

Winter 2003

Collaborating with Campus Administrators and Faculty to Integrate Information Literacy and Assessment into the Core Curriculum

Jim Jenkins

Auburn University, jenkijh@auburn.edu

Marcia Boosinger

Auburn University, boosiml@auburn.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/seln>

 Part of the [Higher Education Administration Commons](#), and the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Jenkins, Jim and Boosinger, Marcia (2003) "Collaborating with Campus Administrators and Faculty to Integrate Information Literacy and Assessment into the Core Curriculum," *The Southeastern Librarian*: Vol. 50 : Iss. 4 , Article 8.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/seln/vol50/iss4/8>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Southeastern Librarian by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@kennesaw.edu.

Collaborating with Campus Administrators and Faculty to Integrate Information Literacy and Assessment into the Core Curriculum.

Jim Jenkins and Marcia Boosinger

This article describes the efforts of faculty at Auburn University Libraries in identifying opportunities for librarians, classroom faculty, campus administrators and those in charge of curriculum planning and change to collaborate on developing an institutional information literacy and assessment program.

Jim Jenkins is Reference Librarian and Instruction Coordinator, Auburn University Libraries, Alabama. He can be reached at jenkijh@auburn.edu. Marcia Boosinger is Chair of Reference and Instruction and can be reached at boosiml@auburn.edu.

support. So, while we need to continue to build our traditional coalitions from the bottom up by working with individual faculty, we also need to learn to build new coalitions from the top down with campus administrators and campus-wide planning committees.”⁴

“One of the most important activities of any library is to recognize its most powerful and influential constituents. . . .”¹ “Information literacy is not just the library. Academic librarians should develop strategies and seek to establish campus partnerships to develop critical thinking skills for students on their campuses.”² In promoting the importance of information literacy and its assessment in the core curriculum, Auburn University library faculty reached out to their most important constituents, academic administrators, policy-making groups, and program directors, demonstrating the efficacy of collaborating on shared goals.

Collaboration Essential

Most academic librarians have known for quite some time that collaboration with their classroom faculty counterparts is essential to the success of information literacy efforts on their campuses; in fact, they have been very successful at convincing their faculty colleagues through networking, coordinating and collaborating, one by one and sometimes even an entire department at a time, that information literacy skills are important ones for their students to acquire.³ But as Loomis reminds would-be collaborators, “What is newer for us, however, is the need to develop coalitions with campus administrators. Because information literacy is a proficiency that cuts across the disciplines and is dependent on cumulative acquisition through a building-block approach, it needs to be integrated throughout the curriculum. Broad programs call for broad coalitions and, in the case of information literacy, for administrative as well as individual faculty

Information Literacy at Auburn

Starting with an evaluation of the state of the campus for application to Information Literacy Immersion 2000, the Chair of Reference and Instruction (CR&I) became aware of the need for the library faculty to broaden their efforts at providing routine library instruction into addressing students' information literacy competencies for lifelong learning. At that time, institutional initiatives for information literacy at Auburn University were scattered and, at best, existed at the departmental level, but more frequently only at the individual course or instructor level. As an institution Auburn University scored low on the ACRL Information Literacy IQ Test, especially on those questions related to the librarians at the institution and the general recognition of the importance of information literacy.⁵ While some librarians at Auburn teach portions of courses collaboratively and engage in limited curriculum planning, all do not have opportunities to do so. Auburn University ranks at about a 3 out of 12 on the Information Literacy IQ Test (3 being “you are taking your first step”), with most of the score coming from resources the libraries provide, the state of networking on campus with a fairly well developed information infrastructure, and a climate ready for collaboration, but little else in the way of widespread recognition of the importance of information literacy, assessment or development of a learning/teaching environment.

There was little evidence that Auburn University recognized the importance of information literacy, certainly not at an institutional level. Definitions of information literacy and planning

involving the concept were missing from campus documents. Administrators had not stated any commitment to information literacy, relying on the state mandated general education curriculum to form the first two years of undergraduate education. Because the few efforts taking place on campus in 2000 were so scattered, the library faculty realized that concentrated efforts toward developing institutional information literacy initiatives would be most successful if the library faculty assumed a leadership role in those arenas. This article describes the efforts of faculty at Auburn University Libraries in identifying opportunities for librarians, classroom faculty, campus administrators and those in charge of curriculum planning and change to collaborate on developing an institutional information literacy and assessment program.

Beginning in the spring of 2001 Auburn University Libraries developed assessment criteria in response to campus wide assessment initiatives and preparation for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation. As a part of this effort the Reference and Instruction faculty also developed assessment criteria for instruction: using a pre-test and post-test, 15% of the English Composition 1120 students questioned will score at least 70% on a test of content covered in library instruction sessions.

In February 2001 library faculty from the Reference and Instruction Services Department participated in a workshop facilitated by Debra Gilchrist, Information Literacy Immersion Institute faculty member. Intended outcomes of the workshop included the formulation of a definition of information literacy and learning outcomes as well as expanded knowledge about assessment and how to work with teaching faculty to turn library assignments into information literacy assignments (i.e. assignments that foster critical thinking skills). The group began their concentrated efforts at assessment by looking at a variety of information literacy definitions and contributing their thoughts on a definition for Auburn University. The resulting definition of information literacy is expressed in the following description: "An information literate person is one who has the ability to recognize when information is needed, and to efficiently locate and access, and effectively interface with, evaluate, use and communicate information in

all formats to become an independent life-long learner. Our goal is to insure that all of our constituents are information literate."

Following on the definitional discussions, Reference and Instruction librarians developed learning outcomes for instruction involving two mandatory English Freshman Composition II sessions.

Outcomes

After the two sessions students will be able to:

- Locate books using keyword searching in the libraries' catalog
- Locate citation/text of articles in at least one database
- Evaluate websites (and any other source of information)
- Understand the difference between an article found through a library database and an article/information found on the World Wide Web
- Use a library catalog to determine the libraries' periodicals, holdings and locations

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools 1998 Criteria for Accreditation include an entire section on the library and other learning resources. Several of the "must" and "should" statements relate to information literacy and life-long learning:

SACS Criteria (excerpt) 5.1.2 Services.

...Libraries and learning resource centers must provide students with opportunities to learn how to access information in different formats so that they can continue life-long learning. Librarians must work cooperatively with faculty members and other information providers in assisting students to use resource materials effectively...this should be consistent with the goal of helping students develop information literacy--the ability to locate, evaluate, and use information to become independent life-long learners.⁶

Because of her involvement in campus administration discussions on the need for

assessment presented by accreditation, the Dean of the Libraries had an opportunity to communicate to the Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Studies the efforts of library faculty to define information literacy, develop related outcomes and begin assessment efforts. In part because of the Dean's description of library assessment efforts to this date, the Instruction Coordinator and the CR&I were invited by campus administrators to collaborate on meeting the Southeastern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation requirements for demonstrated information literacy learning outcomes in the core curriculum in the spring of 2001. This invitation led to a presentation by the CR&I and the Instruction Coordinator to the Core Curriculum Oversight Committee (CCOC), which resulted in a plan for assessing learning outcomes in English Composition II courses via pre-tests and post-tests. This credibility extended to the libraries' information literacy efforts with other individuals as well, such as the Assistant Director of Composition and the Director of the Freshman Year Experience courses, both of whom were responsible for core curriculum outcomes in their areas related to the ability to "gather, synthesize and interpret information."

In June 2001 the CR&I attended Track 2: Librarian as Program Developer of the Wisconsin Information Literacy Immersion Institute while the Instruction Coordinator attended Track 1: Librarian as Teacher.⁷ Valuable background knowledge was gained on making the transition from bibliographic instruction to information literacy, including the psychology of learning, presentation techniques and evaluation of instruction, outcomes and assessment and cooperative methods which are effective in working with faculty to integrate information literacy components into instruction. That same month the CR&I and the Instruction Coordinator attended the ACRL pre-conference in San Francisco, "Reaching Students and Faculty: Putting the Information Literacy Competency Standards to Work." The emphasis of the pre-conference was on implementing the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards while connecting to the institution's mission, meeting accreditation requirements, and using the standards in courses, both 'one shot lectures' and across the curriculum. The most important item discussed was interaction with others on campus, including selling

information literacy to campus administrators, teaching faculty, and other library staff.

Formulating the Program

After attending the institute and conference the Instruction Coordinator and the CR&I met with Auburn's Assistant Director of Composition to discuss assessment plans and learning outcomes for the fall and spring semesters of Freshman Composition. Also in summer of 2001 English Composition II faculty members provided their thoughts on the learning outcome needs of their students. That feedback was compared with the freshman composition learning outcomes as developed by the library faculty and outlines for two to three basic standard English Composition II sessions were developed. Library faculty utilized that framework for providing instruction to summer English Composition II classes encompassing administration of pre- and post-tests. Resulting data were analyzed. A student survey/questionnaire of the effectiveness of library instruction was also given to the students at the time of the post-test.

At the end of summer 2001 the CR&I and Instruction Coordinator met with the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies and Director of Assessment to present data results from summer English Composition II instruction and pre- and post-tests. The results showed that the stated criteria for success (15% of students questioned will score 70% on a test of content covered in library instruction sessions) was exceeded, with 44.9% of students tested scoring 70 or better on the post-test given late in the term. Changes were recommended in the pre- and post-tests based on feedback from English Composition II faculty concerning student-learning outcomes. Test results confirmed the first post-assessment faculty feedback that greater emphasis should be put on keyword searching, because their students were having a difficult time understanding Boolean concepts.

In late summer 2001 library faculty customized and implemented the Texas Information Literacy Tutorial (TILT) for use at Auburn. The Tiger Information Literacy Tutorial,⁸ (Auburn University's version of TILT) is an online tutorial divided into three modules covering selecting, searching and evaluating information resources. The CR&I and Instruction Coordinator made a presentation about Auburn's TILT to Freshman Year Experience staff and faculty who accepted

the libraries' invitation to try TILT and agreed to use it in the fall semester as a pilot project for assessment in two courses. The Auburn Experience and Academic Success Strategies courses introduce freshmen and junior college transfer students to academic life and resources at a major research university. Both courses emphasize academic improvement skills. Students were asked to complete one TILT module and the module quiz. That score was reported as a grade. Results from the TILT quiz were emailed to their instructors and also to the libraries' Instruction Coordinator.

As fall semester began, the CR&I and the Instruction Coordinator gave a presentation on Information Literacy at the 'English Hour' colloquium series that was well received; the Instruction Coordinator was asked to repeat that presentation to a larger audience of new English graduate teaching assistants. The library faculty once again provided instruction to English Composition II classes followed by administration of pre- and post-tests. The Instruction Coordinator and the CR&I collaborated with English Composition II instructors to administer a survey in addition to the pre- and post-tests to determine students' perceived learning after English Composition II library instruction. A description of TILT and its use with the Freshman Year Experience classes was presented to the CCOC for their consideration. The Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Studies and Director of Assessment presented the library instruction pre- and post-test results from summer to the CCOC. As a result CCOC approved the locally developed instruments and TILT as assessment measures for information literacy in the core curriculum.

Presenting the Program

In Fall 2001, at the beginning of the second university-wide assessment cycle, the Director of Assessment presented the revised core curriculum assessment criteria. The criteria included use of the library pretest, post-test and additionally the TILT quiz results as measures of student learning outcomes. After discussion, the CR&I, the Instruction Coordinator and the Director of Assessment agreed that in the second assessment cycle the mean score on the TILT module taken (either selecting, searching or evaluating) would be at least 90% and additionally, no more than 10% of students would score below 80% on any of the modules.

At the end of the FY 2002 assessment cycle, the mean score on the TILT modules was above 95%, with only 1.5 % of the students scoring below 80%.

In the Spring of 2002 the Instruction Coordinator continued to meet with CCOC as an ad hoc member for information literacy. He assisted with the analysis of core curriculum course syllabi to determine that stated information literacy learning outcomes were being met by coursework in core courses. The library faculty once again provided instruction to English Composition II classes followed by administration of revised pre- and post-tests and the survey to measure students' perceived learning. The CR&I and Instruction Coordinator repeated their presentation on Information Literacy at another 'English Hour' colloquium series and to the new English Composition II instructors.

Results of the first two measures of locally developed pre- and post-tests and TILT showed that students in core curriculum courses were achieving learning outcomes and reaching stated assessment criteria. Although the CCOC accepted these data for core curriculum assessment purposes, the library faculty still felt the need to explore the possibility of using a standardized assessment instrument because of the reliability and validity of the results from such an instrument as opposed to those gathered from locally developed instruments. When the CR&I attended an ARL Learning Outcomes Working Group meeting at the 2001 American Library Association Midwinter Conference, she participated in a discussion of Kent State University's initial efforts to develop a standardized instrument for assessing information literacy competencies. The CR&I brought information about the pilot project back to Auburn to discuss with campus collaborators. The CR&I and Instruction Coordinator discussed with the Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Studies, the Director of Assessment and the Assistant Director of Composition the acceptance of Auburn's participation as a pilot site for Kent State University's Project for the Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS) to be conducted in fall semester, 2002. As described on the SAILS web page, the purpose of the SAILS project is "to develop an instrument for programmatic level assessment of information literacy skills that is valid and thus credible to university

administrators and other academic personnel.” SAILS is “standardized, contains items not specific to a particular institution or library, is easily administered, has been proven valid and reliable, assesses at institutional level and provides for both external and internal benchmarking.” With such a tool, the library faculty will be able to “measure information literacy skills, gather national data, provide norms, and compare information literacy measures with other indicators of student achievement,” as well as “document information literacy skill levels, establish internal and peer benchmarks of performance, pinpoint areas for improvement, identify and justify resource needs, and assess and demonstrate effect of changes in their instructional programs. This tool will enable librarians to clarify for themselves and their institutions what role, if any, information literacy plays in student success and retention.”⁹

The Director of Assessment presented Auburn’s participation in SAILS to the CCOC as a replacement for TILT as an assessment instrument and the committee encouraged the Libraries to proceed with efforts to pilot SAILS by the spring of 2003, starting with the core curriculum course of English Composition II. Upon assurance of anonymity for student volunteers, the English Department, through the efforts of the Assistant Coordinator of Composition, has agreed that all English Composition II students may participate in the pilot of SAILS and the Registrar’s office has agreed to provide the necessary demographic data. Final approval from the University’s Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects was received in December 2002. Analysis of the SAILS instrument results will provide Auburn University library faculty with data regarding the information literacy competencies in which students need more instruction and will result in improved, focused and increasingly refined information literacy instruction. In addition, the results will help establish a more meaningful and open dialogue with English and other instructors regarding the need for information literacy instruction. Results can be used to partially satisfy assessment of the core curriculum intended educational (student) outcome.

Summary

“At the levels where curriculum is determined, the case for information literacy needs to be made. Deans and department heads must be convinced of three things: that students must learn how to access and use information; that these skills should be integrated across the disciplines; and that librarians working collaboratively with faculty are the appropriate instructional team to achieve this goal.”¹⁰ . . . although librarians have in one form or another been teaching IL [information literacy] for many years, these projects have met, and will continue to meet, with minimal success, as long as they are initiated solely by librarians and supported only within the confines of the library. . . such programs can meet with success only when they are developed within an explicit statement of philosophy from the highest levels of academic administration that establishes IL as part of the educational mandate of the institution.”¹¹

The collaborative efforts of the Auburn University Libraries and other units over the past two years have created a greater awareness of information literacy learning outcomes and the need for assessment of those outcomes across campus. The English faculty, the Core Curriculum Oversight Committee, and the Director of Assessment have a greater understanding of and appreciation for the library faculty’s contributions to the achievement of university-wide core curriculum assessment goals related to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) criteria. The English Department should be able to determine through pre-and post-tests assessments that library instruction is helping their students gain information literacy competencies. The consultative role that the library has with the Director of Assessment, and the designation of a librarian as an ad hoc member on the Core Curriculum Oversight Committee on matters relating to information literacy assessment is an indication of the level of awareness and cooperation campus-wide brought about by the library faculty’s efforts. The Auburn University Libraries will continue to take a leadership role in information literacy assessment in the core curriculum.

References

1. Stebelman, S., Siggins, J., Nutty, D. and Long, C. "Improving Library Relations with Faculty and University Administrators: The Role of the Faculty Outreach Librarian," *College & Research Libraries*. v. 60 no.2, March 1999, p. 121-130
2. Iannuzzi, Patricia. Faculty development and information literacy: establishing campus partnerships (at Florida International University; revision of a paper presented at the 1998 LOEX-of-the-West conference). *Reference Services Review*. v. 26 no3-4, Fall/Winter 1998, p. 97-102.
3. Cook, Doug. "Creating Connections: A Review of the Literature," in *Collaborative Imperative: Librarians and Faculty Working Together in the Information Universe*, ed. Dick Raspa and Dane Ward. (Chicago: Association of Research Libraries, 2000), p 19.
4. Loomis, Abigail. "Building Coalitions in Information Literacy," in *Information For a New Age: Redefining the Librarian*, compiled by Fifteenth Anniversary Task Force, Library Instruction Roundtable (LIRT), American Library Association. 1995, p.123
5. The Association of College and Research Libraries Information Literacy IQ Test <http://www.ala.org/acrl/nili/iqtest.html>
6. Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Criteria for Accreditation. <http://www.sacscoc.org/criteria.asp>
7. Wisconsin Information Literacy Immersion Institute <http://www.uwec.edu/library/waal/iil.html>
8. Auburn University Libraries' version of the Texas Information Literacy Tutorial (TILT), the Tiger Information Literacy Tutorial. <http://tilt.lib.auburn.edu/>
9. Project SAILS. Project for the Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills. Kent State University. <http://www.library.kent.edu/sails/projdescription.html>
10. Caspers, Jean, Lenn, Katy. "The Future of Collaboration Between Librarians and Teaching Faculty." in *Collaborative Imperative: Librarians and Faculty Working Together in the Information Universe*, ed. Dick Raspa and Dane Ward. (Chicago: Association of Research Libraries, 2000), p 148.
11. Grafstein, Ann. "A Discipline-based Approach to Information Literacy", *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, v. 28, issue 4, July-August 2002, p. 197-204.