Introduction to the SAILS Test

project SAILS
Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills

ALA Annual Conference

Chicago, IL

July 13, 2009
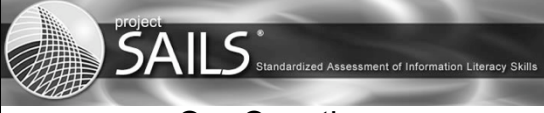
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Agenda

- About Project SAILS
- Timeline
- Institutional Review Board Approval
- Testing Information and Tips
- Using the SAILS System (Tutorials)
- SAILS Reports
- Questions

The SAILS Team

Core Members
(Kent State Univ.)

- Julie Gedeon
- Carolyn Radcliff
- Joe Salem
- Rick Wiggins

Consultants & Developers

- David Bird
- Julia Blixrud
- Christine DeMars
- Jeph Remley
- Steven Wise

Our Questions

- Does information literacy make a difference to student success?
- Does the library contribute to information literacy?
- How do we know if a student is information literate?

Need: A tool to measure info lit skills

Development Support

- Kent State University
- Academic Library Association of Ohio
- Ohio Board of Regents
- Association of Research Libraries
- Institute of Museum and Library Services
- 82 participating libraries; 42,000 students

Early Decisions

- Base on ACRL information competencies for higher education (Standards 1, 2, 3, & 5)
- Create multiple-choice questions
- Test cohorts, not individuals
- Create benchmarks for comparisons
- Use Item Response Theory as measurement model

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ACRL Standards Tested

1. determines nature and extent of needed information
2. accesses needed information effectively and efficiently
3. evaluates information critically
5. uses information ethically and legally

Regrouped ACRL Objectives into Eight SAILS Skill Sets

1. Developing a Research Strategy
2. Selecting Finding Tools
3. Searching
4. Using Finding Tool Features
5. Retrieving Sources
6. Evaluating Sources
7. Documenting Sources
8. Understanding Economic, Legal, Social Issues

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Item Development—First Steps

- Done by content experts and evaluation expert
- Draft test questions related to ACRL objectives
- Write the correct answers
- Develop incorrect answers that are plausible

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Item Development—Next Steps

- One-on-one testing with undergraduate students
- Small group testing (classes)
  – Feedback from students
- Field testing
  – Item analysis

Outcome: Demonstrates an understanding of intellectual property, copyright, and fair use of copyrighted material.

Test item:
Which of the following concepts makes it legally permissible to reproduce portions of works for educational purposes without permission?

- ❑ Copyright
- ❑ Fair use
- ❑ Freedom of information
- ❑ Intellectual freedom
- ❑ Intellectual property

Item Response Theory: Looks at Patterns

	Easier questions				More difficult questions			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
Person A	C	C	C	C	C			
Person B	C	C		C	C	C		
Person C	C		C	C			C	C
Person D	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C

Scope of the Development Phase

- 82 participating institutions
  - 7 Canadian, 75 U.S.
- 42,304 students
  - 5,200 seniors
  - 4,575 juniors
  - 6,532 sophomores
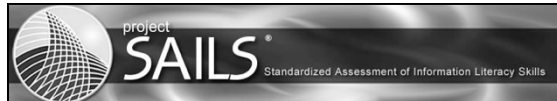 - 20,790 freshmen
  - 5,207 not reported

Evidence of Validity

- External validation
  - Students with high ACT or SAT scores do better on the SAILS test
  - Performance on James Madison Univ. Information Literacy Test moderately correlated to performance on the SAILS test
- Performance testing
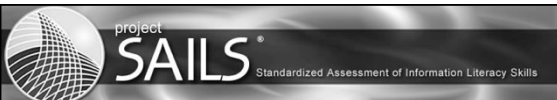 - Strong correlation between SAILS test and execution of easy tasks

The End of the Research Phase

- 5 years of development
- 3 years of data collection
- 3 years of working with other institutions
- 1 year of analysis and evaluation
- 1 year of system redesign
- Continued commitment by Kent State University

The SAILS Test

- Eight skill sets, four ACRL standards
- Each student gets 45 multiple-choice questions
- Web-based or paper/pencil
- $3.00 per student (cap of $2,000 per test administration)
  - Paper testing: add'l 50 cents per form + shipping
- Report describes cohort performance

Project SAILS at Your Institution

- Two test administration periods per year
  - Fall: June 15th through December 14th
  - Spring: January 1st through May 31st
- Fall testing may continue into Spring
- All testing for academic year ends May 31st
- Reports ready at end of each test period

Administering the SAILS Test

- Minimum of 50 students (200 preferred)
- Most students finish in 35 minutes
- Technical requirement: current Web browser
- Register, create test administration, monitor test progress, make payment, generate PDF report online
- Some customization available
  - Labels for class standing and majors
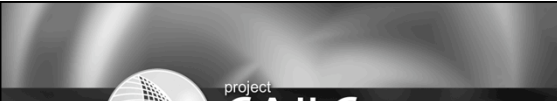 - 2 custom demographic questions

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Detailed Handouts

- Timeline
- Testing Information and Tips
- Tutorials
- Sample Report

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Questions?

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Understanding Your SAILS Report

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Profile of the SAILS Benchmark

- 59,364 students
- 135 institutions
  - 23 Associates-granting
  - 8 Baccalaureate - General
  - 18 Baccalaureate - Liberal Arts
  - 37 Masters-granting
  - 49 Doctorate-granting

  - 125 U.S.
  - 10 Canadian

	Freshmen	Soph.	Juniors	Seniors
Associates	4,154	2,236	448	155
Bac - General	1,543	144	44	103
Bac – Liberal Arts	3,609	810	697	755
Masters-granting	6,923	2,347	1,883	2,184
Doctorate-granting	18,530	4,311	2,951	3,782

Project SAILS Skill Sets

1. Developing a Research Strategy
2. Selecting Finding Tools
3. Searching
4. Using Finding Tool Features
5. Retrieving Sources
6. Evaluating Sources
7. Documenting Sources
8. Understanding Economic, Legal, & Social Issues

Reading the Reports

- Table of contents page
- About the test and the scoring
- Test-taker profile
- Results by SAILS skill set
  - across all skill sets
  - within each skill set
  - your institution and comparisons
- Results by ACRL standards
- Appendices

Questions?

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