



project

SAILS

Standardized Assessment of
Information Literacy Skills

Project SAILS results: What do they mean?

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Outline

- Background information
 - What is Project SAILS
 - Logistics and test administration
- Results
 - Demographic results
 - Custom questions
 - Results by skill sets
- Discussion
 - How can we use these results?

What is Project SAILS

- Standardized test developed at Kent State
- Designed to address the following questions:
 - How do we know if students are IL?
 - What are entry skills? Any changes upon grad?
 - Does library contribute to IL?
 - Does IL make a difference in success/retention?

What is Project SAILS

- Based on ACRL Standards (all but Standard 4)
- 131 questions organized in 8 skill sets:
 - Developing a research strategy
 - Selecting finding tools
 - Searching
 - Using finding tool features
 - Retrieving sources
 - Evaluating sources
 - Documenting sources
 - Understanding economic, legal and social issues

Why participate?

- Exercise in needs assessment
 - To inform IL teaching
 - To provide empirical data to support initiatives
 - To support our commitment to IL
 - To update CREPUQ survey from 2003
 - To track changes over time

Logistics and test admin

- Testing dates
 - 34 sessions in LB-203 b/w Aug. 15 & Sept. 13
- Testing population
 - Incoming first-year undergraduate students
 - Target: 362 students (actual: 198)
- Logistics
 - Ethics approval
 - Promotional campaign
 - Registration and scheduling

Results – Limitations

- Only 54% of our required sample size
- Standard error is too large to be meaningful
 - Varies between ± 12 and ± 25
- Bottom line:
 - Not representative and not generalizable

Results – Demographics

| Self-reported student major | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Business | 32 | 16.2% |
| Communications/Journalism | 9 | 4.5% |
| Education | 6 | 3.0% |
| Engineering/Comp. Science | 21 | 10.6% |
| History | 3 | 1.5% |
| Humanities | 9 | 4.5% |
| Performing & Fine Arts | 29 | 14.7% |
| Science/Math | 20 | 10.1% |
| Social Sciences/Psychology | 24 | 12.1% |
| Other | 41 | 20.8% |
| Undecided | 4 | 2.0% |
| Total | 198 | 100% |

Results – Custom questions

| How would you rate your own ability at doing research? | | |
|---|-----|--------|
| Excellent | 19 | 9.6 % |
| Above Average | 67 | 33.8 % |
| Average | 100 | 50.6 % |
| Below Average | 8 | 4.0 % |
| Very Poor | 4 | 2.0 % |

| Have you received library instruction before? | | |
|--|-----|--------|
| Yes | 92 | 46.5 % |
| No | 106 | 53.5 % |

Results – Scoring

- Item response theory
 - Describes the application of mathematical models to data from questionnaires as a basis for measuring abilities; often used for high stakes tests such as GRE
 - *Wikipedia*
 - Scores based on combination of item difficulty and student performance
 - Data from all institutions merged in benchmark file
 - Average score for a cohort on scale of 0 to 1000

Results – Summary

| Skill set | Concordia | All institutions |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Developing a research strategy | 577 ±12 | 576 ±1 |
| Selecting finding tools | 574 ±18 | 551 ±1 |
| Searching | 566 ±14 | 544 ±1 |
| Using finding tool features | 656 ±20 | 629 ±2 |
| Retrieving sources | 577 ±25 | 557 ±2 |
| Evaluating sources | 603 ±13 | 582 ±1 |
| Documenting sources | 596 ±17 | 577 ±2 |
| Understanding issues | 562 ±13 | 553 ±1 |

Results – “Best to worst”

| Skill set | Concordia | All institutions |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Using finding tool features | 656 ±20 | 629 ±2 |
| Evaluating sources | 603 ±13 | 582 ±1 |
| Documenting sources | 596 ±17 | 577 ±2 |
| Developing a research strategy | 577 ±12 | 576 ±1 |
| Retrieving sources | 577 ±25 | 557 ±2 |
| Selecting finding tools | 574 ±18 | 551 ±1 |
| Searching | 566 ±14 | 544 ±1 |
| Understanding issues | 562 ±13 | 553 ±1 |

Results – Mapped to ACRL

| Standard | Concordia | All institutions |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| 1. Determine information need | 581 ±12 | 579 ±1 |
| 2. Access needed information | 587 ±10 | 572 ±1 |
| 3. Evaluate information | 579 ±12 | 573 ±1 |
| 5. Understand issues | 568 ±12 | 561 ±1 |

General observations

- Custom questions correlations:
 - Self-diagnosed expertise in searching
 - Library workshop attendance

How can we use these results?

- Looking at “low score” skill sets
 - Understanding legal, ethical issues
 - Searching
 - Documenting sources
- Use appendices
 - Appendix E – Test items per skill set and Standard
 - Appendix F – Standards with test items

Understanding issues

- 18 items mapped to this skill set
- Sample question:
 - If you write a research paper, do the original ideas in the paper belong to you?
 - Yes, but only if you obtain copyright
 - ✓ Yes, the ideas are your intellectual property
 - Yes, but only if the paper is published
 - No, student papers are not protected works
 - No, they belong to the instructor for whom you wrote the paper
 - Linked to Standard 5.1.4

Informing teaching practices

| Skill set | Concordia | All institutions |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Using finding tool features | 656 \pm 20 | 629 \pm 2 |
| Evaluating sources | 603 \pm 13 | 582 \pm 1 |
| Documenting sources | 596 \pm 17 | 577 \pm 2 |
| Developing a research strategy | 577 \pm 12 | 576 \pm 1 |
| Retrieving sources | 577 \pm 25 | 557 \pm 2 |
| Selecting finding tools | 574 \pm 18 | 551 \pm 1 |
| Searching | 566 \pm 14 | 544 \pm 1 |
| Understanding issues | 562 \pm 13 | 553 \pm 1 |

Future administrations

- Highly-monitored vs. unmonitored
- By faculty or department
- Collaborating with faculty members
- Longitudinal study
- Considering the *iSkills Assessment* by ETS