WASHBURN UNIVERSITY

Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills
2022-23

Executive Summary

During the 2022-23 academic year , the Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills – administered by Carrick Enterprises, Inc. – was utilized to assess student information literacy knowledge and skills, as well as the Information Literacy and Technology University Student Learning Outcome. Individual student performance was **aggregated into a single information literacy score** and compared to similar institutions.

- 300 seniors – proportionately stratified by college – were randomly selected to complete the SAILS assessment. The stratification distribution was 50% from the College of Arts and Sciences, 26% from the School of Applied Studies, 10% from the School of Business, 14% from the School of Nursing, and 1% for Exploratory students. 59 seniors completed the assessment, for a **response rate of 19.7%**.

- Comparison institutions were categorized into three groupings: All Institutions, a pre-selected comparison Institution Type (Baccalaureate – General/Liberal Arts), and specific, pre-selected comparison institutions:
  - California State University, Dominguez Hills
  - Misericordia University
    - Washburn's surveyed student population was 100% seniors, while the comparison institution's population was 49% seniors.

- Students were assessed for knowledge and ability to implement key information through completion of 55 multiple-choice questions which covered **51 outcomes and objectives**. The outcomes and objectives were summarized into the following four topics:
  - Research Strategies
  - Finding Tools
  - Searching, Retrieving, Evaluating, and Documenting Sources
  - Understanding Economic and Legal Issues Around the Creation and Use of Information

- Overall, the **overall average score of 58% for Washburn University students (n = 59) was higher** than the pre-selected peer institutions, comparison institution types, and all institutions (51%, 57%, and 52%, respectively).

- Washburn students' mean scores were **equal to or higher than** that of the comparison peer institutions for **40 of the outcomes and objectives (78%)**; conversely, the mean scores were lower than the comparison peer institutions for 11 outcomes and objectives (22%).
  - The outcome/objective where Washburn students **performed strongest** was *"Demonstrates an understanding of how the desired end product will play a role in determining the need for information"*, followed by *"Act appropriately to obtain information within the time frame required"* (both answered correctly by 89.8% of students (n = 53)).
  - The outcome/objective where Washburn students **performed weakest** was *"Identifies the differences between freely available Internet search tools and subscription or fee-based databases"* (answered correctly by 16.9% of students (n = 10)).

Project SAILS

Your measure of success

Standardized Assessment of
Information Literacy Skills

Washburn Seniors Fall 2022
Individual Scores Version 1 Report
for
Washburn University
June 29, 2023

CARRICK ENTERPRISES

Assessment made simple

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Carrick Enterprises is the leading provider of information literacy assessment tools to colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. For more than ten years we have worked with over 200 institutions of higher learning to help them accomplish their mission. We are committed to making information literacy assessment a powerful tool for assisting librarians and other educators in contributing to the success of their students.

1. About the Project SAILS Individual Scores Test

The Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS) is a test of information literacy knowledge and skills. Although information literacy is defined in varying ways by professional organizations (see Table 1 for examples), the elements the definitions have in common portray an information literate person as one who is comfortable and proficient in discovering, evaluating, and using information in ethical ways. Information literacy is widely considered an important component of a college education and a growing body of research points to specific benefits of information literacy instruction. Among the research findings: students who receive information literacy instruction profit academically during their first year; information literacy instruction benefits students in general education courses; and there is evidence of lasting improvement in academic performance for those students who receive information literacy instruction.[1]

The SAILS Individual Scores Test has 55 multiple-choice questions based on information literacy abilities that lead to success in college and that are common to many programs of information literacy instruction. Topics covered include research strategies, finding tools, searching, retrieving, evaluating, documenting sources, and understanding economic and legal issues around the creation and use of information.

The test content is inspired by two documents authored by the Association of College and Research Libraries: (1) Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education: Standards, Performance Indicators, and Outcomes and (2) Objectives for Information Literacy Instruction: A Model Statement for Academic Librarians. Test results are intended to support evidence-based decision-making and inform actions for strengthening student learning.

Table 1
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Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning.
Association of College and Research Libraries, Information Literacy Framework for Higher Education, 2015

Information literate people will demonstrate an awareness of how they gather, use, manage, synthesise and create information and data in an ethical manner and will have the information skills to do so effectively.
The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy: Core Model for Higher Education, 2011

Information literate people recognise a need for information; determine the extent of information needed; access information efficiently; critically evaluate information and its sources; classify, store, manipulate and redraft information collected or generated; incorporate selected information into their knowledge base; use information effectively to learn, create new knowledge, solve problems and make decisions; understand economic, legal, social, political and cultural issues in the use of information; access and use information ethically and legally; use information and knowledge for participative citizenship and social responsibility; and experience information literacy as part of independent learning and lifelong learning.
Bundy, Alan. "Australian and New Zealand information literacy framework." Principles, standards and practice 2, 2004

Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information."
American Library Association. Presidential Committee on Information Literacy. Final Report, 1989

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[1] Association of College and Research Libraries. *Academic Library Impact on Student Learning and Success: Findings from Assessment in Action Team Projects*. Prepared by Karen Brown with contributions by Kara J. Malenfant. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2017.

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2. Results

This section provides an overview of how your students performed on the SAILS test as a whole by providing a single overall information literacy score for your entire testing sample and for your subgroups.

Figure 2.1 shows the distribution of scores. Each segment marked on the bottom of the graph represents a score range of 5% (for example, 0–5% correct, 6–10% correct, 11–15% correct). The blue bars represent the number of test-takers who fall within the corresponding score range.

Figure 2.2 gives the average score for your students and the averages for institutional groups in table form. Figure 2.3 is a ranked list of outcomes/objectives for each skill set, in order by your students' performance from the strongest to the weakest.

Additional analyses can be conducted using the accompanying data file of results. You may wish to collaborate with your institution's research office, which may be able to provide additional data about your test-takers. Consultants for data analysis and interpretation are also available through Carrick Enterprises.

Figure 2.1 Graphs of Overall Score Distribution

| Your Institution | Your Peer Institutions | Your Institution Types | All Institutions |
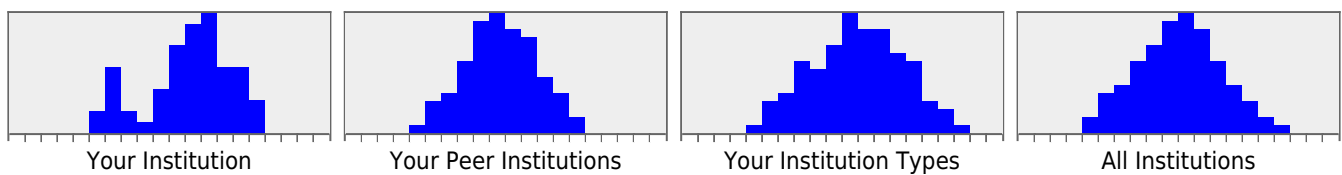
Figure 2.2 Table of Overall Results

	Your Institution n	Your Institution %	Your Peer Institutions %	Your Institution Types %	All Institutions %								
Overall SAILS Score	59	58	51	57	52								
CLASS STANDING													
Senior	59	58	53	72	60								
TRANSFER STUDENTS						59	53	52	52	59	53	N/A	58

Figure 2.3 Outcomes/Objectives Ranked

This list of outcomes/objectives highlights areas of strength and areas that need improvement in students' knowledge of and ability to implement key information literacy outcomes and objectives. The list is ranked by your students' overall performance from strongest to weakest. The ranking is a relative ordering; it does not show how well your students performed on a particular outcome/objective. A blue bar indicates that your students' mean score is higher than or equal to the mean score of your peer institutions. A red bar indicates that your students' mean score is lower than the mean score of your peer institutions. Numbers in parentheses are test question numbers associated with each outcome/objective. See the included download file, Individual Scores Test Questions.

Demonstrates an understanding of how the desired end product (i.e., the required depth of investigation and analysis) will play a role in determining the need for information. (529)

Acts appropriately to obtain information within the time frame required. (600)

Uses effectively the organizational structure of a typical book (e.g., indexes, tables of contents, user's instructions, legends, cross-references) in order to locate pertinent information in it. (42,62)

Selects appropriate tools (e.g., indexes, online databases) for research on a particular topic. (584)

Demonstrates an understanding that other sources may provide additional information to either confirm or question point of view or bias. (124,628)

Uses available services appropriately to obtain desired materials or alternative sources. (30)

Describes how the terms of subscriptions or licenses may limit their use to a particular clientele or location. (638)

Identifies keywords that describe an information source (e.g., book, journal article, magazine article, Web site). (239,444,616)

Participates in electronic discussions following accepted practices (e.g. "Netiquette") (595)

Decides when a research topic has multiple facets or may need to be put into a broader context. (629)

Uses different research sources (e.g., catalogs and indexes) to find different types of information (e.g., books and periodical articles). (257)

Identifies different types of information sources cited in a research tool. (622,625)

Confers with instructors and participates in class discussions, peer workgroups and electronic discussions to identify a research topic, or other information need (642)

Demonstrates an understanding of the concept of truncation and uses it appropriately and effectively. (515,578)

Investigates validity and accuracy by consulting sources identified through bibliographic references. (536)

Describes how various fields of study define primary and secondary sources differently. (101,633)

Identifies characteristics of information that make an item a primary or secondary source in a given field. (147,148,451,452,641)

Demonstrates an understanding that some information and information sources may present a one-sided view and may express opinions rather than facts. (87,563,631)

Demonstrates an understanding that some information and sources may be designed to trigger emotions, conjure stereotypes, or promote support for a particular viewpoint or group. (91,92)

Identifies research sources, regardless of format, that are appropriate to a particular discipline or research need. (523)

Retrieves a document in print or electronic form. (194,229)

Uses background information sources effectively to gain an initial understanding of the topic. (95)

Identifies citation elements for information sources in different formats (e.g., book, article, television program, Web page, interview). (557,560,583)

Determines when a single search strategy may not fit a topic precisely enough to retrieve sufficient relevant information. (28)

Uses effectively the organizational structure and access points of print research sources (e.g., indexes, bibliographies) to retrieve pertinent information from those sources. (520)

Identifies when and where controlled vocabulary is used in a bibliographic record, and then successfully searches for additional information using that vocabulary. (577,582)

Initiates an interlibrary loan request by filling out and submitting a form either online or in person. (214)

Demonstrates an understanding of the concept of Boolean logic and constructs a search statement using Boolean operators. (39,247,541,587)

Identifies alternate terminology, including synonyms, broader or narrower words and phrases that describe a topic. (543)

Distinguishes among citations to identify various types of materials (e.g., books, periodical articles, essays in anthologies). (See also 2.3.1.) (44,49,60,636)

Identifies and discusses issues related to censorship and freedom of speech (122,597,599)

Assesses the relevance of information found by examining elements of the citation such as title, abstract, subject headings, source, and date of publication. (90,635)

Selects among various technologies the most appropriate one for the task of extracting the needed information (e.g., copy/paste software functions, photocopier, scanner, audio/visual equipment, or exploratory instruments) (593,647)

Demonstrates an understanding of intellectual property, copyright, and fair use of copyrighted material (117,132,271,516,554)

Finds sources that provide relevant subject field- and discipline-related terminology. (73)

Determines when some topics may be too recent to be covered by some standard tools (e.g., a periodicals index) and when information on the topic retrieved by less authoritative tools (e.g., a Web search engine) may not be reliable. (623)

Legally obtains, stores, and disseminates text, data, images, or sounds (112,118,553,644)

Describes when the format of the source cited may dictate a certain citation style. (512)

Recognizes that consistency of citation format is important, especially if a course instructor has not required a particular style. (634)

Identifies various formats in which information is available. (568)

Explains what controlled vocabulary is and why it is used. (14)

Seeks expert opinion through a variety of mechanisms (e.g., interviews, email, listservs) (602,645)

Describes search functionality common to most databases regardless of differences in the search interface (e.g., Boolean logic capability, field structure, keyword searching, relevancy ranking). (549,640)

Describes some materials that are not available online or in digitized formats and must be accessed in print or other formats (e.g., microform, video, audio). (29)

Identifies the source of help within a given information retrieval system and uses it effectively. (525)

Names the three major disciplines of knowledge (humanities, social sciences, sciences) and some subject fields that comprise each discipline. (569,570,571,572)

Distinguishes characteristics of information provided for different audiences. (27,624,632)

Identifies the appropriate service point or resource for the particular information need. (548)

Recognizes the format of an information source (e.g., book, chapter in a book, periodical article) from its citation. (See also 2.3.2.) (589)

Identifies the differences between freely available Internet search tools and subscription or fee-based databases. (139,140,141,142)

Demonstrates when it is appropriate to use a general and subject-specific information source (e.g., to provide an overview, to give ideas on terminology). (64)

Appendix A. Student Profile

Figure A.1 is a demographic profile of students who took the SAILS test at your institution as well as cross-institution profiles for your selected peer institutions, for institutions of your selected types, and for all institutions combined. The table reports the available demographic data; not all elements of demographic data were reported for all students. Therefore, percentages for cross-institution characteristics will not always total 100%.

Figure A.1 Student Profile

	Your Institution		Your Peer Institutions		Your Institution Types		All Institutions	
	n=59		n=379		n=553		n=2,184	
Characteristic	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
CLASS STANDING								
Senior	59	100	185	49	80	14	328	15
Post-baccalaureate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TRANSFER STUDENTS								
No, I am not a transfer student	37	63	96	25	161	29	1,112	51
Yes, as Senior	21	36	5	1	2	0	34	2
Yes, as Post-baccalaureate	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0

Appendix B. Cross-Institution Lists

Figure B.1 Selected Peer List

Institution Name	Country	Institution Type(s)
California State University, Dominguez Hills	US	Masters
Misericordia University	US	Doctorate

Figure B.2 Selected Institution Types List

Institution Name	Country	Institution Type(s)
God's Bible School and College	US	Baccalaureate - General
Goshen College	US	Baccalaureate - General
Illinois Wesleyan University	US	Baccalaureate - Liberal Arts
Mid-Atlantic Christian University	US	Baccalaureate - Liberal Arts Baccalaureate - General
Saint Mary of the Woods College	US	Baccalaureate - Liberal Arts
University of Alaska Fairbanks	US	Baccalaureate - General
University of Phoenix	US	Baccalaureate - General
Weimar Institute	US	Baccalaureate - General
William James College	US	Baccalaureate - General

Figure B.3 All List

Institution Name	Country	Institution Type(s)
Augusta Technical College	US	Associates
God's Bible School and College	US	Baccalaureate - General
Goshen College	US	Baccalaureate - General
Harrisburg University of Science and Technology	US	Masters
Illinois Wesleyan University	US	Baccalaureate - Liberal Arts
Mid-Atlantic Christian University	US	Baccalaureate - Liberal Arts Baccalaureate - General
Misericordia University	US	Doctorate
Saint Mary of the Woods College	US	Baccalaureate - Liberal Arts
Suffolk University	US	Masters Doctorate
Union Presbyterian Seminary	US	Other
University of Alaska Fairbanks	US	Baccalaureate - General
University of Phoenix	US	Baccalaureate - General
Washburn University	US	Masters
Weimar Institute	US	Baccalaureate - General
William James College	US	Baccalaureate - General