University Libraries

**Expected Outcome 1: 4th Floor Quiet Study Area**

Auburn University Libraries will provide additional quiet study space on the fourth floor of Ralph Brown Draughon Library. The space will provide individual seating, larger individual workspace, and easily accessible electrical outlets.

**Assessment Method 1:** Seek input

**Assessment Method Description**

In May of 2012 the Library was officially advised that the fourth floor area previously occupied by the Biggio Center was to revert to Library use. The area consisted of a series of walled offices totaling approximately 1,600 sf. A small committee of library personnel was formed to discuss the best use of the space.

**Findings**

The group considered previous conversations with various student groups such as the Library Student Advisory Council who had indicated their desire for more individual study space on the “quiet” study floor. Additional meetings were held with our student advisers to discuss their study habits and desires for improved study space. Library personnel then met with various vendors to discuss furniture options and layouts that would best meet those needs. Herman Miller was offering a new series of furniture geared toward individual study that offered what our student advisers recommended: larger desk work space; privacy without feeling closed in; and electrical outlets.

**How did you use findings for improvement?**

After careful consideration of the available space it was decided to remove as many of the walls as possible in and around Suite 4011. Library personnel shifted approximately 8,000 linear feet of material and rearranged sixteen shelf ranges in order to open 6,000 square feet of space. One hundred and nine individual study areas were purchased and
installed, each with electrical outlets and comfortable chairs suitable for long-term studying.

**Additional Comments**

**Expected Outcome 2: Auburn students shall be information literate**

The Auburn University Libraries Instruction Program supports the university’s general education outcome that Auburn students shall be information literate (SLO#1). The specific outcomes that the university associates with information literacy are: 1. Determine the nature and extent of information needed. 2. Access information effectively and efficiently. 3. Evaluate information critically. 4. Use information to accomplish a specific purpose. 5. Understand the economic, legal, and social issues associated with using information. These outcomes are based on the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education [http://www.al...](http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency).

**Assessment Method 1:** Project SAILS (Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills) test.

**Assessment Method Description**

Project SAILS is a national, standardized assessment of information literacy skills administered by Kent State University in partnership with the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). SAILS provides institution-level benchmark data of eight skill sets derived from the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. The skill sets targeted in this online, multiple choice exam are: Developing a Research Strategy, Selecting Finding Tools, Searching, Using Finding Tool Features, Retrieving Sources, Evaluating Sources, Documenting Sources, and Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues. SAILS measures information literacy knowledge of groups (cohorts) of students. Results are reported by class standing and by major. Comparisons with the entire national SAILS benchmark are also offered. More information about SAILS is available at [https://www.projectsails.org/](https://www.projectsails.org/).

The Libraries administers SAILS biennially. The online test was administered during Spring Semester 2013. Invitations to participate in SAILS were sent out by OIRA to a stratified (by class standing and major) sample of 5002
Auburn undergraduates. Students could also pick up test instructions and login codes at the Libraries’ reference desk. Two hundred ninety-four (294) useable responses were obtained.

**Findings**
The 2013 SAILS report indicated that Auburn students performed better than the institution-type benchmark across all eight information literacy skill sets. “Searching” and “understanding economic, legal and social issues” were easier skills sets for Auburn students, followed by “developing a research strategy”, “evaluating sources”, “documenting sources”, and “selecting finding tools”. The two skills sets most difficult for Auburn students were “using finding tool features” and “retrieving sources”. (See attached Project SAILS 2013 report, pg. 5)
3. RESULTS BY SAILS SKILL SETS

Student performance is presented in this section by skill sets, which are regroupings of the ACRL objectives for information literacy instruction. See Appendix F for the full list of the original ACRL standards, performance indicators, outcomes, and objectives.

Figures and text are provided only for skill sets that have enough items and where enough data were collected to allow for analysis on the skill set.

The first part of this section reports findings from across the skill sets, with a Summary of Results followed by Detailed Results in a table. The second part of this section focuses on each of the individual skill sets.

A. Across the Skill Sets

Summary of Results

Students at Auburn University performed better than the institution-type benchmark on the following SAILS Skill Sets:

- Developing a Research Strategy
- Selecting Finding Tools
- Searching
- Using Finding Tool Features
- Retrieving Sources
- Evaluating Sources
- Documenting Sources
- Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues

To identify which skill sets were easier and which were more difficult for Auburn University students, below are the skill sets ordered by performance, from best to worst. Skills set scores cannot be directly compared to each other. Instead, the ordering reflects the magnitude of difference between your institution’s mean and the institution-type benchmark mean. We calculate the mean and standard deviation of all of the Administrations in the benchmark for each skill set. The ranking is then the distance your mean is from the benchmark mean as a fraction of the standard deviation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best</th>
<th>Worst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Searching</td>
<td>Retrieving Sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a Research Strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating Sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documenting Sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selecting Finding Tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Finding Tool Features</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How did you use findings for improvement?

Having identified “using finding tool features” and “retrieving sources” as areas for improvement, the instruction team will review the relevant SAILS questions associated with each skill set, and explore ways in which to enhance student learning in information literacy library sessions.

Additional Comments

Assessment Method 2: Review of fourth and final essay in ENGL1120 (second semester English Composition)

Assessment Method Description

According to the English Department’s 2007/2008 Revised English 1120 Curriculum, Essay IV is an extended research paper that “requires students to engage meaningfully with multiple sources and then organize, analyze, and synthesize information from those sources to develop an original argument.” In Spring 2013, the Libraries’ four member instruction team graded 70 student essays from Spring 2012 using a rubric developed collaboratively by the instruction team and the English Department Composition Director. The rubric measures students’ abilities to: (1) document citations via a works cited page or bibliography, (2) find appropriate scholarly sources, (3) find appropriate scholarly sources using library subject databases, (4) evaluate appropriate scholarly resources (according to relevance and timeliness) and (5) integrate appropriate scholarly sources into their paper. Each measure of the rubric is aligned with specific standards, performance indicators, and outcomes from the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education (see attached ENGL1120 Paper IV Rubric with Outcomes and Means).

Findings

Essay scores, graded on a five-point scale rubric, with a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 5, were as follows:
(1) Document citations via a works cited page or bibliography. Mean score= 3.07
(2) Find appropriate scholarly sources. Mean score= 2.55
(3) Find appropriate scholarly sources using library subject databases. Mean score=1.82
(4) Evaluate appropriate scholarly resources (according to relevance and timeliness). Mean score= 3.22
(5) Integrate appropriate scholarly sources. Mean score= 2.70
For more detailed statistical breakouts, see attached
The above findings for 2012 can be compared against scores from 2008-2011 (see ENGL1120 Paper IV Rubric with Outcomes and Means). Mean scores for all outcomes rose (or, in one instance, remained equal) from 2008 through 2011. However, in 2012, scores on four out of five outcomes (all outcomes with the exception of #1, documenting citations) declined from their 2011 values. As in years past, the lowest scores were finding appropriate scholarly sources and finding appropriate sources using library subject databases.
## 1. Documentation/Citation Rate the paper based on the following measure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Students will document citations via a works cited or bibliography so that sources may be found easily</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>(0)*</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Four of the papers did not include bibliography. Without bibliography, unable to assess all other rubrics, the four were not counted among the 70 responses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Students will document citations via a works cited or bibliography so that sources may be found easily</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min Value</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Value</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Scholarly Sources  Rate the paper based on the following measure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Students will find appropriate scholarly sources.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Students will find appropriate scholarly sources.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min Value</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Value</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Rate the paper based on the following measure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Students will find appropriate scholarly sources using the library’s subject databases.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Students will find appropriate scholarly sources using the library’s subject databases.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min Value</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Value</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Rate the paper based on the following measure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Students will evaluate appropriate scholarly resources.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Rate the paper based on the following measure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Students will integrate appropriate scholarly sources.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Students will integrate appropriate scholarly sources.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min Value</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Value</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ENGL120/Paper IV/SLO1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will document citations via a works cited or bibliography so that sources may be found easily</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008 – 2.46</td>
<td>Multiple sources are cited without error</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 – 2.46</td>
<td>Multiple sources are cited with fewer than three errors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 – 2.55</td>
<td>Multiple sources are cited with four or more errors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 – 2.98</td>
<td>The majority of sources contain errors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 –3.07</td>
<td>No sources are cited</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Standard Five:** The information literate student understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally
  - **Performance Indicator:** The information literate student acknowledges the use of information sources in communicating the product or performance
    - **Outcome:** Student selects an appropriate documentation style and uses it consistently to cite sources
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will find appropriate scholarly sources</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008 – 1.69 All citations within the bibliography are scholarly</td>
<td>The majority of citations within the bibliography are scholarly</td>
<td>Citations indicated both scholarly and popular sources used equally</td>
<td>The majority of citations within the bibliography are popular</td>
<td>All citations within the bibliography are popular</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 – 2.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 – 2.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 – 2.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 – 2.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Standard One:** The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed
  - **Performance Indicator:** The information literate student identifies a variety of types and formats of potential sources for information
    - **Outcome:** The student identifies the purpose and audience of potential resources (e.g. popular vs. scholarly, current vs. historical)

- **Standard Three:** The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system
  - **Performance Indicator:** The information literate student articulates and applies initial criteria for evaluating both the information and its sources
    - **Student compares information from various sources in order to evaluate reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, and point of view or bias**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will find appropriate scholarly sources using the library's subject databases</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008 – 1.34</td>
<td>The majority of citations within the bibliography have been located through both subject/discipline specific databases</td>
<td>The bibliography contains citations located through both subject/discipline specific databases AND general databases</td>
<td>The majority of citations within the bibliography have been located through a single general database</td>
<td>The majority of citations within the bibliography have been located through Opposing Viewpoints, CQ Researcher or newspaper databases</td>
<td>The majority of citations within the bibliography have been located through web pages or internet search engines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 – 1.89</td>
<td>2010 – 2.10</td>
<td>2011 – 2.41</td>
<td>2012 – 1.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Standard Two:** The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently
  - **Performance Indicator:** The information literate student selects the most appropriate investigative methods or information retrieval systems for accessing the needed information
    - **Outcome:** Investigates the scope, content, and organization of information retrieval systems
  - **Performance Indicator:** The information literate student retrieves information online or in-person using a variety of retrieval methods
    - Use various search systems to retrieve information in a variety of formats
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will find appropriate scholarly sources using the library's subject databases</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008 – 1.86</td>
<td>All citations within the bibliography</td>
<td>The majority of citations within the bibliography</td>
<td>Some citations within the bibliography</td>
<td>Few citations within the bibliography</td>
<td>None of the citations within the bibliography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 – 2.08</td>
<td>evidence relevant and timely sources</td>
<td>evidence relevant and timely sources</td>
<td>evidence relevant and timely sources</td>
<td>evidence relevant and timely sources</td>
<td>evidence relevant and timely sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 – 3.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 – 3.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 – 3.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Standard Three**: The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system
  - The information literate student articulates and applies initial criteria for evaluating both the information and its sources
  - Student compares information from various sources in order to evaluate reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, and point of view or bias

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will integrate appropriate scholarly sources</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008 – 1.86</td>
<td>The essay includes direct quotes, paraphrases, summaries and citations from scholarly sources, all of which support the main thesis</td>
<td>The essay includes direct quotes, paraphrases, summaries and citations from scholarly sources, most of which support the main thesis</td>
<td>The essay includes direct quotes, paraphrases, summaries and citations from scholarly sources, some of which support the main thesis</td>
<td>The essay includes direct quotes, paraphrases, summaries and citations from scholarly sources, few of which support the main thesis</td>
<td>The essay includes direct quotes, paraphrases, summaries and citations from scholarly sources, none of which support the main thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 – 2.28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 – 2.49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 – 2.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 – 2.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Standard Four**: The information literate student, individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
  - The information literate student applies new and prior information to the planning and creation of a particular product or performance
  - Integrates the new and prior information, including quotations and paraphrasing, in a manner that supports the purposes of the product or performance
How did you use findings for improvement?

The Libraries’ Instruction Coordinator shared results of the 2012 assessments with the English Department’s Composition Coordinators. Together with the above assessment results, the Libraries’ Instruction Coordinator shared general observations from library faculty and members of the Instruction Team. She noted that requirements for Essay IV vary significantly by ENGL1120 instructor. Overall, there is a relaxing of requirements with respect to use of scholarly resources in Essay IV. A number of essay assignments do not specify the type of resources to be used, nor do they mention use of library databases. There is, in addition, a lack of consensus among instructors as to the definition of a “scholarly” source. While some instructors hold to the traditional view of “scholarly” sources as academic, peer-reviewed research articles, many others are defining this type of resource much more broadly (e.g., trade magazines, blogs, websites and documentaries are considered scholarly by some).

The Instruction Coordinator communicated to the English Composition Coordinators that if English essay assignments are moving more towards using websites and popular sources, then the Libraries needs to adjust its lessons on source evaluation from a scholarly/popular model to one more focused on website evaluation. It will also be necessary to revise the rubric currently in use.

The Instruction Team believes that a clarification of student learning outcomes in this area is a first step towards improving student performance.

Additional Comments

Assessment Method 3: Performance-based in-class assessment of student work

Assessment Method Description

All teaching library faculty are required to conduct at least two in-class student learning assessments per semester. In-class assessments are based on the learning outcomes identified for that session. While instructors are free to devise their own assessment method, most instructors use worksheets completed by students during in-class, active learning exercises. (Instructors use carbonless paper, which allows students to share a copy of their work.)

The two most common type of worksheets used for ENGL1120 (second semester English Composition) focus on (1) identifying keywords (and synonyms, related terms) of a research topic along with constructing a database keyword search using Boolean logic and (2) evaluating sources based on information need and information type (e.g., popular vs.
scholarly). While the large number of library sessions taught for ENGL1120 (286 classes in 2012) accounts for a good deal of the assessment data we collect, library teaching faculty are strongly encouraged to collect data for sessions taught for upper division classes in their area of subject specialization. The Instruction Team maintains a Student Learning Assessment webpage (http://libguides.auburn.edu/studentlearningassessment) where instructors share active learning exercises and accompanying worksheets. Individual instructor’s findings are shared in annual evaluation documents, during workshops held for all library teaching faculty, and in Instruction Team meetings.

Findings

Based on a review of student work on keyword searching worksheets, library instructors report that students have difficulty formulating a suitable research topic. The most common problems are topics with no real question or argument to address, or topics that are either too broad or too narrow for the scope of the assigned essay. Students also struggle to identify the main concepts associated with their research topic, but the growing consensus among library teaching faculty is that the more fundamental issue centers on the concept of topic development. In addition, when it comes to evaluating sources, students demonstrate only a superficial grasp of the nature and extent of information needed for academic papers. They do not perform well on questions that probe their understanding of the purpose of, and audience for, potential sources for their papers. Our assessment findings revealed that higher order thinking skills come into play not only at the end stages of research—in the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of research results—but also, quite crucially, in the preliminary stages of the process when the research project is being defined.
Answer the following questions about your source. Feel free to use the Internet for help.

1. What type of source do you have? For example, a magazine article. If you’re not sure, investigate online.

2. How soon after the event was your source published?

   Does this influence whether you would use the source for your assignment?

   Explain why or why not.

3. Is your source reporting facts about the event? Is your source analyzing reasons why the event occurred? Does your source have a purpose other than these?

   Does the purpose of the source influence whether you would use the source for your assignment?

   Explain why or why not.

4. Explain the author’s authority (or lack of) on this topic.

   Is the author sharing his or her opinion?

   Do either of these factors influence whether you would use the source for your assignment?

   Explain why or why not.

5. Who is the audience for this source?

   Explain one way that you can determine this.

Toni Carter  Auburn University Libraries 2014
GROUP ACTIVITY

Directions:
Your group will be searching ERIC. (Library homepage→Articles and Databases tab→Databases by Title→ERIC. Your search topic is: prayer in public schools.

Work with your group to identify the types of resources you’ve retrieved with your search tool. As you review your search results, answer the following questions:

Who might use the resources retrieved by your search tool?

- You, me, anybody (general audience)
- Persons employed in a specific trade, career, or profession
- Scholars/academics (college faculty, scientists, researchers)

How and why might someone use the sources retrieved? Tell us about any special features of these sources. For example, do they offer:

- Differing opinions or perspectives
- Up-to-date news or eyewitness accounts
- Data, statistics
- General overviews of a topic
- Career-specific news and information
- Focused, in-depth research
- Bibliographies that point to other relevant sources of information
- Other useful features. Please list.

Would the kinds of sources retrieved by this tool be useful to you for your essay assignment? Please give reasons for your answer.
How did you use the findings for improvement?
Findings have driven individual instructor’s teaching goals, guided the selection of instruction workshop topics, and given rise to new Instruction Team initiatives.

As part of their annual evaluation, library faculty must submit a teaching reflection. Faculty members are asked to take information gleaned from these in-class student learning assessments (together with student feedback or peer evaluation/classroom observation) and draft an instruction improvement goal for the coming year. (See attached teaching reflection guidelines.)

Two instruction workshops were held in 2013 (in January and August); both focused on areas of concern identified during in-class assessments of student work. The January workshop was devoted to designing active learning exercises that would call for more reflective, considered responses from students. In advance of the workshop, faculty members were asked to submit samples of active learning exercises used in their library sessions. During the workshop, faculty were asked to review each other’s samples and to suggest ways these activities could be improved to provide students with more opportunities to engage in critical, higher order thinking. In the August workshop, faculty focused on issues related to source evaluation. In response to the relaxing of essay assignment requirements regarding scholarly sources, library faculty worked to create alternate activities related to website evaluation; workshop exercises focused on designing activities that would elicit student discussion of concepts such as “authority,” “reliability” and “credibility.”

Finally, in response to findings related to student difficulties with formulating a research topic / developing a research question, the Instruction Team is developing a series of short, online tutorials designed to assist students with the different phases of this process. The videos are designed to function both as stand-alone modules and also in a flipped classroom environment. A video and supporting handouts on mind mapping was created this summer and pilot tested on a small number of ENGL 1120 classes.
Teaching Reflection for Annual Evaluation
(Suggested length - two pages)

Review your student learning assessments for the past year and:

• Describe which assessments you used.  
  [http://libguides.auburn.edu/studentlearningassessment](http://libguides.auburn.edu/studentlearningassessment)

• Based on these assessments of student work, describe at least one learning outcome or concept where students excelled.

• Describe at least one learning outcome or concept where students seemed to struggle, or you had hoped that they would have performed at a higher level.

• Upon reflection, how might you change your teaching or instructional materials to improve student learning/results?

• Using the information gleaned from either student learning assessments or student feedback or peer evaluation/classroom observation* draft an instruction improvement goal for the coming year. In other words, what will you change or address in your teaching to help improve student learning? What data will you use to measure that goal?

*Attach student feedback and peer evaluation/classroom observation

Additional Comments

20
Expected Outcome 3: Interdepartmental Communication

The Electronic Resources and Serials Services Department wanted to identify problem areas in communication with the collection development librarians.

Assessment Method 1: Survey

Assessment Method Description

In October 2012 the ERSS members devised a survey for the collection development librarians. In August 2013, the same survey was sent out again to gauge improvements. The survey consisted of six questions:

1. What service procedures do you find confusing or missing?
2. What services, in general, are missing that we can provide?
3. What email communications DO NOT work well or do you find confusing? If you have a particular preference what is it?
4. What email communications DO work well and that you suggest we continue?
5. Please provide any other feedback that you wish to offer so that we can better serve you.
6. Overall, at present, how would you rate the clarity of procedures for ordering serial resources?

Findings

In the 2012 survey fifteen out of sixteen people responded. Particular areas of concern were: lack of clarity on policies, especially the policy on handling excessive journal price increases; need for more time to make decisions for these price increases; desire for list of journals in each subject area with prices; desire for easily accessible usage data. For question 6 14% of respondents rated clarity of procedures for ordering new serials as Difficult, 29% as Somewhat Difficult, 29% as Neutral, 21% as Somewhat Easy, 7% as Easy. 0% responded that procedures were either Very Difficult or Very Easy.

How did you use findings for improvement?

The ERSS department created a new web page on the library intranet for posting policies, journal price histories and statistics. Information regarding Interlibrary Loan requests and monographic usage is also on that site. The department began using a more standard email message
regarding price increases with clearer deadlines. The 2013 survey thirteen out of eighteen people responded and the results showed increased satisfaction with the problem areas identified above. This time 0% of respondents rated clarity of procedures for ordering new serials as Very Difficult, 9% as Difficult, 9% as Somewhat Difficult, 55% as Neutral, 18% as Somewhat Easy, 0% as Easy, and 9% as Very Easy. Timeliness of usage data was still listed as an ongoing weakness.

**Additional Comments**

Since the August 2013 survey The Libraries has appointed a Collections Team to coordinate the activities of the collection development librarians. The ERSS unit is hopeful that this team approach will lead to better and more timely communication about areas of concern between the units. Another survey would probably elicit little response and the ERSS unit will work with the Collections Team to clarify procedures and disseminate usage data.

**Expected Outcome 4: Reference Staffing**

Reference and Instruction Services will align weekday Reference Desk staffing with user needs.

**Assessment Method 1:** READ (Reference Effort Assessment Data) Scale

**Assessment Method Description**

In February, 2012, Reference and Instruction Services implemented the use of the READ Scale (Reference Effort Assessment Data), “... a six-point scale tool for recording vital supplemental qualitative statistics gathered when reference librarians assist users with their inquiries or research-related activities by placing an emphasis on recording the effort, skills, knowledge, teaching moment, techniques and tools utilized by the librarian during a reference transaction.” Each reference transaction recorded and included the question asked, the answer given (optional), the date and time of the transaction, the person replying, the contact point, the question mode (face to face, phone, email, chat, text) and the time spent answering as well as the READ Scale rating of 1 to 6 (see attached READ Scale levels and criteria). Sample data for a three week period were analyzed to determine the number of questions by mode, the number of questions by READ scale category, and the number of questions by time of day, day of the week and READ Scale category.
THE READ SCALE

Level One

- Answers that require the least amount of effort
- No specialized knowledge skills or expertise
- No consultation of resources
- Less than 5 minutes

Examples (Level 1):
- Directional inquiries
- Library or service hours
- Service point locations
- Rudimentary machine assistance (locating/using copiers, showing how to print or supplying paper)

Level Two

- Answers given which require more effort
- Require only minimal specific knowledge skills or expertise
- Answers may need nominal resource consultation

Examples (Level 2):
- Call number inquiries
- Item location
- Minor machine & computer equipment assistance
- General library or policy information
- More complex machine assistance (showing how to save to a disk or email records, launching programs or re-booting)

Level 3

- Answers in this category require some effort and time
- Consultation of ready reference resource materials is needed
- Minimal instruction of the user may be required
• Reference knowledge and skills come into play

Examples (Level 3)
• Answers that require specific reference resources (encyclopedias or databases)
• Basic instruction on searching the online catalog
• Direction to relevant subject databases
• Introduction to web searching for a certain item
• Showing how to scan and save images
• Increasingly complex technical problems (e.g., assistance with remote use)

Level 4

• Answers or research requests require the consultation of multiple resources
• Subject specialists may need to be consulted and more thorough instruction and assistance occurs
• Reference knowledge and skills needed
• Efforts can be more supportive in nature for the user, or if searching for a finite answer, difficult to find
• Exchanges can be more instruction-based, as staff teach users more in-depth research skills

Examples (Level 4):
• Instructing users how to utilize complex search techniques for the online catalog, databases and the web
• Assisting users in focusing or broadening searches (helping to redefine or clarify a topic).
• How to cross-reference resources and track related supporting materials
• Services outside of reference become utilized (e.g., ILL, Tech services, etc); collegial consultation

Level 5

• More substantial effort and time spent assisting with research and finding information
• On the high end of the scale, subject specialists need to be consulted
• Consultation appointments might be scheduled
• Efforts are cooperative in nature, between the user and librarian and/or working with colleagues
• Multiple resources used
• Research, reference knowledge and skills needed
• Dialogue between the user and librarian may take on a ‘back and forth question’ dimension

Examples (Level 5)
• False leads
• Interdisciplinary consultations / research
• Graduate research
• Question evolution
• Expanding searches / resources beyond those locally available
• Difficult outreach problems (access issues that need to be investigated)

Level 6
• The most effort and time expended
• Inquiries or requests for information can’t be answered on the spot
• At this level, staff may be providing in-depth research and services for specific needs of the clients
• This category covers some ‘special library’ type research services
• Primary (original documents) and secondary resource materials may be used

Examples (Level 6)
• Creating bibliographies and bibliographic education
• In-depth faculty and PhD student research; working with outside vendors
• Relaying specific answers and supplying supporting materials for publication,
• exhibits etc
• Collaboration and on-going research

Findings
We found that the vast majority of the 1185 questions recorded over the three week period (890 or 75%) were face to face, and 870 or 73% were at the READ Scale levels 1 and 2. The greatest number of questions occurred in the mid to late afternoon between 2 pm and 6 pm and with another spike in number of questions mid-evening between 7 pm and 9 pm.

How did you use findings for improvement?
Librarian and graduate student Monday through Thursday schedules were reconfigured to incorporate these findings, with graduate assistants staffing the Reference Desk until from 7:45 am to 9 am alone, being joined by a reference librarian until 1 pm. One librarian and one graduate assistant staff the desk from 5 pm to 6 pm. Two librarians staff the desk from 1 pm until 5 pm and again from 6 pm until 9 pm. On Fridays a graduate assistant staffs the desk from 7:45 am until 11 am and from 3 pm until 6 pm. A librarian staffs the desk from 11 am to 1 pm and another works from 1 pm to 3pm. These schedule revisions more accurately address user
information and assistance needs.

Additional Comments