librarians were general education (4), liberal arts (4), and first-year seminar (2). The remaining responses offered a variety of departments that only appeared once in the data. These courses are typically not required for a degree program but are offered as an option to meet institution-wide graduation requirements, and many are routinely taught by a wide variety of both faculty and non-faculty instructors, including advisors, student life/residence staff, and others. The prevalence of librarians teaching these courses in the current research may show that GenEd and/or FYE courses are more open to non-traditional instructors in general, and thus more likely to accept librarian-instructors.

However, it could also be an indication that information literacy courses are not often integrated into disciplinary curricula and are instead being offered as electives or only as GenEd or FYE courses outside of specific disciplines.

Most participants reported that they were able to propose new for-credit courses, with complete academic freedom to design and teach the course as they saw fit through the same process any instructor would follow at their institution. This could be because many participants in focus groups and interviews held faculty (or faculty-like) employment status and had the same privileges as any other faculty at their institution. MacDonald reminds that “faculty status is not the linchpin ... [and the proposed course must] fulfill an identified need” (2010, p. 30). Despite this freedom, many respondents stated that they did not have the time or resources to propose new courses. This could present another reason why many librarians are teaching GenEd, FYE, and similar courses, namely, because those courses most often have a shared or standardized curriculum; do not require an instructor to create a course that reflects their own subject expertise; can exist independently of any individual discipline’s or department’s curriculum planning; and may offer opportunities for a librarian-instructor to easily weave information literacy and/or research skills into the shared course content (MacDonald, 2023; Tedford & Pressley, 2010; Blakeslee, 1998).

Discussion participants also reported that their library departments and/or administrators rarely provided assessment, feedback, or additional pedagogical support for their for-credit work. Instead, librarian-instructors typically received the same support as other instructors, such as student feedback and course evaluations, assessment of the course(s) at the programmatic level by institutional offices, and professional development through the institution’s resource for instructional support. Overall, participants expressed a desire for more assessment, either through the institution or library, to improve their instructional practices. However, when asked about library-specific policies on instruction, very few participants had any such policies guiding their work on for-credit courses. Participants were split on whether such policies might impact librarian-instructors positively, by sharing workloads more predictably and preventing burnout, or negatively, by reducing flexibility or complicating their professional evaluations. These sentiments echo Cunningham and Donovan’s (2012, p. 195) survey respondents who had a positive reaction to “the notion of conducting and using teaching evaluations as an opportunity to improve teaching; however ... [it] would have minimal impact on performance ... or rewards.” Mulherrin et al. likewise noted that “systematic assessment tools [should] not burden instructors” (2004, p. 35).

The next discussion theme centered around the types of compensation, workload accommodations, and support the instructor-librarian may or may not be receiving for their work as for-credit instructors. There was very little consensus on how participants were compensated and variances were dependent on institutional policies, individually negotiated terms with the library and/or teaching-department, or librarian employment status. Some librarians were treated as adjunct instructors and paid at the institution’s adjunct rate but had to perform all for-credit instruction duties outside of their librarian-position’s regular hours. This led to issues with capacity overload, including requiring librarians to spend evenings and weekends grading or doing other for-credit course work. Others reported that teaching for-credit was part of their job duties as a librarian and could be performed during their regular workday, but that they therefore did not receive additional compensation. The most common workload accommodation mentioned was instructor-librarians lessening their participation in library

services, such as reference desk staffing or one-shot information literacy session instruction, to focus on their for-credit courses. These focus group discussions were similar to the open text responses in Perret's survey that found "concerns expressed were excessive burdens on library staff; insufficient, nonexistent, or inappropriate financial compensation; and the perceived demand to meet all expectations of professional staff and all expectations of teaching faculty simultaneously" (2018, p. 328). Tedford and Pressley (2010) noted several methods for supporting librarians-instructors, mainly through administrative and technology support, but also raise awareness that the support can, and has, been dependent on approval from library administrators. These demonstrate that there is still work to be done to support and compensate instructor-librarians equitably.

Most discussion participants reported that they received little to no training on for-credit pedagogical practices before teaching their first course. If they had received any training, it typically centered on the use of software systems to support online instruction. Mulherrin et al. found this to also be true with only "faculty members hired to teach online are required to take a five-week online training class to become familiar with the [course web] platform and ... working with adult students in an online environment" (2004, p. 28). As in these findings, discussion participants shared that they pursued professional development opportunities to strengthen their personal pedagogical expertise. These activities most often were offered through their institution's instructional support offices, but some also took advantage of training offered by professional organizations. There are rare cases, such as at Wake Forest University (Tedford & Pressley, 2010) of tailored training provided by the library for their for-credit instructors. The discussion participants all expressed a desire for such support and training opportunities.

The third theme focused on the impact teaching for-credit courses had on the participants' library. Participants discussed where for-credit instructional activities fit within the priorities of their library. In general, most participants were performing for-credit instructional duties outside of their librarian duties, and therefore it was not considered part of their library's priorities. Due to this, participants' for-credit instruction separated them from the experiences and duties of their librarian colleagues, which sometimes led to overburdening of those colleagues. However, most reported that their teaching had led to an overall increase in awareness of the library's value across the institution; helped librarians be viewed as experts and peers in the eyes of the general faculty; and made the instructor-librarian more aware of the inner workings of the institution through direct contact with students and faculty. These responses echo survey results that these benefits allowed the library as a whole to build deeper connections with their campus communities. Blakeslee had a similar experience teaching a freshmen orientation course. She notes, "Even with faculty status, as a librarian it is easy to feel somewhat peripheral to what goes on in the university because you are not teaching. Sharing the teaching experience has ... [given me] a greater understanding of the issues of teaching faculty and [I] hope the faculty ... have a greater understanding of the issues the library faces" (1998, p. 77).

The final theme from these discussions focused on the participants' perceived value of their work as for-credit librarian-instructors. As with Cunningham and Donovan's (2012) findings, much of the value librarians found in for-credit instruction in this study was intrinsic and student focused. The majority found their for-credit instruction to be incredibly valuable and reported that it improved students' information literacy skills and critical thinking.

Additionally, participants shared that for-credit instruction made them more aware of and responsive to student needs due to the long-term and consistent interactions that they could not maintain in other forms of instruction. One specific impact several participants mentioned was improvement to collection development strategies, as librarians were better able to purchase materials based on information from students, rather than information coming only from faculty requests or filtered through librarians' assumptions. This mirrors Donnelly's reflection that librarians "can no longer make selection decisions based upon what we think students *ought* to use, but rather on what they *will* use" (2000, p. 48) and is a further indication of the value of librarians teaching for-credit courses.

However, discussion participants also emphasized that all forms of instruction librarians participate in are valuable and acknowledged their personal bias toward for-credit instruction. They agreed that for-credit instruction often works best in conjunction with other forms of library instruction, to maximize the number of students librarians can reach and support. These findings are similar to the value of various teaching methods as reported by Oregon State University Librarians (Davidson, 2001). In that study, 80% rated credit courses, 60% rated one-on-one reference desk instruction, and 50% valued written guides as essential teaching methods. As this demonstrates, all types of librarian-led instruction are valuable.

Finally, there was consensus among all participants that, for librarians to be successful with for-credit instruction, they must be willing to teach, be passionate about pedagogy, and have adequate support. All discussion participants strongly agreed that no librarians should be expected or required to teach for-credit course(s) against their preference or capacity. This consensus echoes the points made by Kemp (2006) and MacDonald (2023) in their research of librarians' role in teaching for-credit courses. Kemp states, "While meaningful and valuable for the library and the academic librarian, classroom teaching is secondary to their core responsibilities. Thus, when local conditions permit and the librarian desires to make the commitment, classroom teaching for academic librarians is highly recommended" (2006, p. 21).

Conclusion and Future Directions

Reviewing both survey results and focus group discussions reveals several interesting takeaways. While there are many variations on how librarians perform for-credit instruction, there appear to be some commonalities, especially around the amount of courses being taught, the intended audience for those courses, and the way the courses are integrated into the larger curriculum. It appears that instructor librarians are typically teaching one to two for-credit courses per year, generally aimed at undergraduates, and that many (but notably, not all) of these courses are housed outside of any specific disciplines' requirements.

Potential confusion in this project's results could arise from the difference between librarians who were teaching "library" courses (e.g., courses focused only on information literacy, research skills, archives usage), versus those who were teaching discipline-specific courses outside of and unattached to the library. Due to a lack of differentiation between the two pools of respondents, it is difficult to say whether most librarians are teaching for-credit courses focused on information literacy within the disciplines, such as "research methods" courses for specific fields of study. This differentiation would be an exciting area for future research.

Perhaps the most important takeaway is whether teaching for-credit courses is a sustainable practice for librarians to undertake. The data showed that having faculty status may be a strong indicator of whether a librarian will be permitted to teach for-credit at their institution.

However, there was significant variation among respondents who had faculty status in terms of being considered “full” faculty or adjuncts, versus being “faculty-like” but not permitted access to shared faculty governance, curricular committees, teaching unions, and other areas within the institution where faculty may maintain or advocate for control and support.

In terms of sustainability, burnout and lack of adequate support are also significant concerns. Many respondents felt their work as instructors was valuable and rewarding to them as well as to their students, library, and institution, but still mentioned difficulty managing the work needed to successfully lead their course. Although some respondents indicated that inadequate compensation and/or overwhelming workloads were the norm among most faculty and adjuncts, librarians working additionally as adjuncts may be more vulnerable than other groups. For example, one focus-group participant mentioned that survey Question 19 inspired them to investigate their own compensation. They discovered that librarians teaching as adjuncts were being paid at a significantly lower rate than others in similar roles at their institution. Future research could be done to determine if this is a widespread phenomenon or a localized problem.

This research also generated questions on whether librarians find teaching these for-credit courses beneficial, even if they do not have an information literacy focus. Future avenues for research could include comparing for-credit instruction to other types of librarian instruction, such as one-shot or embedded instruction, in terms of student learning or success outcomes. In addition, the data found that almost no librarians were provided training before teaching for-credit courses. It would be interesting to determine if this is a trend throughout academia or if it is specific to librarians. Furthermore, research could be conducted to determine the preparedness of early-career librarians and/or new graduates to teach for-credit courses. The trending increase in librarians teaching for-credit instruction, revealed here, should encourage more investigation into the potential need to prepare librarians for this role.

Finally, the most compelling recommendation from this research is that performing for-credit instruction, while valuable, must be done under the right conditions and by the right librarians to be successful. Participants were adamant that, due to the unique challenges of serving as an instructor of record, librarians should not be required to work in this role unless they are passionate about teaching, willing to take on the challenge, and provided with appropriate support and/or compensation for this work. For-credit library instruction is one tool in the library’s toolkit; it may work best when integrated alongside other forms of library instruction but is not a one-size-fits-all solution to teaching information literacy. However, for those librarians who do take this work on successfully (and with adequate motivation and support), it seems likely they will increase their own job satisfaction, improve students’ engagement with the library, form better connections with non-library faculty, increase the profile of the library on campus, and gain a deeper understanding of their role as both librarians and instructors.

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Appendix: Survey and Focus Group / Interview Questions

Survey questions can be found as a PDF file at the following URL: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cwomFcX3QPPAArzAOcLBonGaGHmSKBNi/view?usp=sharing>

Focus group and interview questions can be found as a Google Doc file (the format in which they were shared with participants) at the following URL: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sNYPExvdc5cuhCor3Y8HmMdscejev76mp8D5WWbeatk/edit?usp=sharing>

Anyone experiencing difficulties with accessing these files, or requiring an accessibility accommodation to effectively view them, is encouraged to contact the authors at ezn80@psu.edu and ard21@psu.edu.

Previous Presentations of This Work

This work was previously presented at the Library Instruction Together (LIT) 2023 conference.

Slides from that presentation can be found at the following URL: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1P5J8Y2MSsfuzFR9uQ3l0mjb8UBgA9O1w9e_xRXGxYkY/edit?usp=sharing

The presentation was recorded live. This recording can be found on the LIT Youtube Channel and at the following URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7wqWruCVF4>