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Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills: What the SAILS Tests Reveal Over Time

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Comments
The presentation was given at a conference organized by an accrediting agency and attended by university administrators, faculty, librarians, and others interested in how assessment informs student learning and organizational effectiveness.

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Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills:
What the SAILS Tests Reveal Over Time

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The Universities
- Chapman University
  - Medium-sized, private, liberal arts in Orange CA
  - Mostly bachelor’s, many master’s, some doctoral degrees
- Brandman University
  - Medium-sized, private
  - Degrees from associates to doctoral
  - Mix of online and blended programs on 26 campuses in CA and WA

Information Literacy at Chapman
- Student learning outcomes at all levels (curriculum map)
- Based on national standards
- Freshman Foundations Course instruction
- Course-integrated instruction
- Informal and formal assessments
- SAILS: 2007 to the present

Information Literacy at Brandman
- IL integrated throughout the curriculum
- Required course: Information Fluency and Academic Integrity
  - Based on national standards and institutional IL learning outcomes
- Course-integrated instruction (synchronous and asynchronous)
- Informal and formal assessments
- SAILS: 2009 - present

SAILS: Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills
- Based on national standards (ACRL)
- Cohort assessment
- Individual scores assessment
- Custom questions
- Reporting
  - ACRL standards
  - IL skill sets
  - Benchmarking
  - Subgroups
Chapman Implementation of SAILS

• Every Fall since 2007
• Freshman Foundations Course
• Cohort assessment 2007 - 2012
• Both monitored and unmonitored implementations

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Chapman SAILS Results

• Chapman students do well compared to the master's-institution benchmarks
• Strength in basic stages of research projects
• Less strong in advanced areas
• Factors associated with better performance:
  • Major (performing arts/film; history)
  • Prior experience with a librarian (up to a point)

Chapman Use of SAILS

• Establishing the library as an assessment-oriented unit
• Reporting to stakeholders
• Reporting for re-accreditation
• Adapted for use in-class

Brandman Implementation of SAILS

• Every year since 2009
• Assignment in a required course
• Cohort model
• Unmonitored

Brandman SAILS Results

• Brandman students do well compared to the master's institution benchmarks
• Many students had library instruction or F2F meeting with a librarian in the 6 months prior to the assessment

Brandman Use of SAILS

• Informed development of new IL course
• Use of subject headings
• Authority of sources
• Reporting to stakeholders
• Reporting for re-accreditation
Challenges

- Recruitment
- Low stakes
- Non-freshmen in first year classes
- Academic context – non-traditional students coming from the workplace
- Upcoming changes to the standards

Future Implementation

- Chapman
  - Individual scores
  - Freshmen and seniors
- Brandman
  - Capstone course for seniors