



# Library and information literacy instruction in Israeli colleges and universities: A preliminary survey



Carol R. Simon\*

*Business Reference Librarian, Hofstra University, 902A Axinn Library, 123 Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY 11549-1230, USA*

**Abstract** Library instruction is universal in post-secondary educational institutions in Israel. Information literacy instruction is in its infancy. Israeli students experience significant difficulties in using English language resources.

© 2013 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## Introduction

A review of the professional literature focusing on information literacy instruction reveals a vast amount of research, primarily written by and focused upon English speaking countries (United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand). In contrast, there is a dearth of literature exploring how library instruction and information literacy instruction is conducted in colleges and universities in non-English speaking countries.

In the United States, the American Library Association's (ALA) division, Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) has developed a series of five information literacy standards for higher education. These general standards are found at <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards>. Over time the general standards are becoming discipline-specific. In May 2003, Nancy Cunningham provided insight for business librarians by mapping the five general standards to the specific skills business students need to

succeed in academia. With this process, her brief article illustrates the differences between a library instructional program and an information literacy program.

This research describes how general library and information literacy instruction is delivered in Israeli colleges and universities and, more specifically, if and how business information literacy (BIL) instruction is conducted at these Israeli institutions.

According to the *CIA World Factbook* report on Israel <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>, "Hebrew is the official language, Arabic is used officially for Arab minority, and English is the most commonly used foreign language." Israel is the only country with Hebrew as its official language.

## Higher education in Israel

In Israel, institutions of higher learning are accredited by a national organization, *The Council for Higher Education* (CHE) ([www.che.org.il/en](http://www.che.org.il/en)). The CHE has two primary areas of responsibility – the academic curricula and the budget. Budgetary matters are outside the scope of this discussion. Briefly summarized, the CHE was established in

\* Tel.: +1 516 463 6530.

E-mail address: [Carol.R.Simon@hofstra.edu](mailto:Carol.R.Simon@hofstra.edu).

1958 under the provisions of the Higher Education Law. Amended over time, the CHE now has the authority to:

- grant a preliminary permit to open and operate an institution of higher education (at this permit/preliminary stage of accreditation there is no guarantee of a degree)
- accredit an institution as an institution of higher education
- approve and authorize new academic programs
- approve studies under the academic auspices of an accredited institution
- submit proposals for the consolidation, expansion and improvement of accredited institutions and in the matter of academic cooperation among them with regard to teaching and research
- submit to the Government, through the Planning and Budgeting Committee, proposals to develop higher education and for State participation in the budgets of the higher education system according to the needs of the society and the country, and recommendations to the Government regarding the establishment of additional institutions of higher education
- grant a license to branches of foreign institutions of higher education
- grant recognition of degrees awarded by accredited institutions in Judea, Samaria and Gaza.

Neither the CHE, the Israeli Ministry of Education or, any of the professional library organizations in Israel, as identified by Cecilia Harel in her 2004 paper, require library instruction or information literacy instruction at the post-secondary level. Additionally, *The Code of Ethics of the Librarians in Israel* as posted to the IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations) does not mention library or information literacy instruction.

In Israel, some institutions receive public funds and others do not. Some institutions are restricted to teacher training and others are religious in focus. Unlike the US, Israeli students typically serve in the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) for either two or three years (women and men, respectively) after their 18th birthday. Students entering their first year of post-secondary education can be as young as 20 and 22 years of age. According to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) report, *Higher Education in Israel*, the age range of traditional Israeli undergraduates is 18–30. It typically takes 3 years of full-time study to complete a baccalaureate degree. The length of time necessary to complete the second (master's) and/or third (doctoral) advanced degree is determined by discipline.

The rapid expansion of higher education in Israel since the 1990's was studied by Hanna Ayalon and Abraham Yogev in 2005. They note that in 1991, there were 56,000 undergraduates studying in Israel and that by 2002 that number had expanded to 170,000. This continuing expansion is further documented by The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). This agency's 2012 study reports that, for the 2011/2012 academic year, there were 226,000 undergraduate students in Israel and an additional 54,000 studying at the Master's degree level and 10,600 enrolled in PhD programs. In the twenty years (from

1991 to 2011) the number of students at the undergraduate level had increased fourfold (56,000–226,000) and the number of master's and doctoral students (64,600) exceeded the number of undergraduates enrolled in 1991. Using [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#) population total estimates and higher education enrollment data from EACEA, [Table 1](#) highlights the expansion of higher education in Israel.

Additional data about higher education enrollment, provided by [The Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel \(CBS\)](#), provides a similar picture ([Table 2](#)) of the expansion of higher education enrollment in Israel. According to CBS estimates, from the base academic year of 1989/1990 to the 2011/2012 academic year:

- The estimated population grew by 67%
- The number of students enrolled in the first year of a Baccalaureate degree grew by 254%
- The number of students enrolled in the second degree – Master's level grew by 226%
- The number of students enrolled in the third degree – Ph.D. grew by 182%

This rapid expansion in student population presents an ongoing challenge to both libraries and their parent institutions.

## Academic libraries in Israel

As Adler and Goldsmith reported in 2011, Israeli academic libraries now contribute bibliographic records to OCLC and WorldCat. Academic libraries in Israel use either Library of Congress (LC) or Dewey Decimal Classification (Dewey) to organize their book collections. Of the libraries included in this study, the larger university/research libraries (Haifa University, Ben Gurion University, Hebrew University, Tel Aviv University) use LC while the remainder use Dewey. All of the libraries use ExLibris's ALEPH ILS (integrated library system).

MALMAD, the Inter-University Center for Digital Information Services (<http://malmad.iucc.ac.il/>), was founded in 1998 for the acquisition, licensing and operation of information services to universities and colleges in Israel. The MALMAD Consortium as originally described by Elhanan Adler in 1999, has since expanded and now offers a wide range of electronic resources for members. Currently, as a centralized purchasing consortium, MALMAD is able to offer

**Table 1** Growth in higher education enrollment and population in Israel.

	1991	2002	2011
Total population IMF <sup>a</sup>	4,970,000	6,300,000	7,560,000
First degree – baccalaureate	56,000	170,000	226,000
Second degree – masters			54,000
Third degree – PhD			10,600

<sup>a</sup> Total population from IMF mid-year estimates, not the calendar year.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/355742>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/355742>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)