

Progress Report for ACS Information Fluency Project Grant 2001

Information Fluency instruction for first-year students: a team approach Rollins College

Rollins College is conducting a pilot instructional program in information fluency for first-year students. The project fosters collaboration among Rollins faculty, librarians, students, and information technologists. To implement the project, instructional teams were formed to pilot three sections of a one-credit information fluency course. The first team recently taught Information Fluency (IFT 101) to a class of students co-registered in a Rollins Conference Course, a seminar class required for first-year students. The second team's class will be co-registered with a freshman level educational psychology course, and a third section will be open to all incoming Spanish language students.

There are two main goals for the pilot project:

1. To determine the optimal strategy for introducing all first-year students to information fluency skills to provide a basic level of competency
2. To develop collaborative projects in information fluency with faculty, librarians, students, and information technologists

The course content reflects the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, which have been endorsed by the ACS guidelines task force. These standards address the categories of preparation, access, evaluation, assimilation, presentation, and ethical use of information.

The curriculum for the course includes instruction in both computer literacy and information literacy. The instruction begins with a theoretical component that welcomes students to the Information Age, discusses what information is and who produces it, and demonstrates how students can use information. Each course section includes some or all of the following skills:

1. Introduction to the basic structure of operating systems (such as Windows) and one or more software applications such as: word processing (Word), data base (Access), spread sheet (Excel), and presentation programs (PowerPoint, FrontPage)
2. Introduction to email, the World Wide Web, Web browsers, and search engines
3. Introduction to library resources in all formats
4. Choosing a research topic
5. Developing research strategies and identifying research tools
6. Database searching

7. Legal and ethical issues, such as copyright and plagiarism

The instructional teams are responsible for determining the specific skills to be taught, based on the goals for the accompanying course. For the first pilot IFT course, which was co-listed with a class on contemporary issues in American education, students were required to create a web page about a research topic. A pre-test was administered to the class of fifteen students to determine entering skill levels. A post-test was administered at the conclusion of the course, to assess the level of skills attained during the course. On the pre-test, fourteen students self-reported weak skills in web page design; three reported weak library skills and five reported neutral library skills; and thirteen reported weak knowledge of Boolean search skills. On the post-test, fourteen students reported strong skills in web page design; thirteen reported strong library skills; and thirteen reported strong knowledge of Boolean search skills. Student and instructor evaluations of the course will be used to assist the teams responsible for teaching subsequent sections and will be incorporated in the final report.

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October 17, 2001