



In the Fall of 2006, we decided to use an exercise which combined all of the outcomes on one sheet that students filled in as they were going through library instruction. These are the outcomes that were assessed:

- The student will be able to determine the nature and extent of the information needed.
- The student will be able to access needed information effectively and efficiently.
- The student will be able to evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.

We utilized the general education rubric and divided the activity into three sections:

1. Identifying an information need-creating a research question and generating keywords as well as a search strategy
2. Accessing information-filling in book, article and website information
3. Evaluating information-evaluating one of those resources according to given criteria

1. For the most part students were able to come up with fairly substantive questions, although some still put in very general topics like "global warming" and had trouble understanding how to better narrow the topic and explore related issues and keywords to yield an effective research query

2. Again, students were able to determine how to search and identify the various components of the resources they were finding although there was confusion between

using the library catalog and the databases and how to navigate tasks such as finding full-text articles.

3. This was the most problematic area. When the students did fill this out, it was mostly with one or two word answers indicating that they were unable to determine if the article or resource they were evaluating had credible information based on the criteria provided. For the most part, if they found something in a database they said it was credible regardless of the information the resource actually contained.

After piloting the new instruction program, are asking all of the students in the English classes to fill out a Research Journal that we will use not only for assessment purposes, but also to determine if this new way of doing instruction was better than the traditional one time library instruction in terms of helping students understand and synthesize the large (and complicated) amount of information we typically present.

We are also asking the students in all our other classes to fill out an Information Literacy questionnaire that is also mapped onto the Information Literacy competencies for general education. We hope that in the future we will be able to use the same tool for assessment no matter what the subject area of the class.

While the results indicate that students showed a competent or highly competent level of Information Literacy skills in all three of the areas, there are still several issues that we need to address.

- Because this was done on a voluntary basis, some students provided more complete answers than others and there was no way to tell whether or not the student had a difficult time answering the questions, or simply did not take the activity seriously.
- Most students had trouble identifying what a search strategy was. This led us to believe that we will need to change the way in which some of the questions are worded to make them as clear as possible.
- The other question that arose is that for the need to ask students specifically how they constructed their search strategy-in other words if students get the information they need, does it matter how they find it?
- There is a clear need to emphasize critical evaluation of sources which has been an ongoing effort and which continues to be of great importance.
- For the future, there will be an attempt to combine qualitative as well as quantitative data in order to create as comprehensive a picture as possible about student learning of Information Literacy standards.