

2021 IL 100-Level Report

1. Overview

The 100 Level Information Literacy (IL) group was tasked with assessing research artifacts from the English 101 (Engl 101) courses. The results of this report primarily focus on student learning with regards to information literacy skills. The IL group consisted of various faculty and evaluated student performance using the following criteria related to information literacy: Knows when information is needed, Locates information, Evaluates information, Uses information effectively and responsibly, and Shares information effectively and responsibly. These metrics are based off of the “Information Literacy and Critical Thinking” rubric.

2. Methods

The IL assessment group consisted of 7 faculty members from various faculty units across campus including Library Science, English, EIL/TESOL, Political Science, Computer Science, Religion, and Psychology. They reviewed anonymized samples from Engl 101 courses. The Engl 101 artifacts were selected because the course is required for students to obtain an associates degree and is taken during their freshman/sophomore year. In addition, this is the first time Engl 101 papers were used to benchmark IL assessment at the 100-level using the established institutional-level IL rubric.

Considering that this is a 100-level assessment, an average score of 1.7 (out of 3) was deemed the minimum acceptable score (the 300 level artifacts were scored at a minimum of 2.0 average). This would fall between the “Emerging” and “Developing” levels on the rubric. Any mean scores falling below 1.7 would indicate an area where students struggle and need help improving.

3. Recommendation for Student Learning

It was suggested that the IL group focus on the results of the assessment to identify gaps in student learning and implications of those gaps using the established rubric. The data results showed that students could improve in all of the five criteria of Information Literacy: Knows, Locates, Evaluates, Uses and Shares. Using the Score Frequencies table, the students were strongest in Locates and Uses but weakest in Evaluates, Shares and Knows. Evaluates was the weakest area with 9% of artifacts in the Initial level and 43% in the Emerging level, which posits that more than 2 in 5 students struggle with evaluating information they find. The next criteria which students seem to find challenging is Shares where 6% are in the Initial stage with 30% in the Emerging stage.

If the mean score of 1.7 is acceptable, the percentage of students in each area that scored below 1.7 are: Evaluates (76.59%), Knows (65%), Shares (61.70%), Uses (59.57%) and Locates (51%). This data is taken from IL 100-Level Source table under each criteria for the individual artifacts. From the data, we notice that students do well with locating information relevant to their course assignment.

In relation to the rubric, the group recommended that faculty and administrators work to improve student proficiency with particular attention to the following criteria:

Evaluates

Developing:

- Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.
- Describes the relevance of the source in context of research topic/thesis/statement or question.

Highly Developed:

- Thoroughly (or systematically and methodically) analyzes one's own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.
- Describes the relevance of the sources with specific examples from the text in the context of research topic, thesis statement, or question.

Knows

Developing:

- Designs research objective appropriate to assignment.
- Produces an appropriate thesis or argument, research proposal, or exploratory observation.
- Presents a position with partial relevance and quality for assignment.

Highly Developed:

- Designs original, concise and focused research objective appropriate to assignment.
- Articulate a well-crafted thesis or argument, research proposal, or exploratory observation.
- Presents a well-conceived position that displays mastery of material.

Shares

Developing:

- Uses more paraphrasing than quotes.

Highly Developed:

- Integrates quotes and paraphrases appropriately to articulate an argument.

3.1 Information Literacy Skills Scores by Demographics

Here is more data broken down according to different demographic categories of gender, EIL, home region, and college disciplines at the 100-level. Note that all differences in average scores between groups are not statistically significant.

3.1.1 Gender

The average score for male students fell below 1.7 in all of the categories, with Evaluates at the lowest at 1.04. Female students scored above 1.7 in Knows, Locates and Uses. At this point, we don't really know what to make of this clear difference, or how to address it.

3.1.2 EIL Status

The average students enrolled in EIL fell below 1.7 in all of the categories, with Evaluates as the weakest at 0.92. Those who were not enrolled in EIL scored higher at Locates and Uses, albeit they scored higher in Evaluates at 1.33, it was the category with which they struggled the most.

3.1.3 Home Region

Students from Asia struggle fell below 1.7 in all of the criteria, scoring 1.37 as the highest under Locates. Students from the Pacific region scored higher in Locates at 1.81 and those from Hawaii struggled in all the categories with their highest average under Locates at 1.54. The students from the US Mainland scored above 1.7 in Knows, Locates, Uses and Shares with their lowest score at 1.53 at Evaluates. Other International students scored below 1.7 in all of the criteria, with Evaluates as the weakest at 0.50. Students from all of the different Home Regions struggled with Evaluates.

3.1.4 College

Students in the Arts & Letters program scored above 1.7 in Knows, Locates, Uses and Shares with their strongest at 2.0 in Knows and Locates. Those in the Business & Government program scored 1.81 on Locates but struggled with the other 4 categories with Evaluates as the lowest at 1.07. This was similar with students in the Education & Social Work disciplines, Knows, Evaluates, Uses and Shares fell below 1.7, with Locates as the highest mean at 1.82. The students in the Math & Computing struggled in all of the categories with a highest score of 1.60 under Shares. Students in Sciences scored above 1.7 in Locates (2.00) and Uses (1.85). The Undecided students struggled in all of the categories with their highest score under Locates at 1.60. All programs scored their lowest under Evaluates.

3.2 Analysis and Recommendations

Based on the analysis of this data, one could conclude that faculty are doing a decent job of helping students access and navigate the library databases and search tools, but that many students then fall short in effectively evaluating and using the sources they find. It is hard to know how much of this is due to assignment/course design, lack of instruction, time management, etc.

The group proposes that faculty units discuss how to help students develop skills in evaluating information across the curriculum. One challenge that is not unique to BYU-Hawaii is that when writing and research-heavy classes are delegated almost exclusively to English, students may:

- 1) find that their learning experiences in information literacy are narrowly siloed and limited,

- 2) lack discipline-specific tools and knowledge for accessing and evaluating information, creating gaps in their preparation for future careers, and
- 3) lack motivation and desire to improve information literacy skills because the main courses that are used to teach and assess it are general, required courses that many students see as irritating hurdles to overcome on their way to the “real” work of training in their chosen field.

It is interesting that students in Math & Computing and Undecided scored poorly in all of the areas, this could mean that there are less opportunities in those areas for students to practice and reinforce IL skills.

4. Recommendation for Methodology

4.1 inter-rater Reliability

The group recommended more time to calibrate and norm the rubric, as each faculty member will evaluate and understand the rubric according to their differing discipline-specific standard. Covid protocols contributed to a less robust norming session than what would be best. A suggestion was put forth about delegating faculty members to serve in an information literacy committee with a higher level of time commitment across 1 or 2 semesters to oversee the application and adaptation of the rubric. This committee should assess both lower (100 or 200) and higher (300 or above) levels of artifacts and make comparisons.

4.2 Rubric

Concerning the rubric, the reviewers struggled with the Shares criterion during the norming session of the assessment process. The Shares descriptors were somewhat unclear and redundant with other categories. Also, it was noted that the rubric doesn't account for the way different disciplines favor different presentations of information, such as paraphrasing being required in the sciences and quotations being more acceptable in English courses. One suggestion was to combine Uses and Shares as they seem to assess the same skills. Another discrepancy is that under Knows and Evaluates, there were 3 categories of definitions, whilst Locates had 2 categories, with Uses and Shares with one category of definitions for each. The rubric may be more effective if each criterion had the same amount of definitions. On a more general level, some group members agreed that it may be time for the University to create or adopt a new IL rubric that is more clear, thoughtful, and tailored to the artifacts that we are assessing.

Cautions

Although cultural and educational background should be considered when evaluating students capabilities in regards to information literacy, especially at the 100-level, one must caution against assuming students have lower IL abilities based on demographics. Individual students' IL skills may differ considerably within a demographic, some may even score higher within that group.