



## NELIG Meeting - April 25, 2008

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## **NELIG Spring Meeting - April 25, 2008**

**Association of College and Research Libraries - New England Chapter  
New England Library Instruction Group  
Providence College  
Providence, RI  
April 25, 2008**

NELIG Co-chairs Heidi McCann and Kari Mofford welcomed 45 attendees to the meeting and thanked Ed Bailey of Providence College for hosting the event. Heidi announced the annual conference, to take place at Western New England College on June 6, 2008.

A group of panelists from 4 community colleges and 2 four-year institutions discussed their experiences introducing various assessment tools into information literacy initiatives. These tools and panelists were:

iSkills/ICT - Teresa McManus, Chief Librarian, Bronx Community College and Geraldine (Geri) Hebert, Reference/Bibliographic Instruction Librarian, Bronx Community College

iSkills/ICT - <http://www.ets.org/iskills/>

Information Literacy Test (ILT) by James Madison University - Susan Buzzell, Reference & Instruction Librarian, Wheelock College

Information Literacy Test (ILT) by James Madison University  
- [http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/wm\\_library/ILT.pdf](http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/wm_library/ILT.pdf)

Informational Literacy Assessment Tool (created locally) - Ellen Madigan Pratt, Distance Education & Outreach Coordinator, LaChance Library, Mt. Wachusett Community College

Mount Wachusett Community College's Information Literacy Assessment Tool/Rubric  
- <http://cisweb.mwcc.edu/sto1/acrl/Assess.doc> and [http://cisweb.mwcc.edu/sto1/acrl/InfoLit\\_assessment\\_Sample\\_Fo7.doc](http://cisweb.mwcc.edu/sto1/acrl/InfoLit_assessment_Sample_Fo7.doc)

TRAILS - Ellen Carey, Library Co-Coordinator, Greenfield Community College

TRAILS - <http://www.trails-9.org/>

SAILS - Bridget Gunn, Coordinator, Science Information Literacy, Babson Library, Springfield College

Project SAILS

- <https://www.projectsails.org/abouttest/aboutTest.php?page=aboutTest>  
**SAILS Experience: Science Information Literacy Project**

Geri Hebert and Teresa arrived at Bronx Community College in 2002 with limited computer resources and online information. To increase resources, all students were assessed a technology fee, which was used to fund the purchase of additional computers for the library. In their initial study of student behavior, Geri and Teresa determined that many students used the web regularly, but did not know how to assess web-based content for academic purposes. In their particular situation, they had the backing and support of the faculty at Bronx CC. They see information literacy as an initiative that requires faculty buy-in and is wider than the library alone; without faculty support it can be too limiting and can fail. There are now eleven community colleges in the area who have adopted the iSkills/ICT product.

Susan Buzell spoke of her Castleton State College experience, which is a lesson in what not to do. She began at Castleton State in 2004, but she had no faculty buy-in regarding information

literacy initiatives, partially due to the fact that information literacy was not a graduation component. She looked at various options and chose the ILT tool from James Madison University. She spent a year putting a test into place, but was not allowed to implement information literacy at a specific course level since it was not required for graduation. After assessing ILT, she determined it was not strong enough as an assessment tool because it was possible to advance to the next level too easily without being truly “information literate.” Faculty never supported information literacy since they perceived it as an added burden for students.

Ellen Madigan Pratt discussed the “home-grown” assessment tool at Mt. Wachusett. They have strong support from the faculty, who embrace the concept of information literacy. It is one of the four competencies required for graduation. It is imbedded in two classes, which all students are required to take. Faculty receive training on assessment so they know how to use the tool. A faculty member in the audience suggested that the tool still needs tweaking, since it is difficult for faculty to assess the base literacy of each student; the question is subjective.

Ellen Carey discussed the evolution of information literacy at Greenfield CC, which began as one-shot sessions, but then she partnered with a non-profit agency to develop a 1-credit class for high school dropouts enrolled at GCC using grant money. She adopted TRAILS, which is freely available on the web. It is designed to be done online and has no provision for a printed out version. This is difficult when students are not technically astute or have not access to a computer. She wanted to implement a pre- and post-test, but realized her expectations were too high. In retrospect, it would have been better to do a more abbreviated version of the test that was not as ambitious and didn't have as high an expectation regarding information literacy. She also has discovered that there is a “disconnect” between the ability of students to answer the TRAILS questions correctly yet be unable to actually exhibit information literacy skills in practice.

Bridget Gunn spoke about her experiences using SAILS at Springfield College for an information literacy project in the Sciences. She embedded information literacy into upper level science courses (5 per semester). The information literacy objectives are based on four of the five ACRL Information Literacy Standard Two, Outcomes and Objectives. The data can be compared to all institutions or peer institutions only. It can be done in an online format or paper and costs \$3 per test with a \$2,000 cap. However, no individual data can be tracked, it's not conducive to small sample sizes (no data available for less than 10 students, no valid data for groups less than 50), and the data is only produced twice a year. Therefore, no individual feedback can be provided to students, nor can students be tracked over time. She was able to fund this initiative through a 3-year grant. She is currently evaluating a different test, the Research Readiness Self-assessment tool offered through Central Michigan University.

After the panel discussed their individual experiences, a question and answer period followed. One of the members in the audience, Lana Jackman, suggested that attendees looked at the National Forum on Information Literacy web site: <http://www.infolit.org/>

**Other references:**

Research Readiness Self-Assessment (RRSA) - [http://rrsa.cmich.edu/cgi-bin/rrsahp.cgi?session\\_id](http://rrsa.cmich.edu/cgi-bin/rrsahp.cgi?session_id) and [http://rrsa.cmich.edu/cgi-bin/rrsalib.cgi?session\\_id](http://rrsa.cmich.edu/cgi-bin/rrsalib.cgi?session_id)

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Respectfully submitted,  
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