

2007-08 General Education Assessment Results

General Education Goal Assessed

Information Literacy - To retrieve, analyze, synthesize, organize, and evaluate information through technological and traditional means:

1. Determine the nature and extent of information needed.
2. Access information sources efficiently and effectively.
3. Critically evaluate information sources.
4. Critically evaluate information content.
5. Acquire and use information ethically and legally.

Measures

Direct Measure: An internally designed and tested rubric was used to evaluate student proficiency in evaluating sources. The rubric measures four attributes: variety, authority, objectivity, and coverage.

Indirect Measure: An analysis of similarities and differences between English-102 artifacts and artifacts from the other disciplines.

Statement About Method:

Artifacts for this exercise were provided by faculty members. Any instructor with a writing assignment was invited to participate, regardless of discipline. The only requirement for submitting student papers was a work cited/bibliography page containing a minimum of three outside sources.

A team of librarians and one faculty member worked in pairs applying the rubric to student artifacts. The event began with a calibration exercise to ensure consistency among evaluators. (See "Training Process for Evaluating Student Artifacts" for more information.) In the event of a disagreement among the two readers, a third reader applied the rubric to make the final pass/fail decision.

Explain Standards Used for Achievement of Objective:

Student work was evaluated on a three-point scale: excellent (3), good (2), and poor (1) for each of the four attributes. A minimum score of 7 must be obtained in order to achieve an acceptable level of proficiency. Based on the results of the 2006-07 information literacy pilot project at least 80% of the artifacts will meet or exceed expectations.

Results

Number of Artifacts Assessed: 324

Number of Artifacts that Meet or Exceed Expectations: 281 (87%)

Number of Artifacts that Do Not Meet Expectations: 43 (13%)

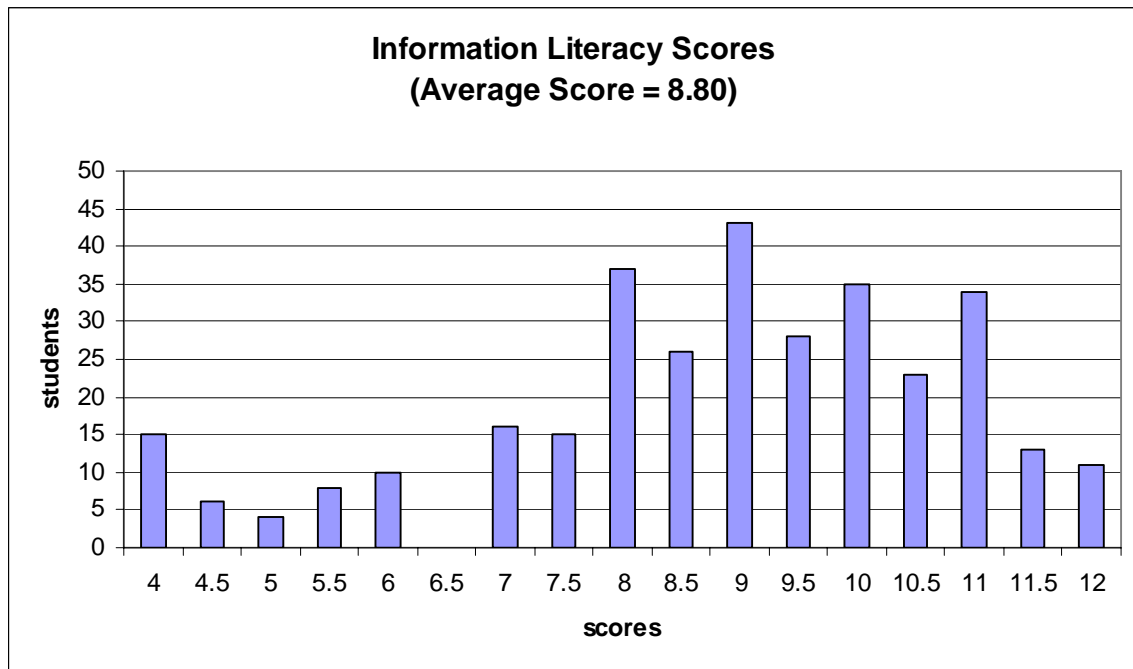
Number of Artifacts Requiring a Third Reader: 28 (9%)

Direct Measure

Overall Scores

The average score for the information literacy assessment was 8.80, which is slightly higher than the 8.40 average score from the 2006-07 pilot project. More than half of the artifacts had a score of 9 or higher. When asked why the results were better than last year, the evaluators responded with the following reasons:

- It has been a year since introducing Information Literacy to the college community – more instructors are requesting library instruction courses
- Last year we did not require a minimum number of sources
- We assessed more artifacts this year (a better representation of the population)
- Last year we used more assessors (variability among readers)



Graph 1

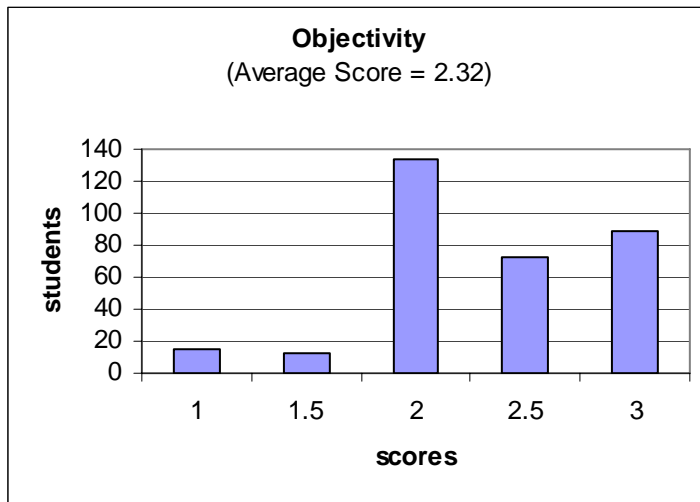
Scores for Attributes

The four attributes are listed from highest average score to lowest.

Objectivity -A judgment of how fairly and equally information sources treat a topic. An objective source relies on facts rather than opinions or beliefs.

The Objectivity attribute had the highest average score of 2.32. It also had the least variability. Based on the distribution of scores, depicted in Graph 2, the sources cited in the student papers relied on facts more often than opinions or beliefs. The evaluators commented on the relationship between Objectivity and Authority indicating that they

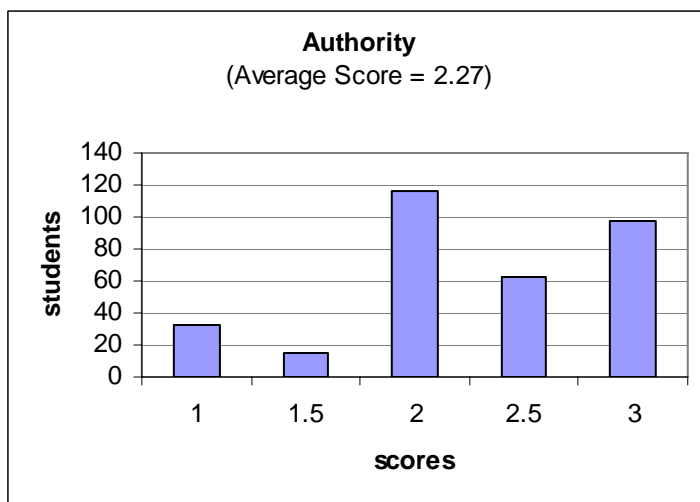
often awarded the same score for both. An analysis of the scores reveals a strong correlation (0.87) between the two attributes.



Graph 2

Authority - The authority of a source is determined by who wrote it and what credentials they have in the field about which they are writing. The materials are sponsored, produced, or written by government agencies, higher education institutions, or other reputable organizations with expertise on the topic.

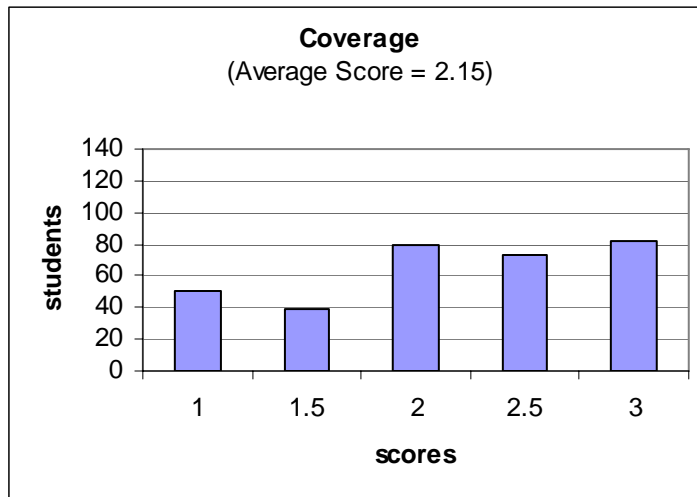
As mentioned above, the scores for Objectivity and Authority were closely related. The average score for Authority was 2.27. Readers commented that Authority was easy to evaluate. Peer reviewed journals were deemed to be very credible. The credibility of certain websites (specifically dot coms, dot nets, and dot orgs) were questionable and often depended on the evaluator's knowledge. Wikipedia was considered not credible. Graph 3 depicts the distribution of scores for this attribute.



Graph 3

Coverage - Does the information provide cursory or in-depth coverage of a subject?

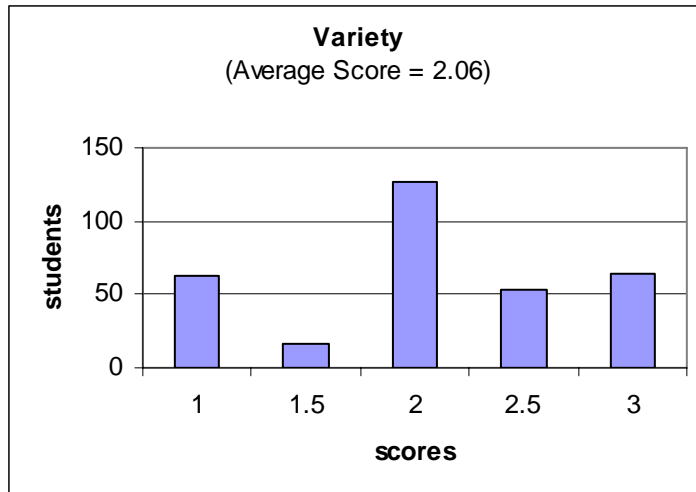
Coverage had an average score of 2.15. It also had the most variability. Readers commented that citations, rather than sources and titles, were better for determining the depth of the coverage. The evaluators also concluded that encyclopedias, while reliable sources, contain general knowledge and therefore provide cursory coverage of a subject.



Graph 4

Variety - Includes sources from a broad range of information types (e.g., print, electronic, interview, etc.)

Variety focused on the number of different types of sources listed on the work cited page. In order to receive an “excellent” score in Variety, a paper had to list at least three different types of sources. (For example a web site, a journal article, and a book.) Variety had the lowest average score of 2.06, and it was the lowest scoring attribute in the 2006-07 pilot project as well. About one-third of the artifacts listed only one type of information source – web sites. Evaluators commented that students rely heavily on internet search engines for conducting research. Graph 5 depicts the distribution of scores for Variety.



Graph 5

Indirect Measure

The results for ENG-102 artifacts and artifacts from the other disciplines were very similar. ENG-102 had a slightly higher average score 8.83 compared to 8.79. Also 59% of the artifacts from ENG-102 had a score of 9 or higher compared to 57% of the other artifacts. The disciplines scored slightly higher than ENG-102 on Authority (2.29 vs. 2.25) and Coverage (2.17 vs. 2.12).

The biggest differences between the two groups were in Variety and Objectivity. The average score for Variety in ENG-102 was 2.25 compared to 1.96 for the other disciplines. ENG-102, a research course, requires the use of multiple sources. Since the papers from the other disciplines encompass a wide range of levels and courses, it is difficult to specify the requirements for the variety of sources. The average score in Objectivity for the other disciplines was 2.38 compared to 2.21 for ENG-102.

Conclusions Regarding the Overall Assessment:

In general, students are meeting or exceeding expectations for Information Literacy. Eighty-seven percent of student artifacts achieved a score of 7 or better, exceeding the established performance standard of 80%.

Strengths/Weaknesses -

Strengths - More than half of the artifacts received a score of 9 or higher. Students tended to cite objective and authoritative information when researching their papers.

Weaknesses – Students did not rely on a variety of sources when researching their papers. About one third of the artifacts were determined to be deficient in Variety.

Actions to Be Taken to Improve Student Learning:

- Share the results with the faculty at the fall 2008 Faculty Professional Development Program highlighting the need to incorporate a variety of sources in writing assignments.
- At the fall Library discipline meeting, discuss a way to emphasize the use of resources which are not dependent on search engines, such as the CCAC journal databases and overview databases, which seemed underused in the artifacts.

Actions to Be Taken to Improve Assessment Process:

- Revise the rubric to specify the levels of performance for Variety. (Poor – Gathered information from only one information type, Good – ...two types, and Excellent - ...three or more types.)

Acknowledgements:

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