

# Learning Assessment Report, 2013/14

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## *Overview*

The Rutgers University Libraries continue to provide information literacy instruction to our students across our campuses. Instruction is usually offered in conjunction with for-credit courses as part of the curriculum. Most undergraduates receive library instruction through courses in the writing program or in the transfer student orientation process. Additional discipline-based library instruction is provided to upper-division undergraduates, and graduate and professional students by library subject specialists. In addition to formal instruction, student learning is supported through multiple channels including reference services (in-person at our multiple reference desk locations, and virtually via email and live chat), LibGuides (online research guides that provide general information about using the Libraries, subject research assistance, or course-specific research help for assignments and other curricular needs), one-on-one research consultations, the Libraries' website, and online tutorials.

Over the last two years, we have made some significant changes to the library faculty who lead and support our instructional programs. In addition to hiring a new Associate University Librarian for Research & Instructional Services (a system-wide position that oversees most of the public services aspects of the Libraries), we also added an Instructional Design Librarian and an Undergraduate Experience Librarian, and appointed a new instructional coordinator in our Library of Science and Medicine. We also reconstituted the Libraries-wide Instructional Community of Practice (ICOP), a group designed to share best practices and inform instruction-related change across our organization.

We have also made significant changes to the technology and resources supporting student learning this year. ICOP recommended that the Libraries adopt a new computer classroom control software system (Insight) to replace our old system (Netop). Insight is already used in the School of Communication & Information-controlled computer classrooms, so the change will allow a more seamless experience across hands-on teaching facilities for our student-instructors who are graduate students from the library science program. Insight features a polling capability that can facilitate formative assessment in the classroom and we will investigate ways to integrate this feature into our classes.

Also, the Libraries website was completely redesigned to more readily highlight our rich collection of services and resources. As part of the new site, we have introduced a new discovery layer (or search interface) that attempts to create a “Google-like” experience – providing one box to search multiple library resources simultaneously. With the release of the new site, help options (including live chat, when available) are now highlighted on every page on our website and have been added to our two largest databases providers (EBSCO and ProQuest). Although the number of chat session has remained virtually unchanged over the last two years, the statistics show that since the rollout of the new website, 40% of chat sessions are initiated from web pages other than the Libraries home page or help page. Now that the site has launched and users have become accustomed to the new site navigation, a website User Experience Team is forming to conduct research on user needs, behaviors and expectations. The work of this team will shape future changes to the website to improve user experience, productivity and satisfaction.

Finally, the Libraries worked closely with the Office of Instructional & Research Technology (OIRT) and the Center for Online & Hybrid Learning and Instructional Technologies (COHLIT) to incorporate library learning modules into the Sakai (OIRT-managed) and eCollege (COHLIT-managed) learning management systems (LMS). In either system, whenever an instructor is creating a new course, the Libraries are available as an optional module in the default course template. Adding the Libraries module gives students direct access to our library guides and tutorials as well as expanded access to help tools including live chat. These features have been available in Sakai for a few semesters, and to date 2,133 course sites include links to the Introduction to Libraries guide and 2,654 course sites include subject- or course-specific research guides. The integration with eCollege is more recent, with introductory information available now and a Summer 2014 rollout of the option to include research guides and our Ask-a-Librarian service (live chat and email reference) to courses. Blackboard (the Newark LMS) has long included a library tab as part of their standard product, and we are glad we have been able to work with our OIRT and COHLIT colleagues to incorporate this feature into the other systems. Legacy-UMDNJ online courses use Moodle, and we have not yet sought out partnership opportunities for directly linking that LMS with library resources.

## *Learning Goals*

The Libraries learning goals continue to be tied to the Association of College and Research Libraries’ (ACRL) Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. These goals guide our practices when creating new courses, developing tutorials, and discussing instructional partnerships with teaching faculty and other campus stakeholders. The Rutgers

University Libraries Information Literacy Goals and Outcome Expectations document is available online at [http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/RUL\\_Information\\_Literacy\\_Goals\\_and\\_Outcome\\_Expectations.pdf](http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/RUL_Information_Literacy_Goals_and_Outcome_Expectations.pdf).

It is worth noting that the ACRL guidelines are currently being revised. A draft version of the new Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education has been released for comment. ICOP and several library faculty members have provided feedback to the draft. National discussion is underway and further comments will be accepted through the summer. A final draft is expected in August 2014. The new framework moves away from goals toward a threshold competencies model. When the ACRL standards are finalized, the Libraries will convene a task force to revise our own standards to more closely align with the new framework. The most recent version of the Framework may be found online at <http://acrl.ala.org/ilstandards/>.

### *Course Syllabi*

As noted in the Executive Council of Assessment's response to our 2012/13 report, the Libraries do not offer courses in the same way that other schools and departments on campus do. However, although we do not offer for-credit courses in the Libraries, our faculty do participate in the Byrne Seminar program. In the recent past, one library faculty member offered a course each year. This coming fall we have five library faculty led courses planned. These courses will provide us with a new opportunity to directly measure student learning and information literacy skills.

When integrating information literacy instruction into existing campus courses, we rely on collaboration with the teaching faculty to enhance their syllabi and course experiences. Our change to the library instruction portion of the English 201: Research in the Disciplines classes is a good example of course syllabus alignment. Previously, all English 201 instructors were encouraged to include library instruction as part of their course, but the amount of instruction and content provided were determined through a negotiation between the course instructor and the librarian. Accordingly, breadth and depth of coverage varied greatly among the sections. In 2012/13 the Libraries worked closely with the English 201 coordinator to standardize the information literacy component of the course. In the revised version, an online course guide has been developed that breaks the information literacy content down into modules. Each module maps directly to a corresponding week in the overall English 201 course syllabus. Unlike the previous model where course sections could have one to four library instruction sessions at various points in the semester, this structured version provides relevant

information at each appropriate moment in the curriculum. Each module includes an assessment activity; however, each English 201 course instructor may determine whether to require, collect, or grade the activity so the Libraries do not collect direct assessment artifacts. For the last two years, the Libraries have participated in the Undergraduate Research Writing Conference, awarding prizes to the papers that exhibit the best use of research.

This example of course alignment has begun to serve as a model for additional course development. This year, the same instructional design principles were applied to a redesign of COM 380, a hybrid version of the public speaking course in the School of Communication & Information (SC&I). The Libraries worked closely with an instructional designer in SC&I to integrate library research into the fabric of the course. The first offering of the class has just ended and early feedback from the instructor is positive. If SC&I determines that changes to the course are warranted based on instructor feedback, the Libraries are prepared to work with them to update the information literacy portions of the course.

### *Assessment Plan, Structure and Process*

Over the last year, we have been reviewing the overall instructional practices within the Libraries to identify opportunities to formalize our assessment strategies on a programmatic basis. We targeted established programs and partnerships, and have focused our efforts on these programs because they reach large numbers of students and therefore have the potential for the greatest impact.

#### **Writing Program**

An Assessment Task Force was appointed to develop a biennial assessment cycle for measuring student learning in English 201. The task force has launched the first assessment cycle, focusing on the pedagogical technique of flipping the classroom in the English 201 instruction sessions. The assessment is being piloted on the Spring 2014 sections and will be repeated in the Fall. The following activities have been identified:

- Polling Libraries faculty, adjuncts, and students/RAs regarding their method/s of flipping the classroom
- Polling Writing Program instructors who do not elect a library session
- Comparing LibGuide usage statistics prior to Spring 2014 to determine the impact of this instruction tool

- Periodic and systematic collection of random student artifacts and designating an ‘assessment day’ when library and academic faculty will read essays using a rubric for integrated writing and research (more information below under *Future Plans*).

### **Transfer Students**

The Students in Transition (STS) course is required for all New Brunswick School of Arts and Sciences transfer students and has a library component that provides a uniform approach to information literacy/research instruction. A library assignment is integrated into this course. During Fall 2013, a scavenger hunt was developed as another passport activity for these students. This was designed as an assessment activity and the questions were directly aligned with the learning outcomes in the STS course.

### **McNair Scholars**

The library continues to work with the Summer Institute of the McNair Scholars program and its Basics of Research pre-requisite course. In this program student learning and the approach to the library instruction used are being measured. Students are using an audience response system for interactive learning and formative assessment. There are many hands-on activities, and video tutorials are also being heavily used. A pre-posttest was developed to measure the impact of the library sessions on student learning. The posttest will be administered at the end of the Summer Institute. The overall course assessment was modified to include four library instruction-related questions. Thinking about the longer term impact, the students in this program are tracked for ten years through the Graduate Student Profile Progress Report and we are seeking to create a formal assessment strategy where we can follow up with this cohort as they continue onto the terminal degree.

### **Assessment in Action**

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), in partnership with Association for Institutional Research (AIR) and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), is running a three-year Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant-funded program “Assessment in Action: Academic Libraries and Student Success” (AiA). The Libraries submitted a competitive proposal to ACRL and were invited to join the second cohort of the program. Our team, led by the Libraries’ instructional design librarian and including members from the campus McNair Scholars Program, will participate in a 14-month professional development program that includes team-based activities assessing the impact of library instruction in the McNair Program. The program officially kicks off on June 27, 2014 but assessment strategies are already being piloted with the Spring 2014 McNair student cohort.

Over the course of the program, the team will be exploring assessment strategies that foster reflective learning in the students and plan to align the learning outcomes/opportunities in each course. Peer assessment is also an integral part of this course. Questions they will be asking include: Can the students identify the changes in their research behaviors upon completion of the Summer Research Institute? Do the learning tools/strategies used in these instruction sessions impact/foster student learning? Does the library instruction influence the ultimate goal of the McNair Program for students to persist onto the doctoral degree?

Because the students are tracked for many years after they complete the McNair Program, we have a rich opportunity to gauge library impact over time with a distinct cohort of students. Working with McNair staff, and following IRB approval, we will create a database that will allow us to compare cohort performance. As we close the loop, this information will inform changes that are made to our syllabus and pedagogical approaches. Also, because the McNair Program is offered nationally, assessment strategies developed here at Rutgers have the opportunity to inform practices across the McNair system.

### **Level One Assessment**

Many of our instruction sessions and extracurricular activities end with evaluation forms that allow students to give feedback about their experience, satisfaction and perceived learning. Although we do not have a standard tool we use for this activity, individual instructors use the feedback to adapt future classes.

### **Affiliated-Library Instruction**

The James B. Carey Library in the Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations (SMLR) is not an official part of the Rutgers University Libraries system. However, our librarians and the SMLR librarian communicate regularly, and share ideas and best practices. In the Spring 2014 semester, their librarian offered a one-credit information literacy course for SMLR students. As part of the course, students were required to submit a paper that analyzed a news piece that reported on or documented a research study, and compared that news piece with the original research and related papers. The assignment measured the students' abilities to identify the original research, locate similar articles, and judge the credibility of the new piece and the original research. This summer, the SMLR librarian and our instructional design librarian will meet to discuss the course and the SMLR librarian will change aspects of the course for the Fall 2014 offering based on student performance in the Spring version.

## **Future Plans**

In the coming year, the Libraries will continue to develop a culture of assessment. Although we have successfully instituted pockets of change, there are many additional opportunities to include assessment activities in our instruction. Plans are already underway for a TeachMeet program, which will include peer learning and collaborative blogging. With TeachMeet, our instructional design librarian will develop a regular schedule of visits to various Libraries locations to lead group discussions about current and best practices around instruction and assessment. All of our librarians will have the opportunity to share their techniques, tips and tricks with each other to expand their understanding of current instruction. Journal club-type discussions and blog postings will also bring in additional perspectives about instruction and assessment. In future faculty meetings, we may also introduce an “assessment minute” activity where colleagues are invited to share an assessment strategy, results and loop-closing response they have instituted in their classes.

In addition to our local assessment plans, the Rutgers Libraries will be participating in the New Jersey Cross-Institutional Assessment of Information Literacy. This statewide assessment activity will train librarians at participating institutions to grade a sampling of student papers using an established rubric. Our instructional design librarian and the chair of our Instructional Community of Practice have already been trained to use the rubric and additional librarians will learn to apply the rubric in the coming months. According to the project description, student papers will be graded "using both analytic and holistic criteria. These five performance measures will be rated on a 10-point scale: 1) Evidence of research; 2) Citation; 3) Integration of outside sources into the development of ideas presented in the paper; 4) Writing 5) An overall holistic information literacy score rating the overall impression of research competency." Depending on its success, this model may influence our local assessment strategies for measuring the Libraries' impact on student learning in the writing program.

## *Library Assessment Tools/Measures*

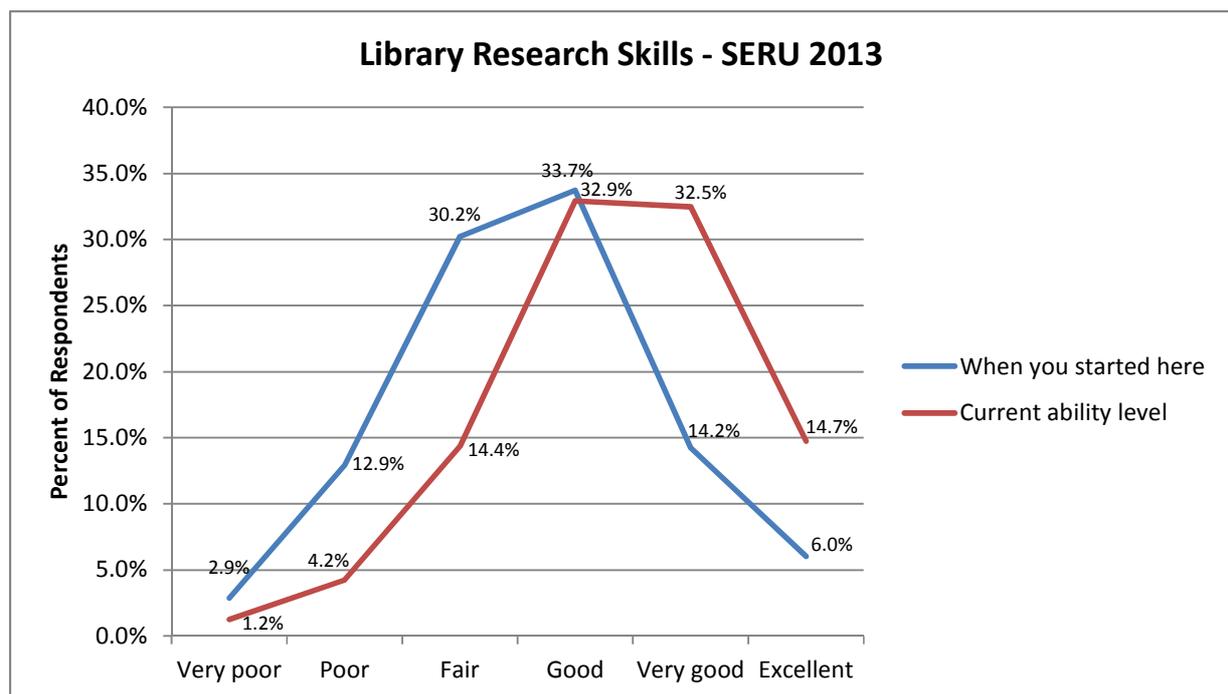
### **SERU**

Rutgers University – New Brunswick has administered the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) survey each year since 2008-09. The survey includes questions about the library including usage, the importance of a world class library collection, self-assessment of research skills and accessibility of staff.

Results from the 2012 SERU survey show that 72.7% of students study in a library sometimes/frequently/usually or always. 40.1% study in one of the library facilities frequently/usually or always. Both percentages have increased compared to the 2011 survey. These questions were not asked in the 2013 survey.

From the 2013 survey results, 90.4% of students were somewhat satisfied/satisfied/very satisfied with the accessibility of library materials, while 59.8% were satisfied/very satisfied. Having access to a world class library collection was rated as very important/essential by 35.5% of students, while 87.9% rated such access as somewhat important/important/very important/essential. 89.9% of students were somewhat satisfied/satisfied/very satisfied with accessibility of library staff, while 56.4% were satisfied/very satisfied. These results have been fairly consistent over the last few years.

Students were asked to rate their library research skills proficiency at two periods in time: 1) when you started at Rutgers and 2) now. Results from the 2013 survey showed an overall improvement.



## Customer Satisfaction Survey

Our online Customer Satisfaction Survey, which we opened October 1, 2009, is our primary internal assessment tool. The survey asks two questions having to do with instruction, and rates performance and importance on a seven point scale. Results from July 1, 2013 through June 31, 2014 are:

	Performance	Importance
<i>I have used the following Library services in the past year... (choose all that apply)</i>		
Attended instructional sessions	5.46	4.62
<i>My satisfaction with and the importance to me of the following services provided by this Library...</i>		
Instructional Services	4.90	4.69

Note that the opportunity to rate satisfaction and importance is offered only to survey respondents who indicate that they used the service.

For undergraduate students, satisfaction and importance receive substantially different scores for the following services: seating/workspace, facilities for security of personal belongings, parking, accessibility, and computer workstations, indicating that these areas need work. In each area, importance outweighs satisfaction. Services where satisfaction and importance are more closely ranked are the online catalog, group study rooms, and hours of access/operation.

Graduate students rank all services as more important than undergraduates, and importance always outranks satisfaction. The difference between satisfaction and importance is larger for the online catalog, remote access, electronic resources and collections than for interlibrary loan and the website.

43.6% of graduate students and 67.3% of undergraduate students agree/strongly agree that locating information is simple and easy, while 51.3% of graduate students and 73.2% of undergraduate students agree/strongly agree that they are often successful in finding the information they are seeking. When somewhat agree is added, the percentages rise to 66.7%, 84.5%, 71.8%, and 89.3%, respectively.

## *Response to Assessment Results*

### **Library Assessment**

The Libraries' Customer Satisfaction Survey asks respondents to rate both satisfaction and importance for each library resource or service. We look for areas where importance is

considerably higher than satisfaction to identify opportunities for improvement. The goal is to reduce the gap between the two numbers wherever possible.

During 2011, undergraduate student responses identified the following areas as having the greatest opportunities for improvement (largest gap between importance and satisfaction): collections, online catalog, and electronic resources. During 2013, all of these measures have improved. In particular, satisfaction with the online catalog shows significant improvement among this user population.

The new Libraries website was developed to improve access to the Libraries resources and services and is intended to improve the user experience. The design, layout and functionality were greatly influenced by user feedback, including the issues identified in the customer survey. In particular, the new search interface was designed to make the library catalog easier to search and to make the electronic resources more visible. The 2013 survey results indicate that, for the undergraduate population, student satisfaction in these areas has improved. The graduate student population results still indicate a gap for the online catalog and electronic resources, which will be an issue for us to consider going forward. Improvement of the online catalog is already an ongoing effort.

“Hours of access/operation” also shows an improvement over previous years. Based on student responses from the customer satisfaction survey, direct student feedback and comments on social media, the Libraries expanded hours for the 2013/14 academic year. We added weekend hours at the Kilmer Library, opened Alexander earlier on Sundays and expanded 24/7 hours prior to finals. We also extended late night hours in the Alexander graduate reading room starting in 2012/13.

### **Instructional Assessment**

Many of our systematic assessment strategies are relatively new or currently being developed. Until at least one round of assessment results are available for analysis, we are unable to “close the loop” based on findings. However, some of our activities have already produced enough information for us to make adjustments to our instruction.

As mentioned above, an assessment activity was added to the Students in Transition library instruction. Students had the option of completing a post-instruction library scavenger hunt activity that measured students’ information literacy skills. Despite being introduced to multiple online scholarly resources including journal databases, students usually used general web searching techniques (e.g., Google) to find the scavenger hunt answers. Although the students

believe they are capable of selecting authoritative, accurate, current, objective information, the scavenger hunt activity revealed the need for additional education in this area. Based on the kinds of resources students used to search and answer questions, web site evaluation skills will be added to the Libraries' STS instruction in the Fall.

An example of closing the loop using level one assessment feedback this year is in the Douglass Residential College's Knowledge and Power: Issues in Women's Leadership (K&P) course. As part of the K&P course, the students learn how to conduct an interview for an oral history assignment. The instruction (provided by a librarian) consists of four videos followed by interview practice sessions. The students have consistently indicated a preference for more practice time, so we hope the next K&P session will include a "flipped classroom" approach where the students will be assigned the videos in advance of class, leaving class-time free for guided practice. Implementation of this change is dependent upon whether the new K&P course director continues with a similar curriculum going forward.

## *Conclusion*

This year, the Libraries have made progress on the formalization of our assessment plan and we have made strides towards building a culture of assessment. High profile projects, such as the Assessment in Action program and the New Jersey Cross-Institutional Assessment of Information Literacy, will serve as models for continuing our progress in the coming years.

### **Respectfully submitted July 3, 2014 by:**

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