
Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS) Phase II
www.projectsails.org
Mabee Library, Washburn University

Description

At least 200 undergraduates at each participating institution complete a Web-based test. The test consists of 45 multiple choice questions randomly selected from a pool of approximately 150 questions. The questions are designed to address certain information literacy "skill sets" as defined by the researchers. Ideally, the testing takes place in a "highly monitored" environment in which students are together in a classroom or computer lab monitored by a librarian.

This project is to assist in the development of a standardized instrument to measure college students' information literacy competencies based on the Association of College and Research Libraries' Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. Washburn University's participation is part of a national project involving several other institutions and the Association of Research Libraries. The assessment program eventually developed, including the use of this standardized instrument, will allow librarians and administrators in higher education to determine if library instruction has an institutional impact on students' information literacy skills.

Phase I of the project took place in 2002-03, with 14 participating institutions across North America. Phase II took place in 2003-04 with 30 institutions. The third and final Phase will take place in 2004-05 with 100 institutions.

Project Methodology at Mabee Library

- Assistant Director for Public Services (ADPS) contacted known faculty, Assessment Committee members, the Assistant Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Assistant Director of Student Activities and Greek Life to solicit faculty/student participation in the project.
- Participating faculty each agreed to donate one class period in which students would complete the SAILS test in the Library's electronic classroom
- ADPS met with the Greek Council to arrange evening drop-in times for fraternity and sorority members to complete the SAILS test in the Library's electronic classroom (for community service credit)
- Assistant Director for Technical Services worked with the SAILS team and Washburn's ITS department to develop the Web front end necessary for participation in SAILS

Timeline of SAILS at Washburn University

June 2003	AD Public Services attends Phase II meeting at ALA Annual meeting in Toronto
July 2003	AD Public Services began contacting potential faculty participants (7/24/03)
October 2003	SAILS testing period at Washburn University (Oct. 1-22)
November '03	AD Public Services attends CAS Chairs meeting to promote SAILS project
January 2004	AD Public Services attends results meeting at ALA Midwinter meeting in San Diego
June 2004	AD Public Services will attend Phase III meeting at ALA Annual meeting in Orlando
Fall 2004	WU will participate in Phase III of SAILS

Summary Of Washburn University Results (see accompanying booklet)

See Results Notebook at www.projectsails.org/Washburn_all.pdf

- Only 4 institutions tested during Fall 2003
- Results notebook compares WU results with average results from 18 institutions who have participated since Phase I
- Approximately 26 institutions will complete testing in Spring 2004; WU will not get a new notebook with new aggregated data at that point

Usefulness of Results for WU

- Validity of instrument is still being tested
 - scores not really statistically significant
 - it is inappropriate to compare ourselves to other participating institutions at this time
- Instruction librarians can use results in goal setting for Instruction program for FY2004-2005
 - look at questions our students are less likely to answer correctly: is there a pattern? could we add/change content of what we teach in library instruction classes?
 - Can librarians and faculty work together more effectively to ensure students are taught information literacy skills they need?
 - Are there certain skill sets our students need particular help with? Can we add/change content of what we teach?

Recommendations For Future Participation

- Participate in Phase III to help the SAILS team develop the instrument (fee=\$1,800)
- Test in Fall 2004 to avoid testing in same semester as LibQUAL+™
- Use a highly monitored environment to ensure greater student participation; also to encourage faculty buy-in and participation
- It is important to get more students to participate next year: more participants = more detailed analysis of results
 - ask for faculty participation well before the semester starts and syllabi are planned
 - contact past faculty participants first: Kandy Ockree, Karen Ray, Patricia Renn-Scanlan, Zach Rhein
 - contact Jamison Johnson in Student Activities and Greek Life to encourage participation from sororities and fraternities