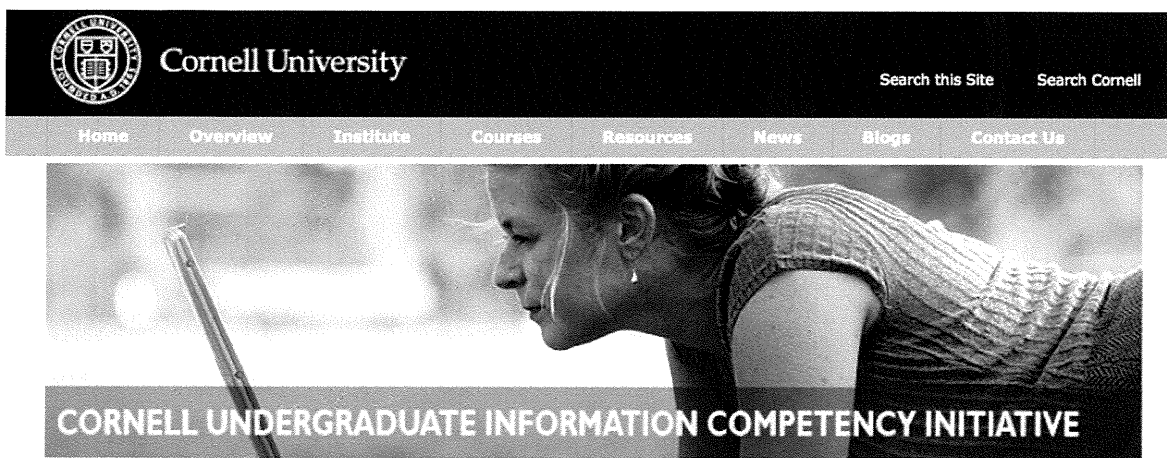


Impact Assessment Goals



Latest News

- Third Summer Institute featured in Cornell Chronicle 06/24/2010 - 14:26
The successful third summer institute for the Undergraduate Information Competency Initiative was featured in an article in the Cornell Chronicle on June 10.
- Researching Hip Hop featured in Chronicle of Higher Education 02/05/2010 - 12:35
Prof. Steve Pond's Research Hip Hop class, one of the information competency pilot classes, was recently featured in the January 17, 2010 Chronicle Review's Arts & Academe section.

[More News](#)

The **Cornell Undergraduate Information Competency Initiative**, funded by a grant from Cornell University Library and the office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, encourages Cornell faculty to explore creative and effective ways to engage students by integrating research skills into the classroom and the curriculum through the redesign and creation of assignments for undergraduate courses. This Initiative supports the university's goal of improving undergraduate education by providing faculty the funding, opportunity, and the assistance of campus academic partners to transform the curriculum by creating authentic and engaging research assignments to incorporate into their courses.

The Initiative, based on a model pioneered by the University of California Berkeley's Mellon Library/Faculty Fellowship for Undergraduate Research, was created as a response to a growing national concern that today's undergraduates do not possess core information competencies.

[Learn More...](#)

Readings

- Usability Assessment of Library-Related Web Sites, Methods and Case Studies
- Integrating Information Literacy with a Sequenced English Composition Curriculum
- Using Rubrics to Assess Information Literacy
- Assessing Information Literacy Among Undergraduates: A Discussion of the Literature and the University of California-Berkeley Assessment Experience
- Information Literacy Assessment: Standards-Based Tools and Assignments.

[More Readings](#)



FOR RELEASE:
Contact: Gwen Glazer
Phone: (607) 254-8390
E-mail: gglazer@cornell.edu

2CUL To Examine Libraries' Role in Supporting Humanities Ph.D. Students
Partnerships between Libraries, Graduate Schools and Writing Centers Could Help Graduation Rates

ITHACA, N.Y. (Feb. 23, 2010) – Can libraries help doctoral students in the humanities finish their degrees?

A collaborative study between the libraries at Cornell University and Columbia University — two leading research libraries that make up the 2CUL partnership — aims to discover if the library can help ameliorate high attrition and low completion rates for doctoral students in the humanities.

"We know libraries play a major role in graduate students' lives, and we want to build on that connection to create the right kind of help that comes at exactly the right time in their careers," said Anne R. Kenney, Carl A. Kroch University Librarian at Cornell. "The goal of this project is to listen to graduate students' concerns and determine whether the library can develop strategies that will help directly with their research and contribute to their success."

Grants from the Council on Library and Information Resources and the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation will support a user needs assessment to determine what academic libraries can do to help humanities doctoral students complete their degrees. Both 2CUL libraries, which participate in a partnership that could become the most expansive collaboration to date between two major research libraries, are contributing to this effort.

Cornell's Graduate School and Columbia's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences are providing additional support. Support from Cornell's Graduate School comes from a grant from the Council of Graduate Schools for its CGS Ph.D. Completion Project.

The pilot project will involve focus groups with Cornell and Columbia's humanities students in all stages of their PhD work, as well as recent graduates. Interviewers will then develop a questionnaire based on information from the focus groups and administer it to 20 to 25 students in three or four departments at each institution.

After the analysis period, the institutions will recommend a course of action to address the findings. Possible steps forward would include partnerships with the graduate schools, writing centers and other campus entities at both institutions. Assessment will be completed by March 2011.

Humanities students have longer mean times to completing their PhDs than students in any other discipline and, according to a recent National Science Foundation study, those times are increasing. In 2003, the average humanities student took nine years to graduate, up from 7.5 years in 1978. Another study shows that humanities students' 49-percent completion rate within a 10-year period is considerably lower than the rates of their peers in mathematics and physical sciences (55 percent), social sciences (56 percent), life sciences (63 percent) and engineering (64 percent).

"It's well documented in empirical studies that PhD students in the humanities have a more difficult time than their colleagues in the sciences and social sciences," said Kornelia Tancheva, director of Olin and Uris libraries at Cornell and a co-principal investigator on the grant. "Many factors — advising, financial aid, family life, community, job prospects — have been shown to contribute to this, and we want to examine the role the library might play in supporting their work."

"It is important for academic research libraries to understand how library services might impact graduate student success in terms of degree completion and time to completion," said Damon Jaggers, Columbia's associate university librarian for collections and services and co-principal investigator on the study. "The results of this study could inform the design of more responsive and effective research support services for humanities graduate students — a core user group for research libraries like those at Columbia and Cornell."

About Cornell University Library

Cornell University is an Ivy League institution and New York's land-grant university. Among the top ten academic research libraries in the country, Cornell University Library reflects the university's distinctive mix of eminent scholarship and democratic ideals. The Library offers cutting-edge programs and facilities, a full spectrum of services, extensive collections that represent the depth and breadth of the university, and a deep network of digital resources. Its impact reaches beyond campus boundaries with initiatives that extend the land grant mission to a global focus. To learn more, visit <http://library.cornell.edu>.

About Columbia University Libraries/Information Services

Columbia University Libraries/Information Services is one of the top five academic research library systems in North America. The collections include over 10 million volumes, over 100,000 journals and serials, as well as extensive electronic resources, manuscripts, rare books, microforms, maps, graphic and audio-visual materials. The services and collections are organized into 22 libraries and various academic technology centers. The Libraries employs more than 550 professional and support staff. The website of the Libraries at www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb is the gateway to its services and resources.

Summary:

Partnerships could help graduation rates



Libraries
Instruction

INSTRUCTION - Library 110

Library 110 is a one-credit hour class designed to teach basic information literacy skills to first year and transfer students. The course familiarizes students with an array of online information resources and introduces them to specific UNL Libraries services and resources.

The objectives of the course include enabling students to:

- Recognize features common to databases and search engines, as well as understand the impact of different kinds of searches on the information retrieved.
- Carefully evaluate and analyze online information sources for quality and usefulness.
- Identify which resources will be most useful for specific research needs.
- Generate terms appropriate to specific research as well as refining search strategies.
- Search the UNL Libraries Catalog to find materials and interpret information found there.
- Locate library service points and materials, as well as understand different services the University Libraries provide.

Library 110 is offered five times during the academic year. Two non-concurrent 7-week classes (consisting of numerous sections) are held during fall and spring semesters. One class is held during the 5-week summer session.

Library 110 is largely independent-study in nature, and students are responsible for accessing and working through web-based units that cover topics and skills related to the course. Each unit contains text as well as graphical material and graded exercises.


For additional information about the course, contact Susan Leach at sleach1@unl.edu or in the Library Instruction Office (N201 Love Library/(402)472-0703). Signe Boudreau, the LI110 Professor-of-Record, can also be contacted through the Library Instruction Office

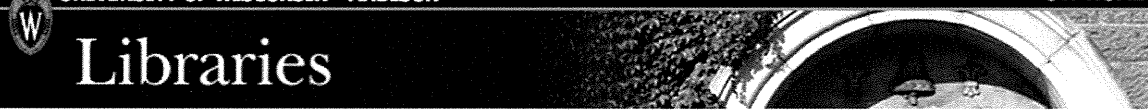
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Assessment

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Information Literacy: An Essential Learning Outcome

The Library and Information Literacy Instruction Program provides leadership for efforts to assess students' information literacy skills at the classroom, course, program, and campus levels. The examples below include assessments conducted in collaboration with administrators, faculty, and instructors, as well as those conducted within the libraries in order to improve student learning.

- [UW-Madison's Essential Learning Outcomes](#)
- [UW-Madison Academic Assessment Plan 2003/2008](#)
- [Assessment Plan for General Education at the UW-Madison](#)

If you have questions or would like to know more about our assessment efforts, please contact Library & Information Literacy Instruction Coordinator [Sarah McDaniel](#).

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Instructional Services for Faculty

Assessment

Information Literacy: An Essential Learning Outcome

The Library and Information Literacy Instruction Program provides leadership for efforts to assess students' information literacy skills at the classroom, course, program, and campus levels. The examples below include assessments conducted in collaboration with administrators, faculty, and instructors, as well as those conducted within the libraries in order to improve student learning.

The UW System is a participant in the Association of American Colleges and Universities *Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP)* project. From this project, the UW-Madison campus adapted a set of [Essential Learning Outcomes](#). These learning outcomes are used as an assessment framework for departments and programs across campus. Information literacy is included among the "intellectual and practical skills" that students should develop.

The new 2008 Preface outlines university-wide assessment standards, goals, and guidelines for measuring and evaluating student academic achievement. The *Plan* requires every UW academic program that includes general education goals to have an assessment plan, in order to be able to "construct a case of evidence to evaluate if students are achieving these learning expectations." Because of the wide diversity in programs here at the UW, evaluative methods can be quite different from department to department, but it is important that these assessment methods be used on a regular basis and be done at all academic levels, to receive a full picture of student learning. Each plan must be consistent with the Essential Learning Outcomes, which include "Information Literacy in the area of Intellectual and Practical skills".

[\[LINK TO PLAN\]](#)

According to the *Plan*, the primary tool used for measuring information literacy at the campus level has been standardized testing. While these efforts have shown that students have achieved an "acceptable level of performance," it is indicated that "[a] more authentic assessment of student learning will provide better information which can be used for program administration and improvement." A future information literacy assessment is included in the *Plan's* calendar for assessment projects scheduled over the next several years (slated for the 2010-11 school year).

[\[LINK TO PLAN\]](#)

Our Students

The following are examples of assessment activities that Library and Information Literacy Instruction librarians have been engaged in across campus.

Reports

An Assessment Study of the Effectiveness of the General Education Communication "A" Requirement at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is an analysis of the self-reported learning of students who had completed the "Comm-A" requirement in comparison with those who, for

whatever reason, had not. The students were asked to rate their writing, communication, and information literacy skills in a variety of ways. The results show that students who had taken the Comm-A requirement ranked their information literacy skills dramatically higher than those who had not, in such areas as locating research materials, properly citing the work of others, and understanding the issue of plagiarism. This was true across all five courses that fulfill the Comm-A requirement.

[\[LINK TO DOC.\]](#)

The NSSE Study Report: An Overview of the National Survey of Student Engagement 2008 Results for UW-Madison is a close-up view of freshman and senior undergraduate students at the UW who were surveyed as part of the National Survey of Student Engagement. The NSSE is used to "assess student involvement in practices associated with high levels of learning" at over 750 colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada. Topics in this survey that relate to information literacy include "Coursework Emphasizes Academic Challenge," "Reading and Writing Assignments," and "Active and Collaborative Learning." More specifically, the survey included questions about students' ability to make judgments about the value of information, to synthesize and organize ideas and theories, to apply theories or concepts to practical problems or new situations, and to use the Internet to complete assignments. In each of these areas, UW seniors consistently ranked their abilities in these areas higher than their first-year counterparts. For example, when students were asked questions about their ability to make judgments about the value of information, senior students responded with answers of "Quite a bit" or "Very much" at a rate near 70 percent, whereas first-year students responded with the same answer at 60 percent. Both first-year and senior students ranked their skills highly in these areas, but it is clear that their information literacy skills were impacted in their time at UW-Madison.

The ECAR Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology is an investigation of undergraduate students at several schools, including UW-Madison, and their use of IT tools in their personal lives and in their educational careers. The purpose of this study is for college-level educators to get a better "feel" for how IT affects students' daily lives and how students' skills and knowledge in these areas can be best used for educational purposes. The survey included three information literacy questions, relating to using digitally based information. The students were asked to rate their skill levels in the following three areas: "using the Internet to effectively and efficiently search for information;" "evaluating the reliability and credibility of online sources of information;" and "understanding the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of digital information." In all of these areas, students ranked themselves very highly, with almost 80 percent of the students rating themselves at near-"Expert" levels ("Expert" was the highest rating in the scale provided) in their Internet research abilities. In the other two areas, the students' self-ratings were lower, but still relatively high.

The Project SAILS Test (Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills) was administered to a small group of incoming freshman in 2006 and 2007. The test was used to find out more about the kinds of information literacy skills students have upon arriving on campus, before taking the Communication "A" and "B" courses. Although the sample size was ultimately considered to be too small to reach meaningful conclusions about UW freshman information literacy skills, it was found that there was no significant difference in information literacy skills between UW students and the national benchmark for students at similar institutions, and that UW students tested higher than average than their freshman counterparts in searching and retrieving resources. Librarians used the information collected through SAILS to inform their judgments about areas of information literacy could receive greater emphasis in the library module of the Communication "A" courses.

This article is an account of the development and implementation of required communication courses for undergraduates at the UW. The Communication "A" and "B" courses, which were created in reaction to concerns over the verbal and writing abilities of incoming UW student, was a university-wide effort that resulted in a decentralized model for teaching proper academic communication skills necessary to succeed in every discipline. These necessary skills include information literacy, and it is noted here as a result that "librarians have been treated as information professionals and brought more clearly into the teaching mission of the university." The authors of the article call for a full-scale assessment of the Communication courses in order to determine the effectiveness of the courses as well as best practices for teaching these skills in the future. Citation: Westphal-Johnson, N. and Fitzpatrick, M. (2002). The role of communication and writing intensive courses in general education: a five-year case study of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. *The Journal of General Education* 51 (2), 73-102.

National Testing

- Project SAILS was administered to incoming freshmen to establish an information literacy benchmark for incoming freshmen and to compare UW students to incoming students at similar institutions. (Spring 2007 & Summer 2007)
- Chemistry 346 utilized the Student Assessment of Learning Gains (SALG) which assesses learning as reflected by the student. Information Literacy questions were included; they related to each of the course's assignments. (Fall 2004 & Spring 2005)

Pre/Post Testing

- Life Sciences Communication 100 students take a pre/post survey regarding their information needs and the effectiveness of a library session in meeting those needs for their persuasive-paper assignments. (Each semester)
- Engineering Professional Development 151, Mechanical Engineering 900, Chemical & Biological Engineering, and Interdisciplinary Engineering 413 students take a pre/post survey regarding their information fluency during a library session. (Each semester)
- Communication-A instructors were surveyed about the effectiveness of library instruction sessions in improving their students' skills as demonstrated in coursework. Changes were made to the library module's curriculum (CLUE tutorial and library instruction session), based on instructor feedback regarding their students' weaknesses and strengths. (Fall 2007)

Surveys

- Biocore 304 instructors receive results of a student survey on the library session. Results are examined by the instruction team to inform revisions to the curriculum. (Yearly)
- Biology 151 students are required to complete a tutorial on evaluating Web sites. A Web-based survey is embedded in the tutorial, to enable students to immediately send feedback, questions, etc. Mass emails to students are generated to address comments and needs. (Each semester)

Student Projects/Assignments

- To fulfill accreditation requirements, second-year medical students are required to submit records of search queries completed in PubMed to instruction librarians. Students have the option of learning skills online, in person, or independently. Librarians analyze the results to assess the effectiveness of each mode of instruction in improving student performance. (Yearly)
- Spanish 266 instructors were surveyed to determine if a library session or a library course page was most effective for students' assignments. The instructors determined that a hybrid

of both approaches was most effective and that good assignment design was integral to student success. (Spring 2008 & Fall 2008)

- Biology 152 instruction coordinators and librarians meet to determine if Chapter 2 Using the Library for Scientific Research (co-written by the librarians and course instructors) needs revisions before being printed in the Biology 152 Lab Manual. (Annually)

Embedded Testing

- Chemistry 346 students complete a supporting-information document to complete each lab report. See Journal of Chemistry Education article on course revision and components. (Annually)
- A benchmark survey is given to incoming chemistry graduate students in the fall. The survey's results influence the content presented in the first-year organic and inorganic graduate classes. (Annually)

Specific Tools

- Communication-A students completed an online worksheet during the library session. Instruction librarians evaluated responses in each skill area, using a rubric. Results shaped changes in the curriculum (e.g., results showed that we needed to emphasize keyword over natural-language searching, as well as the differences between popular and scholarly sources). (Fall 2007)
- Communication-A students complete an in-class evaluation form at the end of the library session. Instruction librarians review the responses after each class and discuss student comments in planning meetings. The comments and responses after each class have led to changes in instructional strategies, such as providing more hands-on activities and fewer demonstrations. (Each semester)
- Biology 152, Communication-A courses have clicker questions embedded throughout the library-session curriculum. Students' responses shape the direction of the session, and an analysis of the composite responses shapes the curriculum design. (Annually)
- Biology 152 and Biology 301 students fill out note cards with responses to "one-minute assessment" questions. Students' comments on the most useful things learned and how to improve the session are analyzed and incorporated into the next semester's instruction. (Each semester)

Current Initiatives

To improve student learning, Library and Information Literacy Instruction librarians across campus are continuously engaged in systematic assessment of their teaching. Examples of current initiatives are listed below.

The *Assessment Plan for General Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison* is a framework for measuring the efficacy of the General Education Requirements (GER) in the courses where such requirements are taught. The "Essential Learning Outcomes," which include information literacy in the area of "Intellectual and Practical Skills," provide a framework for student learning in the context of the requirements. Information literacy skills are initially taught in Communication "A" and "B" courses.

According to the *Plan*, the primary tool used for measuring information literacy skills on campus has been standardized testing. While these efforts have shown that students have achieved an "acceptable level of performance," it is indicated that "[a] more authentic assessment of student learning will provide better information which can be used for program administration and improvement." Therefore, a direct assessment of information literacy skills is included in the *Plan's* Cycle of Assessment, a calendar for assessment projects scheduled over the next several years

(slated for the 2010-11 school year).

The CUWL User Services Coordinating Committee's Information Literacy Assessment Working Group recently produced a report (October 2008) investigating a variety of commercially available information literacy assessment tools being considered for use in the UW System. They identified three major available tests—iSkills, Project SAILS, and the Information Literacy Test- and studied the merits and drawbacks of each. The group considered several factors, such as suitability for use at a system level; relevance to the information literacy skills being taught at each institution; presence and quality of feedback to test-takers; usability at a variety of levels (classroom level to institution level); practicality of providing the test, given campus schedules; and cost to use the test. Though the group did not ultimately recommend one of these three instruments over the others for use in the UW System, they did find that iSkills would be best used only at an individual-school level. Also, they recommended further investigation, to find out how other schools are using these tools.

- [Learning Assessment Wiki](#) *Restricted access; contact LILI for permissions.*
- [Memorial Library Communication-B Toolkit](#)
- [Subject Integration Template](#) (In progress)
- [Library Course Pages](#) (Redesigned in Spring 2009 to allow for better assessment of student usage)

If you have questions or would like to know more about our assessment efforts, please contact Library & Information Literacy Instruction Coordinator [Sarah McDaniel](#).

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