

Amy Glende, MLS and Melissa Peterson, MLS
Erie Community College – South Campus

Abstract

In 2010 Erie Community College embarked on a college-wide Project SAILS assessment of their students. Since then, the statistics and information collected has been used by the Erie Community College General Education Committee to propose information literacy as a student learning outcome. This poster session presents the process used, the definition of the proposed outcome and the Project SAILS data used to create a starting point for outcome implementation and assessment of information literacy campus wide.

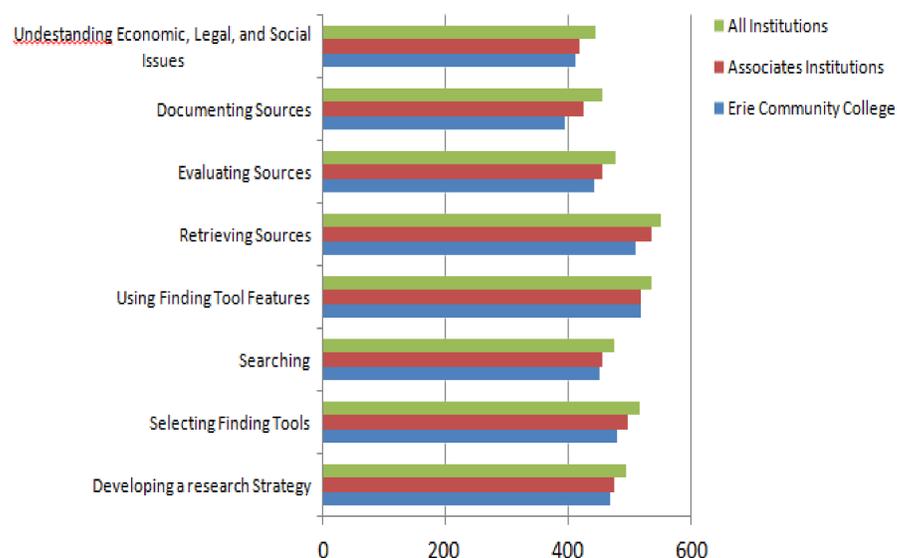
Introduction

Although information literacy has long been recognized as an important 21st century skill for college graduates by the Association of College & Research Libraries, as well as accrediting bodies such as the Middle State Commission on Higher Education, in 2010 Erie Community College (ECC) had no definition of information literacy or of an information literate student, nor did it have an institution-wide committee to implement information literacy.

Feeling itself behind the curve, and with Middle States re-accreditation quickly approaching, The General Education Committee and the ECC Library Resource Centers sought to discover the current state of information literacy across ECC. Committee members wanted a nationally benchmarked assessment instrument that could be relatively easy and affordable to administer. After some searching we decided on the Project SAILS assessment. The only other metric of information literacy ECC had was a satisfaction measure from the 2008 administration of LibQual.

Project SAILS Scores

Overall Scores - across all skill sets



Erie Community College's Proposed Information Literacy Skills

- Seek authoritative sources to satisfy information need
- Define information need within a manageable focus
- Develop research strategies
- Identify gaps in information
- Compare several pieces of information and evaluate utility
- Determine the need for information to supplement course materials
- Evaluate reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness and bias
- Analyze information sources available and rank their value relative to need
- Uses the citation and style for written communication most often associated with field or discipline of study
- Demonstrates familiarity with issues of intellectual property such as copyright, plagiarism, patents or trademarks
- Compare new information with prior, recognizing value, contradiction or unique characteristics
- Use an appropriate investigative method to the discipline and question

Methods and Materials

With the assistance of ECC's Institutional Research Office, specific courses were identified across ECC's three campuses, disciplines/fields and academic levels to participate in the SAILS assessment. Faculty were recruited into the effort and students were strongly encouraged to participate, but were not required and no incentives were offered for participation. Students were given the paper and pencil test to complete as computer resources were limited on ECC campuses.

Administration occurred over the fall 2010 semester and completed surveys were returned to Project SAILS for aggregation and analysis. ECC received a results report soon thereafter.

Results

Results were based on 392 completed tests. Overall, ECC students performed "about the same" (within one standard deviation) as the community college benchmark on seven of the eight tested skill sets. The seven are: developing a research strategy, selecting finding tools, searching, using finding tool features, retrieving sources, evaluating sources and understanding the economic, legal and social issues of information. The skill that ECC students performed worse than the community college benchmark is documenting sources. Of these eight skills sets, SAILS results determined which skills are easier and which are more difficult for ECC students. Ordered by performance, ECC students are best at retrieving sources, using finding tool features, selecting finding tools, and searching. ECC students have more difficulty with developing a research strategy, understanding economic, legal and social issues, documenting sources and evaluating sources.

Discussion

Since the administration of Project SAILS, ECC has also gone through Middle States re-accreditation. The result of these two experiences has been an increased college-wide awareness and discussion of information literacy. During the 2012-13 academic year, the General Education Committee at ECC has adopted the Middle States definition of information literacy and is developing information literacy as a learning outcome for ECC students college-wide.

Naturally, ECC librarians are very encouraged by this. The College Senate at ECC has heard the proposal for information literacy as a learning outcome and has approved the General Education Committee plan to move forward. The information literacy skills ECC students will need to demonstrate were developed from Project SAILS results and informed especially by those skills that ECC students had the most difficulty with.

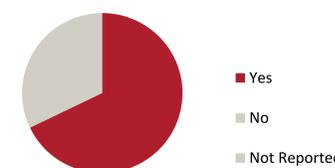
Information Literacy: LibQual 2008

	Mean (1-9 scale)	SD	n
The library helps me stay abreast of developments in my field(s) of interest.	6.42	1.92	1,137
The library aids my advancement in my academic discipline or work.	6.88	1.80	1,137
The library enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits or work.	7.01	1.82	1,137
The library helps me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information.	6.67	1.90	1,137
The library provides me with the information skills I need in my work or study.	7.01	1.77	1,137

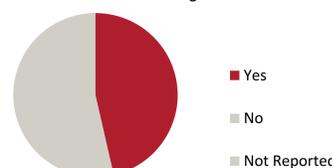
SUNY Community Colleges

(National Center for Education Statistics – Academic Libraries Survey , Fiscal Year: 2010)

Definition of Information Literacy or of an Information Literate Student



Incorporated Information Literacy in the Institution's Strategic Plan



Conclusions

The ECC experience suggests that using Project SAILS as an institution-wide information literacy assessment has benefits that extend beyond learning what skills students excel or fall short of. It can be catalyst for discussing the importance of information literacy generally, specific skills and information literacy concepts can be debated and can be the basis for creating the momentum to promote information literacy college-wide.

Presenter

Amy Marie Glende
Erie Community College
South Campus
Library Resource Center
Glendea@ecc.edu

Presenter

Melissa Peterson
Erie Community College
South Campus
Library Resource Center
Petersonm@ecc.edu