

Project SAILS: What it is, What we found out, What you can do next

During Spring 2005, 453 CGCC students in ENG101 and ENG102 participated in the SAILS assessment of information literacy skills, administered through Kent State University. The results became available to us in June 2005.

Good news! CGCC students have average information literacy skills, scoring around 50% in each of the skill sets and standards measured by SAILS. These scores approach the “Across Institutional Average” of participating colleges and universities.

So we’re on the right track. We—and our students’ previous instructors—are doing many of the right things, but obviously, we can still do better.

We have identified four areas in which CGCC students received their lowest scores or in which CGCC scores were lowest compared to cross-institutional averages:

- Skill Set 3—Identifying & Distinguishing Among Types of Sources
- Skill Set 5—Selecting Search Terms (closely related to Skill Set 6, Constructing the Search)
- Skill Set 7—Understanding Information Retrieval Systems (closely related to Skill Set 4, Selecting Finding Tools)
- Skill Set 11—Documenting Sources

(Special note to ENG101 instructors: Consider focusing on Skill Set 11, which is included in MCCC’s Official Course Outline for ENG101, as well as Skill Set 3, which can be a useful prelude to teaching students how to document sources.)

This packet will

- Familiarize you with CGCC scores in each skill set area (compared to cross-institutional averages).
- Show where you and your students can access information literacy tutorials, guides, exercises, activities, and rubrics—including materials geared specifically to some of the Skill Sets listed above. (A link to this information will be posted to the CGCC Composition web site.)
- Provide a comprehensive listing of the information literacy objectives that fall under each Skill Set.

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Project SAILS Skill Sets and CGCC Scores

Skill Set	CGCC	All Institutions
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Information Literacy: Links to Resources for Students and Instructors

Information Literacy: Sites and Tutorials

Go! Gauchos Online: Glendale Community College Library Tutorial
<http://www.gc.maricopa.edu/lmc/tutorial/gaUCHO.htm>

Indiana University Libraries Guide to Library Research
<http://www.indiana.edu/~libinstr/Tutorial/>

TILT (Texas Information Literacy Tutorial)
<http://tilt.lib.utsystem.edu/>

List of online resources from TILT
<http://tilt.lib.utsystem.edu/stuff/fyi.htm>

Directory of Online Resources for Information Literacy: Programs, Projects, and Initiatives concerning Information Literacy in Higher Education, from Blumberg Memorial Library, Texas Lutheran University
<http://bulldogs.tlu.edu/mdibble/doril/academic.html>

Information Literacy Teaching Tools from the University of Arizona Library

Resources for English 102 Instructors
<http://www.library.arizona.edu/library/teams/ust/engl102/resources.htm>

Information Literacy/Research Instructional Activities
<http://www.library.arizona.edu/library/teams/ust/engl102/engl/102activities.htm>

Rubrics—How to Identify an Information Literate Student
http://www.library.arizona.edu/library/teams/ust/engl102/Rubrics_6.03.doc

Sites that Address Specific Skill Sets

Valencia Community College—Distinguishing Between Popular and Scholarly Sources (Skill Set 3)
<http://valencia.cc.fl.us/lrcwest/scholarlypop.html>

Information Literacy Instructional Program—Information Literacy Learning Guides
<http://www.estrellamountain.edu/library/INFOLIT/GUIDES/Guides.htm>

- See “Types of Information” (Skill Set 3)
- See “Database Skills” (Skill Sets 4 & 7)

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign—Refining Your Search (Skill Sets 5 & 6):
<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/ugl/BI/Workshop/Search.htm>

OASIS: Online Advancement of Student Information Skills
<http://oasis.sfsu.edu/chapters/>

- See Chapter 1, #3 for “Identifying Concepts” (Skill Set 5):
<http://oasis.sfsu.edu/chapters/Ch1/IB.html>
- See “Using Databases for Accessing Information” (Skill Set 7):
<http://oasis.sfsu.edu/chapters/Ch3/index.html>

Project SAILS Skill Sets (rev. 1/05)

(From the Project SAILS website: <http://sails.lms.kent.edu/plans/skillsets.html>)

- Skill Set 1: Developing a Research Strategy
- Skill Set 2: Scholarly Communication / Structure of Disciplines
- Skill Set 3: Identifying and Distinguishing Among Types of Sources
- Skill Set 4: Selecting Finding Tools
- Skill Set 5: Selecting Search Terms
- Skill Set 6: Constructing the Search
- Skill Set 7: Understanding Information Retrieval Systems
- Skill Set 8: Evaluating and Revising Search Results
- Skill Set 9: Retrieving Sources
- Skill Set 10: Evaluating and Selecting Sources
- Skill Set 11: Documenting Sources
- Skill Set 12: Economic, Legal and Social Issues (other than citation)

Skill Set 1: Developing a Research Strategy

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

1.1.2. Develops a thesis statement and formulates questions based on the information need

1.1.4.1 Identifies an initial question that might be too broad or narrow, as well as one that is probably manageable.

1.1.4.2 Explains his/her reasoning regarding the manageability of a topic with reference to available information sources.

1.1.4.3 Narrows a broad topic and broadens a narrow one by modifying the scope or direction of the question.

1.1.4.4 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.

1.1.4.5 Uses background information sources effectively to gain an initial understanding of the topic.

1.1.4.6 Consults with the course instructor and librarians to develop a manageable focus for the topic.

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

1.2.6 Realizes that information may need to be constructed with raw data from primary sources

1.3.3.1 Searches for and gathers information based on an informal, flexible plan.

1.4.1.1 Identifies a research topic that may require revision, based on the amount of information found (or not found).

1.4.1.2 Identifies a topic that may need to be modified, based on the content of information found.

1.4.1.3 Decides when it is and is not necessary to abandon a topic depending on the success (or failure) of an initial search for information

2.2.1.1 Describes a general process for searching for information.

2.2.1.3 Gathers and evaluates information and appropriately modifies the research plan as new insights are gained.

2.3.3.3 Identifies the appropriate service point or resource for the particular information need.

2.3.3.5 Uses the Web site of an institution, library, organization or community to locate information about specific services.

2.5.1 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)

2.5.5 Uses various technologies to manage the information selected and organized

3.4.1 Determines whether information satisfies the research or other information need

Skill Set 2: Scholarly Communication / Structure of Disciplines

1.2.1.1 Describes the publication cycle appropriate to the discipline of a research topic.

1.2.1.2 Defines the "invisible college" (e.g., personal contacts, listservs specific to a discipline or subject) and describes its value.

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

1.2.2.4 Describes how the publication cycle in a particular discipline or subject field affects the researcher's access to information.

Skill Set 3: Identifying and Distinguishing Among Types of Sources

1.2.3.1 Identifies various formats in which information is available.

1.2.5.1 Describes how various fields of study define primary and secondary sources differently.

1.2.5.2 Identifies characteristics of information that make an item a primary or secondary source in a given field.

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

Skill Set 4: Selecting Finding Tools

1.1.3.2 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).

2.1.3 Investigates the scope, content, and organization of information retrieval systems

2.1.3.10 Demonstrates when it is appropriate to use a single tool (e.g., using only a periodical index when only periodical articles are required).

2.1.3.4 Distinguishes among indexes, online databases, and collections of online databases, as well as gateways to different databases and collections.

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

2.1.3.6 Identifies the differences between freely available Internet search tools and subscription or fee-based databases.

2.1.3.8 Determines the period of time covered by a particular source.

2.1.3.9 Identifies the types of sources that are indexed in a particular database or index (e.g., an index that covers newspapers or popular periodicals versus a more specialized index to find scholarly literature).

2.2.6.1 Locates major print bibliographic and reference sources appropriate to the discipline of a research topic.

2.2.6.2 Locates and uses a specialized dictionary, encyclopedia, bibliography, or other common reference tool in print format for a given topic.

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

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

2.3.2.2 Explains the difference between the library catalog and a periodical index.

2.3.2.3 Describes the different scopes of coverage found in different periodical indexes.

3.4.5.3 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.

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

Skill Set 5: Selecting Search Terms

1.1.5.1 Lists terms that may be useful for locating information on a topic.

1.1.5.2 Identifies and uses appropriate general or subject-specific sources to discover terminology related to an information need.

1.1.5.4 Identifies more specific concepts that comprise a research topic.

1.2.2.2 Finds sources that provide relevant subject field- and discipline-related terminology.

1.2.2.3 Uses relevant subject- and discipline-related terminology in the information research process.

2.2.2.1 Identifies keywords or phrases that represent a topic in general sources (e.g., library catalog, periodical index, online source) and in subject-specific sources.

2.2.2.2 Demonstrates an understanding that different terminology may be used in general sources and subject-specific sources.

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

2.2.3.1 Uses background sources (e.g., encyclopedias, handbooks, dictionaries, thesauri, textbooks) to identify discipline-specific terminology that describes a given topic.

2.2.3.2 Explains what controlled vocabulary is and why it is used.

2.2.3.3 Identifies search terms likely to be useful for a research topic in relevant controlled vocabulary lists.

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

2.2.5.4 Identifies and selects keywords and phrases to use when searching each source, recognizing that different sources may use different terminology for similar concepts.

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

Skill Set 6: Constructing the Search

2.2.4.1 Demonstrates when it is appropriate to search a particular field (e.g., title, author, subject).

2.2.4.2 Demonstrates an understanding of the concept of Boolean logic and constructs a search statement using Boolean operators.

2.2.4.3 Demonstrates an understanding of the concept of proximity searching and constructs a search

statement using proximity operators.

2.2.4.4 Demonstrates an understanding of the concept of nesting and constructs a search using nested words or phrases.

2.2.4.6 Demonstrates an understanding of the concept of keyword searching and uses it appropriately and effectively.

2.2.4.7 Demonstrates an understanding of the concept of truncation and uses it appropriately and effectively.

2.2.4.5 Demonstrates an understanding of the concept of browsing and uses an index that allows it.

Skill Set 7: Understanding Information Retrieval Systems

2.1.3.1 Describes the structure and components of the system or tool being used, regardless of format (e.g., index, thesaurus, type of information retrieved by the system).

2.1.3.11 Distinguishes between full-text and bibliographic databases.

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

2.1.3.3 Identifies what types of information are contained in a particular system (e.g., all branch libraries are included in the catalog; not all databases are full text; catalogs, periodical databases, and Web sites may be included in a gateway).

2.1.3.7 Identifies and uses search language and protocols (e.g., Boolean, adjacency) appropriate to the retrieval system.

2.1.4.2 Determines appropriate means for recording or saving the desired information (e.g., printing, saving to disc, photocopying, taking notes).

2.2.5.1 Uses help screens and other user aids to understand the particular search structures and commands of an information retrieval system.

2.2.5.2 Demonstrates an awareness of the fact that there may be separate interfaces for basic and advanced searching in retrieval systems.

2.2.5.6 Describes differences in searching for bibliographic records, abstracts, or full text in information sources.

2.2.6.3 Demonstrates an understanding of the fact that items may be grouped together by subject in order to facilitate browsing.

2.2.6.4 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.

2.3.1.5 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).

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

Skill Set 8: Evaluating and Revising Search Results

2.1.4.3 Analyzes and interprets the information collected using a growing awareness of key terms and concepts to decide whether to search for additional information or to identify more accurately when the information need has been met.

2.2.5.3 Narrows or broadens questions and search terms to retrieve the appropriate quantity of information, using search techniques such as Boolean logic, limiting, and field searching.

2.4.1.1 Determines if the quantity of citations retrieved is adequate, too extensive, or insufficient for the information need.

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

3.7.2.1 Demonstrates how searches may be limited or expanded by modifying search terminology or logic.

3.7.3.1 Examines footnotes and bibliographies from retrieved items to locate additional sources.

3.7.3.2 Follows, retrieves and evaluates relevant online links to additional sources.

3.7.3.3 Incorporates new knowledge as elements of revised search strategy to gather additional information.

Skill Set 9: Retrieving Sources

1.3.1.1 Determines if material is available immediately.

1.3.1.2 Uses available services appropriately to obtain desired materials or alternative sources.

1.3.3.2 Demonstrates a general knowledge of how to obtain information that is not available immediately.

1.3.3.3 Acts appropriately to obtain information within the time frame required.

2.3.1.1 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).

2.3.2.1 Uses call number systems effectively (e.g., demonstrates how a call number assists in locating the corresponding item in the library).

2.3.3.1 Retrieves a document in print or electronic form.

2.3.3.2 Describes various retrieval methods for information not available locally.

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

Skill Set 10: Evaluating and Selecting Sources

1.1.3.1 Describes the difference between general and subject-specific information sources.

1.2.3.2 Demonstrates how the format in which information appears may affect its usefulness for a particular information need.

1.2.4.1 Distinguishes characteristics of information provided for different audiences.

1.2.4.2 Identifies the intent or purpose of an information source (this may require use of additional sources in order to develop an appropriate context).

1.4.2.1 Demonstrates how the intended audience influences information choices.

1.4.2.2 Demonstrates how the desired end product influences information choices (e.g., that visual aids or audio/visual material may be needed for an oral presentation).

1.4.2.3 Lists various criteria, such as currency, which influence information choices.

2.1.4.1 Selects appropriate information sources (i.e., primary, secondary or tertiary sources) and determines their relevance for the current information need.

2.2.1.2 Describes when different types of information (e.g., primary/secondary, background/specific) may be suitable for different purposes.

2.4.1.2 Evaluates the quality of the information retrieved using criteria such as authorship, point of view/bias, date written, citations, etc.

2.4.1.4 Determines the relevance of an item to the information need in terms of its depth of coverage, language, and time frame.

3.2.1.1 Locates and examines critical reviews of information sources using available resources and technologies.

3.2.1.2 Investigates an author's qualifications and reputation through reviews or biographical sources.

3.2.1.3 Investigates validity and accuracy by consulting sources identified through bibliographic references.

3.2.1.4 Investigates qualifications and reputation of the publisher or issuing agency by consulting other information resources.

3.2.1.5 Determines when the information was published (or knows where to look for a source's publication date).

3.2.1.6 Recognizes the importance of timeliness or date of publication to the value of the source.

3.2.1.7 Determines if the information retrieved is sufficiently current for the information need.

3.2.1.8 Demonstrates an understanding that other sources may provide additional information to either confirm or question point of view or bias.

3.2.3.1 Demonstrates an understanding that information in any format reflects an author's, sponsor's, and/or publisher's point of view.

3.2.3.2 Demonstrates an understanding that some information and information sources may present a one-sided view and may express opinions rather than facts.

3.2.3.3 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.

3.2.3.5 Searches for independent verification or corroboration of the accuracy and completeness of the data or representation of facts presented in an information source.

3.2.4.1 Describes how the age of a source or the qualities characteristic of the time in which it was created may impact its value.

3.2.4.2 Describes how the purpose for which information was created affects its usefulness.

3.2.4.3 Describes how cultural, geographic, or temporal contexts may unintentionally bias information.

3.4.2 Uses consciously selected criteria to determine whether the information contradicts or verifies information used from other sources

3.4.5.1 Describes how the reputation of the publisher affects the quality of the information source.

3.4.5.4 Compares new information with own knowledge and other sources considered authoritative to determine if conclusions are reasonable.

3.4.7.1 Describes why not all information sources are appropriate for all purposes (e.g., ERIC is not appropriate for all topics, such as business topics; the Web may not be appropriate for a local history topic).

3.4.7.2 Distinguishes among various information sources in terms of established evaluation criteria (e.g., content, authority, currency).

3.4.7.3 Applies established evaluation criteria to decide which information sources are most appropriate.

Skill Set 11: Documenting Sources

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

2.3.2.4 Distinguishes among citations to identify various types of materials (e.g., books, periodical articles, essays in anthologies).

2.5.3.3 Demonstrates an understanding that different disciplines may use different citation styles.

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

5.3.1.3 Demonstrates an understanding that there are different documentation styles, published or accepted by various groups.

5.3.1.5 Describes when the format of the source cited may dictate a certain citation style.

5.3.1.7 Locates information about documentation styles either in print or electronically, e.g., through the library's Web site.

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

Skill Set 12: Economic, Legal, and Social Issues—Other than citation

5.1.1 Identifies and discusses issues related to privacy and security in both the print and electronic environments

5.1.2.1 Demonstrates an understanding that not all information on the Web is free, i.e., some Web-based databases require users to pay a fee or to subscribe in order to retrieve full text or other content.

5.1.2.2 Demonstrates awareness that the library pays for access to databases, information tools, full-text resources, etc., and may use the Web to deliver them to its clientele.

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

5.1.2.4 Describes the differences between the results of a search using a general Web search engine (e.g., Yahoo, Google) and a library-provided tool (e.g., Web-based article index, full-text electronic journal, Web-based library).

5.1.3 Identifies and discusses issues related to censorship and freedom of speech

5.1.4 Demonstrates an understanding of intellectual property, copyright, and fair use of copyrighted material

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

5.2.5 Legally obtains, stores, and disseminates text, data, images, or sounds

5.2.6 Demonstrates an understanding of what constitutes plagiarism and does not represent work attributable to others as his/her own

5.2.7 Demonstrates an understanding of institutional policies related to human subjects research

(From Project SAILS website: <http://sails.lms.kent.edu/plans/skillsets.html>)