Student and Faculty Engagement: Mentoring, Discovering and Collaborating to Achieve a Scholarly Campus Culture

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Introduction

This Quality Enhancement Program (QEP) proposal seeks to make discipline-based inquiry, learning, and engagement a strategic and embedded university-wide practice at Armstrong. This proposal directly supports Armstrong’s mission to be “an academically selective institution of first choice, recognized nationally for undergraduate, graduate, and professional education.” In general terms, discipline-based inquiry, instruction, and research is understood to be student-focused, transformative, experiential, and rigorous; frequently, it has been documented to lead to student success (Wood, 2003, Johnson 2001, Kremer 1990, Eberlin et. al 2008). In particular, this type of student-focused engagement has been shown to be especially important for connecting diverse and first-generation college students to their discipline and for improving their success (Pike 2005, Tobias 1990, Brown 2010, Koljatic and Kuh 2001). And more broadly, undergraduate research has been shown to improve students’ learning, engagement and connection to their disciplines throughout the university (Boyer 1998, Kuh 2008, Locks and Gregerman 2008, Lopatto 2010, Stewart 2003, Gregerman 1999). Numerous researchers advocate for a research supportive curriculum that enhances student participation and promotes learning outside of the regular classroom in order to improve student learning, retention, and student global competitiveness (Karukstis and Elgren 2007, Karukstis 2007, Gregerman et. al. 1998, Carlson and Rasmussen 2008, Hathaway et. al. 2002). To create a culture on our campus that supports this style of inquiry and leads to these results, this QEP proposal hopes to strike an organic balance among three components of higher education we are already immersed in and doing well: teaching, mentoring, and scholarship. Yet because more often than not these three areas of academic performance occur independently of one another at Armstrong, this QEP aims to bridge the gaps among them by allowing faculty to incorporate scholarly teaching into their courses. By providing faculty opportunities to mentor students one-on-one in their undergraduate scholarly endeavors and by enabling them to augment their own scholarly projects, this QEP emphasizes situations where students and academics learn together, helping both populations build and practice the skills and habits of mind that prepare them to realize their potential. Through these initiatives, Armstrong will strengthen its foundational commitment to superior teaching by ensuring that transformative student learning occurs inside and outside the classroom.

To this end, we propose that Armstrong adopt a university-wide program that promotes active, inquiry-based, and student-centered pedagogical methods. These methods are
developed from the constructivism principle of learning theory where students are engaged in cooperative and interactive exploration of a topic or design of an experiment. In the literature, these methods take many forms, including problem-based learning, case-study learning, process-oriented guided inquiry, and a number of other pedagogical strategies. (Brown, 2010, Eberlein et. al 2008, Carlson, & Rasmussen 2008, Rasmussen & Kwon 2007, Abraham 2005, Wood 2003, www.pogil.org). Moving our university in the direction of adopting these strategies, however, requires more than merely providing students opportunities to engage in research; it goes further and leads faculty to develop new ideas about teaching and learning. In many cases, faculty members will need to move beyond conceptualizing themselves as “sages on the stage”; this QEP will encourage them to consider themselves as facilitators who engage students in active learning and who ask them to develop deep knowledge, rather than merely perform through rote memorization or other styles of passive learning (King 1993; Landis et. al 1998, Duffrin et. al 1998). Thus, both faculty and students will be encouraged to participate in the entirety of the learning cycle of exploration, concept invention, and application. Students will have opportunities to work in small groups (with individual roles assigned within these groups to ensure that all students are fully engaged in the learning processes) and to take share as partners in the increased responsibility for learning and understanding material. This type of learning develops process skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and communication through cooperation and reflection. It helps students become lifelong learners and leaders, which prepares them to be competitive in a global market. One of the challenges for faculty in adopting this QEP will be, no doubt, to make them comfortable with their transforming roles and to familiarize them with these active teaching methods. It will require that they significantly redesign their lecture periods and laboratory experiments to accommodate these new pedagogies. Because faculty carry heavy workloads, finding the time necessary for this retooling will be one of the key hurdles that must be overcome to implement this initiative. This proposal includes strategies that enable faculty to secure the time they need to explore these types of high-impact teaching practices.

The value this QEP will add to our campus will be manifold. First of all, developing discipline-based inquiry skills in the classroom will, no doubt, lead to a research supportive campus culture and curriculum for both students and faculty. The gains for students will be numerous and tangible. Exposing them to these types of higher order thinking skills will likely make them more inquisitive and thus instill within them an interest in participating in discipline-based undergraduate research projects throughout their years at Armstrong. Additionally, because undergraduate research will provide one-on-one mentoring of students by faculty, it will allow both students and faculty to explore open-ended topics in their field. As a byproduct of this exploration, students will feel connected to their academic programs, which in turn will foster their academic growth in their majors and nurture a sense of increased connection to the community of scholars in their chosen field. Numerous studies have shown that undergraduate research is particularly important in promoting this sense of connectedness (Gregerman 1999, Hathaway 2002, Locks 2008). These studies also demonstrate that this sense of community in turn leads to more students being retained at higher levels and, consequently, to more students progressing toward graduation. The gains for faculty will
also be registered on the pulse of the university. Faculty will be encouraged to think about the possibilities for engaging undergraduates in research, thus enhancing their own interest in scholarly pursuits and expanding their understanding of what they consider research to be. This emphasis will lead to meaningful conversations on our campus about how scholarship is conducted and defined in a wide range of disciplines.

The College of Science and Technology has implemented a number of programs that are active and inquiry based, funded by grants and internal funds. Many faculty in this college use active, inquiry and collaborative pedagogies in their courses and laboratories, including the general chemistry laboratory (CHEM 1211L and 1212L) and the studio physics design (PHYS 1111K). Other courses in the college also use these methods. The college has also implemented a number of programs to fund and support undergraduate research programs during the school year and the summer. Student interest in undergraduate research is increasing in all departments of CST. Across the quad, the College of Liberal Arts has been hosting a series of faculty forums to help professors in the Humanities understand what elements in their research and pedagogy can already be defined as “inquiry-based.” They will be hosting experts in the field of “Best Practices in Undergraduate Research in the Humanities” in the near future to expand their conversations about how research can be conceptualized as a social phenomena, not just as publication or lab experience. Faculty in this college are currently being encouraged and funded (through summer mini-grants) to pursue and cameo their work with undergraduates at conference presentations, capstone paper forums, and creative performances. Thus, this proposal is an expansion and elevation of current practice on our campus, all of which points toward improvement of student engagement, knowledge acquisition, and the development of research skills across disciplines and bridges faculty-student divides.

**Description of Need**

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSEE) (http://nsse.iub.edu/html/annual_results.cfm) benchmarks effective educational practice as that which includes active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, academic challenge, enriched educational experiences, and supportive campus environments. According to this survey, effective educators promote high achievement, provide mentoring, encourage students to connect to their discipline, and facilitate opportunities for them to collaborate. In addition, the recent report by Arum and Roksa (2011) indicates that there is a crisis brewing in American colleges where students are learning very little as measured by the Collegiate Learning Assessment, a measure of student’s ability to “think critically, reason analytically, solve problems and communicate clearly” (http://www.collegiatelearningassessment.org/). While some departments are beginning to engage in methods of collaborative learning, many have a distance to go to expand their earlier ways of thinking about research and pedagogy and take on new concepts. Because university education is uniquely poised to help students solve a range of unforeseen problems (with which the coming years will doubtless confront us both locally and globally), we are anticipating and addressing the urgency of this challenge, by designing a QEP that allows us to offer better mentorship and
instruction, while simultaneously increasing our standards for academic rigor. Because future educational prospects suggest that we will be required to deal creatively with uncertainty, we want to provide educational experiences for both our students and faculty that prepare them to do just that, making this initiative not only timely, but imperative. Yet many departments have not been able to step up to this challenge due to lack of time/interest/funds to implement such programs. More often than not, given these constraints, we find that our default position is to allow practices to remain the same and to justify that by calling them “well-established classroom traditions.” This perpetuation of past practices seems inevitable, because faculty are often not aware of the research that supports more actively engaged pedagogies. But it is no small feat to enable faculty to make this transition. Clearly, a strong emphasis on faculty development is needed to help faculty learn about best practices, to facilitate their efforts to incorporate new pedagogies into their courses, and ultimately to support their efforts to improve student outcomes.

Helping departments and colleges find a role for undergraduate research to play in their curriculums is therefore at the center of this QEP. In this focus, we recognize and respect the idiosyncratic needs and differences of emphasis among our points of academic concentration. For example, there will be distinct challenges to face in promoting undergraduate research in the College of Liberal Arts, where publication with student authors is not always looked upon favorably by professional societies. In the College of Health Professions and College of Education, where the number and amount of clinical/internship hours required in a degree program can be prohibitive for both faculty (teaching loads) and students (time available to pursue experiential activities), special consideration will need to be given to these pragmatic time constraints. And in the College of Science and Technology it will be important to emphasize the redesign of lab strategies and the conceptualization of what constitutes a lab experience. Thus in recognizing the need for this QEP on our campus, this proposal aims to acknowledge the academic standards and professional demands of our various constituencies by making the discipline-specific requirements needed for us to make this transformation key pieces of our enhancement process.

As is well known, the retention (≈70% for incoming freshmen) and graduation rates (≈40%) of Armstrong students is below the average rate for both the state and the nation. This QEP, therefore, also aims to address our need to increase our RPG rates by enriching student experiences via the adoption of a university-wide undergraduate research program. Specifically, this QEP will tackle the RPG and student engagement issues by providing faculty development in the areas of active and collaborative learning and by providing increased opportunities for student-faculty academic interaction by promoting an institutional sea-change in our conceptualization of how research transpires. This initiative will be accomplished by supporting and mentoring both faculty and students, by engaging in them enriching educational experiences activities, and by tying undergraduate research not only to scholarly activity, but also to field work, community outreach, and service learning. Once implemented, this QEP will have an impact on students at every level (freshman through senior) and connect faculty across the university.
Methods of the Quality Enhancement Plan

Implementation of this QEP involves three branches of activity, each of which serves to improve faculty skills in student academic engagement and to provide students an opportunity to engage in active learning. In each year of the QEP, all new tenure-track faculty will receive a course release (estimated to be approximately 12 faculty per year) to participate in the Armstrong Teacher Scholars Program as defined below. In addition, each college can select faculty (proportional to the number of faculty in the college, limit 20 per year, 10 faculty per semester), through a selection process that is both competitive and viewed as an honor, to participate in a similar cohort of Armstrong Teacher Scholars for experienced faculty. Two facilitators will be needed to lead each cohort (4 total), and those faculty will perform these activities in load or by extra compensation.

• The Armstrong Teacher Scholars Program for New Tenure-Track Faculty: New tenure-track faculty will be given a course release in their first semester to participate in a learning community course designed to both orient them to the university and to engage them in adopting and practicing successful student-centered teaching practices. Because new faculty are often novices who have been trained primarily in passive lecture-based teaching in their own collegiate histories, these learning communities will be designed to expose them to new pedagogies and to provide them with new practices to use as their models. They will discuss pedagogy based on educational research and engage in active learning strategies within their small class groups. Their participation in this learning community will be facilitated in-load by two Armstrong faculty, and it will draw upon expertise from outside speakers/facilitators. These facilitators will have previously documented experience in student-centered, inquiry-based learning and will be versed in current educational literature. Additional faculty development for the facilitators will be provided each year (travel to meetings/workshops to learn more about active learning strategies). Faculty will be expected to produce two active learning modules in their discipline (core or major) and the cohort group will serve as the test bed for the activities. It is expected that faculty in the cohort will serve as mentors to each other beyond the time of the initial learning community meeting; they may serve as facilitators for future ATS sessions as well. Program oversight will be by the Office of Faculty Development in conjunction with the Director of the Armstrong Teaching Scholar Program.

• The ATS Program for Current Faculty: Current faculty will be eligible to be nominated by their departments (one per year per department) to participate in a program called “Armstrong Teaching Scholar” (ATS) which will help current faculty develop and enhance student academic engagement practices. In particular, the learning communities will focus on best practices to enhance active and collaborative learning, aiming to increase student-faculty interactions in their courses. Faculty will investigate and implement best practices for student-centered, inquiry learning and be encouraged to integrate experiential activities into their teaching. These development activities will be provided to faculty via overload compensation or stipend awards for completion of the program. Faculty participating in this program will receive recognition at events
(possibly at graduation or honors convocation) and awards/plaques recognizing them as Armstrong Teaching Scholar. Exceptional ATSs will be eligible to be paid/or in-load facilitators for other groups of faculty in subsequent years. Program oversight will be by the Office of Faculty Development in conjunction with the Director of the Armstrong Teaching Scholar Program.

• **The Impact of the ATS Program for both Students and Faculty:** These initiatives will provide increased opportunities for both populations to engage in disciplinary activities outside of class. Armstrong will make a concerted effort at the VPAA level through the Office of Faculty Development and deans (and possibly with the Research and Scholarship Committee) to develop an internal grant process that funds student/faculty scholarly activity during the school year and during the summer. As students at the freshmen and sophomore level become more engaged in their discipline and their course work, an increasing number will be seeking research/discovery opportunities that allow them to work one-on-one with faculty and other students. All too often, in the past, these capstone activities have not been highlighted and promoted or completely funded at the university level (when they have been supported, they have often been so by departments, deans and external funds). The university will develop an application process, a funding model, a website on which to advertise research opportunities to students, and a set of required outcomes for these projects that must be collaborative (faculty and students) and within the discipline. Projects may be for undergraduate research/scholarly activities, service-learning activities, fieldwork activities, conference presentations, and other experiential activities. Funding includes faculty and student stipends, travel, and materials and supplies. Funding also includes the costs of expanding the current research and scholarship day on campus to include marketing, poster boards, awards and a keynote speaker. All faculty-student projects receiving funds from this award will be required to present at the research and scholarship symposium to help support and promote the undergraduate research culture on campus.

**Expected Outcomes**

This QEP nurtures the development of life-long student and faculty learners in the arts and sciences core and the disciplines. It facilitates increased student and faculty engagement in critical thinking, information literacy, communication, writing and quantitative skills. It supports improvement in faculty instructional quality and increases student-faculty collaborative scholarly activity. It fuels an increase in RPG results and points toward increased alumni support of Armstrong after graduation. All faculty learning outcomes should result in student learning outcomes.

**SLOs**

- Students will develop knowledge of discipline-specific inquiry skills.
- Students will actively engage in their own learning
- Students will understand the demands and needs of their chosen fields.
• Students will apply discipline-specific inquiry skills from the classroom to resolve a specific question or problem.
• Students will learn how to present the results of discipline-based inquiry in a professional or academic forum.
• Students from diverse backgrounds will identify with the academic mission of the institution, feel welcome and develop an appropriate scholarly student peer group.

**FLOs**

• Faculty will develop course curricula that include discipline specific research and inquiry experiences.
• Faculty will develop engaging student inquiry modules through discussion in faculty learning communities
• Faculty will discover and implement pedagogical methods that address different learning styles.

**Assessment Plan**

The student learning outcomes will be assessed in a variety of ways on campus. Faculty who participate in learning communities will directly assess student learning gains and the development of inquiry-based skills via exams, college/department/discipline exit exams, eFACE data, and faculty assessment student learning via instruments such as Student Assessment of Learning Gains (SALG) (http://www.salgsite.org/). This feedback from current students in the enhanced courses will be used formatively to enrich and further develop the faculty learning community content and direction. FLOs will be measured via a structured examination of faculty APARs by the QEP assessment director and by peer-observation of teaching by the learning community facilitators and participants (the director of faculty development, the director of the ATS program and the QEP assessment director will assemble a committee to create a model to be used to evaluate teaching by peer observation outside of the regular tenure and promotion system; however, faculty will be free to include this assessment in their portfolios if desired). Both faculty and students will participate in qualitative assessments such as focus groups and individual interviews.

The university will quantitatively measure student-learning gains via the MAPP and the administration of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA). The university will measure the impact of student engagement via national benchmarks such as NSSE, student satisfaction surveys and collecting data on RPG (registrar and institutional research data), numbers of experiential activities participated in by faculty and students, student and faculty joint publications, presentations, projects. The university will also develop, via the QEP assessment director, a longitudinal survey of alumni to determine if undergraduate research was an important determinate in student achievement after graduation (impact on career goals, attending graduate or professional skills, obtaining employment, passing certification exams).
Assessment Timeline:
Prior to full implementation: Baseline data will be collected. Faculty will be surveyed to determine their understanding and incorporation of active learning strategies in their classroom, and they will be surveyed regarding their involvement in undergraduate research. Students (through Cove) will be asked similar questions about their knowledge and experience with active learning and undergraduate research. Student MAPP scores and student NSEE data will be collected as a baseline. An alumni survey will be developed and administered to determine past impact of undergraduate research and active learning. If possible, a few classes of sophomores, juniors and seniors in each college will take the CLA as part of their course (possibly all students in an area B course in a given semester). The peer-evaluation of teaching form will be developed during this time.

During the implementation of this QEP, the data described in the previous paragraph will be collected continually. Alumni survey will only be given to those who have graduated in the previous year. The peer-evaluation of teaching form will be implemented and used in courses connected to the faculty learning community. Faculty, as part of the learning community, will develop assessments for their courses and report the data to the QEP assessment director. The assessment director will work with the Director of Faculty Development, the ATS director, and the faculty in the learning communities to analyze the data for the project.

Feasibility
The initial budget outline is given below:

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<th>QEP Management Costs</th>
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## Faculty Learning

### Community Costs

New Faculty 12 @ $2,500 (part-time replacement cost/overload compensation)

- $30,000

10 current faculty per semester @ $2,500 (part-time replacement cost/overload compensation)

- $50,000

Stipends/overload compensation/course releases for faculty instructors for FLCs (4 per year at $3,000)

- $12,000

Photocopying/Books/Supplies

- $5,000

Professional development for facilitators

- $5,000

**Total**

- $102,000

## Faculty Student Internal Grant Funds

Faculty Summer Stipends (10@$5,000)

- $50,000

Student Stipends (10@$2,400; $300 per week, 8 weeks)

- $24,000

Student travel Costs (10 @$1,000)

- $10,000

Supplies and Equipment (up to $3,000 per project each year)

- $30,000

Expansion of Student Research Day

- $3,000

**Total**

- $117,000

**Yearly Totals**

- $239,000
$1,168,000  Total Budget

Similar QEPs in SACS

Kennesaw University “Taking the Lead Among learning-Centered Institutions”
University of Houston “Learning, Collaborating, mentoring, Connecting, Transforming Through Discovery”
Valdosta State University “Undergraduate Engagement in Discipline-Based Inquiry “
William and Mary, “Expanding the Learning Community: Building on Faculty-Student Collaboration to Enhance Student Scholarship”
University of Texas, Dallas “Gateways to Excellence in Math and Science (GEMS)”
Lamar University, Active and Collaborative Engagement for Students (ACES)
Northern Kentucky University, Student Engagement in Active Learning (SEAL)
Baylor University, Engaging Undergraduate Learners
Nova Southeastern University, “Enhancing Student Academic Engagement”
University of Virginia, "Enhancing Student-Faculty Engagement"
The University of Texas at Arlington, “Active Learning: Pathways to Higher Ordering Thinking at UT Arlington”

References


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Critical Thinking & Civic Engagement: Campus Collaboration in First-Year Seminars

Quality Enhancement Plan Proposal

Submitted by Jane V. Rago, Mary Anne Brock, Monica Rausch (April, 2011)

Supported by the Faculty Learning Community reading Educating Citizens: Preparing America’s Undergraduates for Lives of Moral and Civic Responsibility by Anne Colby, Thomas Ehrlich, Elizabeth Beaumont, & Jason Stephens. (Beth Howells, Mark Finlay, Christy Mrozeck, Jason Tatlock, Wendy Wolfe, Beth Burnett, Jewell Anderson, Kathleen Schaefer)

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Scope
This QEP will directly affect all first-year students, faculty, professional staff, and administration. It will indirectly affect the majority of the student body, as most who graduate from Armstrong will have been involved in the First-Year seminar, either as a student or possibly as a peer mentor.

Finances
Because this QEP relies on classes we already have, the financial burden should be minimal. Occasional course overload pay, some part-time faculty hires, initial compensation to launch the initiative, and classroom space are the materials needed.

Support
Jane Rago is available to write the longer report in summer 2011 for reasonable compensation.
Critical Thinking & Civic Engagement: Campus Collaboration in First-Year Seminars

Overview

The development of discipline-specific three-credit first-year seminar courses will address our students’ need for academic orientation, campus orientation, civic engagement, and intellectual inquiry. National research clearly demonstrates that schools with seminars not only retain students at a higher rate but also demonstrate increased academic strength of the students. Retention-Progression-Graduation (RPG) rates are positively correlated with student-faculty interaction, students feeling part of a larger community, students taking an academically rigorous seminar course, and students becoming civically engaged. The seminar is a systemic, comprehensive, and sustainable plan that will allow unity across campus—courses will be taught by faculty, staff, department chairs, deans, administrators, and will focus on campus and community involvement.

Introduction

We propose the development of several discipline-specific, academically-based 3-credit-hour First-Year Seminar (FYSE) courses at Armstrong, one to be required of each incoming student. Using the existing resource of our core classes that already reach most first-semester, first-year students, these academically diverse seminars will share the student learning outcomes (SLOs) of critical thinking and civic engagement. By embedding the seminar in the Core, we will use resources that we already have. We propose a model similar to that of the University System of California: using courses that we currently offer and staff, but sharpening a focus on the SLOs of critical thinking and civic engagement and tagging these courses as “FYSE” (in the same way that an honors course is tagged HONS), reducing the enrollment to 20-25, and offering sufficient sections across multiple disciplines each semester to provide incoming students a choice as to where they will take their required seminar. The FYSE version of various core courses will be taught on a rotating basis, and—in addition to discipline-specific course
content—will also strengthen student learning and knowledge of what being an educated
citizen means, both on campus and in the world. See “Methods” for more detail.

What is new with this proposal is that while these courses will maintain their
academic content, they will also fulfill the FYSE SLOs of critical thinking and civic
engagement through co-curricular activities. These classes will often be linked with a 1-
credit class, FYSE 1100—taught by professional student affairs staff, Lane Library
faculty, professors, adjuncts, deans, and administrators—that offers extended orientation
based on the academic content of the core class. If we need to be flexible, we can also
offer a 2-credit class, FYSE 1101 that contains extended orientation and critical inquiry
on a special topic/theme.

This type of required seminar course aligns well with several of the values that
underpin Armstrong’s Strategic Plan: (1) “promoting education that is student–focused,
transformative, experiential, and rigorous, leading to student success”; (2) offering
“teaching, mentoring, and scholarship”; (3) creating “community engagement through
outreach and service”; and (4) building a relationship with the city of Savannah. The
several iterations of the seminar course will also strengthen communication and
community at Armstrong, inspire collaborations between Academic Affairs and Student
Affairs, and unite the Library, Administration, Faculty, and Professional Staff. As the
intentional and collaborative focus on the first-year student creates a sense of unity on our
campus and inspires our students to become more connected to both Savannah and to our
academic community, our students will be more likely to continue their studies at and
graduate from Armstrong. Ultimately, Armstrong becomes a stronger institution of higher
education that is centered upon civic engagement, attracting dedicated students and staff.
Need

There are several needs at Armstrong for this QEP: it aligns with four of our values as outlined in the Strategic Plan; it addresses the conundrum of what class can offer the SLO of critical thinking; it offers a measurable solution to poor RPG rates; and it redresses our “silo-effect” of lack of communication and collaboration between university units, as well as within university units (among faculty, for example, there exists fragmentation between colleges). Perhaps most importantly, though, it addresses a direct need of our students: to be challenged and supported by our institution and to become truly educated as deeper thinkers and engaged citizens.

In its work since April 2010, the EMC (Enrollment Management Council) has concluded that one of Armstrong’s institutional weaknesses is fragmentation across campus. Communication between various departments and programs is often unclear, and while there are many services and initiatives available to our students, faculty and staff often don’t know about what’s happening in other campus areas, resulting in a silo effect wherein programs risk being either cross-purpose or redundant with other campus initiatives. The successful seminar will be integrative, collaborative, systemic, and sustainable across all of Armstrong. Every qualified employee will teach a class at some point—faculty, professional staff, administrators, deans, chairs, and the President. While each seminar will be different, this class will address campus fragmentation through its very form, offering students a coherent understanding of a liberal arts education.

Internal data shows retention is a problem between the first and second year (details will be in detailed report). After a year of focused analysis and discussion, Armstrong’s Enrollment Management Council has determined that this university needs
not only to help students understand what is needed to graduate in four years, but also to understand how to be a successful college student—both through the liberal arts core and within upper division courses. Many, if not most, of these issues can be solved through the implementation of a required seminar that includes both an extended orientation to university life as well as an academic, discipline-specific component of critical thinking and civic engagement. Working with ICE (Initiative for Civic Engagement), our increased focus on international studies, and our recent ad-campaign that unites town and gown, we can use our rich community of Savannah as well as our diverse and vibrant campus activities to get our students involved in deeper, transformative learning. Overwhelmingly, research shows that students who are involved, and who feel part of a community, stay to graduate. NSSE, as well as our institutional research, offers much more data which will be incorporated in the final and detailed report.

When we examine national RPG research, we see overwhelming evidence that student success is largely determined during the first year (Upcraft & Gardner 1990; Noel, Levitz & Saluri 1985, Tinto 1993). Leading theorists Upcraft and Gardner, after 25 years of research, identify ten “Beliefs Necessary for Freshman Success”: “Institutions have an obligation to support and enhance the first year”; “The key to first year success is involvement”; “Faculty involvement is vital to first year success”; “The freshman seminar is a proven and effective way of enhancing student success.” They continue to argue that the seminar “can be the glue that holds together and solidifies all efforts to enhance FY academic and personal success” (Upcraft et al 5). There is conclusive and substantial data that supports the theory of a seminar’s success at Armstrong: One of the most extensive and respected systems for evaluating the success of the first-year seminar
is that at the University of South Carolina, where retention research has been conducted continually since 1972. “Freshman taking University 101 have achieved a higher sophomore return rate than nonparticipants for fourteen consecutive years... the differences in return rates of seminar participants and nonparticipants have ranged from .9 to 7.2% annually” (Fidler 215). These findings are even more dramatic when one considers that participants have frequently been less qualified, based on SAT scores and high school rank (Fidler 216).

Several studies, that span decades, have similarly concluded that FY seminars can be the site from which to address many FY issues that impact RPG rates and student success as a whole. “The results here lend support to the conclusion that, on the whole, freshman seminars are a positive influence on retention” (Fidler 221). An examination of national retention findings reveals two logical reasons for these results: 1) “The quality of the relationship between student and professor is of critical importance to student satisfaction with the campus (Pantages & Creedon 1978, Milem, Berger & Day 1997)” (Fidler 221). 2) “Integration of the freshman into the campus social system is vital to retention (Tinto 1985, Terenzini & Pascarella 1977, Meyer & Zucker 1989, Tierney 1992; Whitman, Spendlove & Clark 1984)” (Fidler 221). Anderson (1985) has described specific strategies for promoting student persistence: Nearly all of the suggestions he offers can be implemented through a carefully designed FY seminar (Fidler 221).

Tinto’s now-famous theory of student departure (1993) has achieved national recognition for being a thorough and comprehensive study, using research and data culled from a twenty-six year focus. One of his findings reads, “A majority of all leaving takes place in the first year” (Strayhorn). Furthermore, “Principles of retention have been
recognized and activities/programs established; however, the match of societal expectations and organizational conformity that would place *staying in college* on par with *going to college* has failed to achieve an equally institutionalized sense of value” (Milem 240, emphasis mine). In order for the seminar to work, it needs to be an intentional and coordinated effort among ALL units of campus:

One. . . conclusion around retention as an inadequately institutionalized feature of higher education asks whether the trappings of college and university efforts to retard departure tend to be just that—i.e., symbolic efforts to publically legitimize through a demonstration . . . with little that extends deeply into the structures and lifeways of the [school]. Much of the student welcoming, support, and intervention structure of the typical university tends to be rather marginalized, inhabited by staff who must engage in ongoing battles to integrate . . . their services into the core culture. (Milem 241)

For a further reading on existing literature, see Appendix.

**Methods**

Every fall semester several first-year courses from core areas A, B, C, D, E, and Physical Education will be designated as a seminar class and tagged as FYSE (much like an HONS course). For example, sections of ENGL 1101, HIST 1111/1112, BIOL 1107, CHEM 1151/1151/1211 will be tagged with FYSE. Those tagged courses—with enrollments limited to 20-25 students—will retain discipline-specific content but the faculty will deliver that content using methods that foster critical literacy and civic engagement. It is estimated that an instructor will teach a tagged-core class every three or four years, thus rotating across the curriculum in classes we currently offer and staff. Faculty will maintain their regular teaching load and compensation. When their course is tagged with FYSE, or when required to teach a tagged course, the course will be part of their teaching load and will also be counted as service to the university.
These courses will be linked with the 1-credit FYSE 1100, a course that will be taught by qualified professional staff, Lane Library faculty, deans, department heads, administrators, and faculty. FYSE 1100 offers a supplemental credit to the seminar-tagged core class, using the academic content of the core class as a basis for extended orientation: study skills, time management, campus resources, community involvement. If needed, FYSE 1101 can offer a supplemental 2 credits that uses the core class as an academic base from which to offer extended orientation, as well as offer deeper critical inquiry into the theme/topic/subject/content of the core class. This could be an exploration for the discipline itself, or it could be interdisciplinary in its focus. Using a ‘special topics’ approach will keep the interest to teach these courses high, as there exists freedom to teach one’s academic/research interests.

The development of this seminar program involves a culture change for Armstrong, but research shows that after campus integration, seminar classes become competitive and sought-after. Until this integration and popularity solidify, faculty and staff development is vital for successful implementation. Each Fall semester, those teaching the tagged core classes and FYSE 1100 will participate in Learning Communities to collaborate and plan their courses for the following Fall Semester. Resources such as community contacts and pedagogical theories will be made available.

Student Affairs staff will teach the FYSE sections as part of their job, as will deans, department heads, and administrators on a rotating basis of course-load and shared service to the university. Similarly, a faculty’s regularly assigned core class will periodically be designated as a seminar course, which will count as Service in the APAR (Annual Professional Activities Report). Additionally, any faculty who teach FYSE 1100
will do so at an overload pay. Ideally, there would be a small incentive offered to those who teach any component of the seminar as we develop and launch this initiative: either monetary or as a credit or course-release.

Materials needed would include classroom space for FYSE 1100; a database of community connections and opportunities in Savannah; and Faculty Development support for the initial Faculty Learning Communities. The First-Year Experience team, the Initiative for Civic Engagement, Faculty Development, Advisement, and the Navigate team will help in coordinating the phase-in of the First-Year Seminar, but the QEP is, ultimately, a collective endeavor by all parts of the university. This is the strongest aspect of the QEP—its scope can include all students and university employees.

**Expected Outcomes**

All seminar courses will share two SLOs: critical thinking and civic engagement. Our students will become academically stronger as they engage in critical inquiry. The intellectual rigor of the seminar course will promote deeper liberal arts learning and have a positive impact on student success. The seminar class will connect our students with the community of Savannah as we promote civic engagement and the students understand and reflect on practices of citizenship. Students will gain field-specific knowledge in real-world environments and understand the practices of citizenship and service. The seminar class will use critical thinking to explore on-site learning, either on campus or in the community as the students apply and exchange knowledge between the classroom and field. These seminars will further connect Armstrong with the local community and strengthen ties within the Armstrong community. Students will be critical thinkers, better prepared intellectually, socially, and academically for their tenure at Armstrong. Colby
et al writes, “Academic disciplines embody values that shape students’ perspectives and frames of reference, even though these assumptions are often unexamined and thus invisible” (Colby 11). Our seminars will critically examine each discipline as it relates to the larger community. Students will demonstrate civic engagement and be better prepared to lead engaged, educated lives after graduation—as they become conscientious citizens. All seminar courses will require participation in a campus or community event/service, and then the student will analyze the co-curricular event in a final, written project that relates the academic content of the course to experiential learning—thus combining critical thinking with civic engagement.

Although less quantifiable as SLOs, other integral expected outcomes are the strengthening of the Armstrong community; a boost in morale; and the opportunity to continually create and implement learning opportunities, open communication and collaboration for faculty, staff, and administration—a true shared governance in our mission to our students. This collaboration will foster campus collegiality and interdisciplinary connections by unifying the campus in a common endeavor.

Finally, this QEP comes from both our work on the EMC and also from a faculty learning community. After reading Educating Citizens we agreed that civic engagement, combined with critical thinking and a focus on our first year students, will address campus fragmentation as we advocate for a continuing culture change at Armstrong, one of integration and collaboration, intellectual inquiry across disciplines, and academic rigor for students, faculty, and staff.
Assessment Plan

We will pilot the Faculty Learning Communities fall 2011 and the core FYSE classes fall 2012. As we pilot the program, we will assess seminar students and general student population for RPG, GPA, & satisfaction comparisons. Our data sources will include BANNER and student/faculty surveys. We will also identify standardized assessments such as ETS’s iCritical Thinking. Student-projects might also produce presentations that could be shared in an Armstrong-sponsored, peer-reviewed Civic Engagement Symposium.

An interdisciplinary committee will develop instruments to measure SLOs for critical thinking and civic engagement. These will be demonstrated in the analysis assignment in all seminars. For example, the written analysis of the co-curricular event can address some of the following questions: How does learning extend beyond the classroom? What makes an engaged citizen? How do you define yourself in relation to your community? How can Armstrong improve its service to Savannah? Define and discuss the importance of a liberal arts education in the context of living in a democracy. The connections between the assessment and the expected outcomes will be clear: as our students become critical thinkers and civically engaged, they will become academically, socially, and politically stronger; their level of discourse will elevate our entire academic community; and they are more likely to succeed in their majors and thus graduate.

Feasibility

Because this QEP heavily relies on what already exists, the expenses will be minimal. Expenses will include release-time for Student Affairs staff and Lane Library faculty to teach a FYSE 1100; overload pay for faculty who choose to teach the FYSE
1100 in addition to their regular course load; a small stipend for faculty development to those who teach a seminar-core class as this initiative launches; and the need for enough part-time faculty to cover the reduced class size for the discipline-specific seminar class sections. Redirection of resources in this context means people work together across campus and a general focus is on being a student-first institution dedicated to our students’ success, rather than a large price-tag.

This QEP does not change any programs of study. It does not require new courses, as the FYSE 1100/1101 classes are newly created versions of AASU 1100/1101, and the FYSE-tagged core classes already exist in the core—so this does not affect the core. The content of a seminar-tagged core class will be expanded to include the co-curricular assignment and emphasis on the seminar SLOs; otherwise, the content remains the same.

We have support from the academic side of Armstrong. This proposal comes after three years of research. Last fall the EMC recommended the required seminar as an initiative to improve RPG rates, and we presented a proposed 2-credit FYSE in open forums to all four colleges and the Library. This QEP is a direct result of faculty feedback, as we sought to address the concerns created by our original 2-credit FYSE course, rather than 3-credit discipline-based courses. Even with the problems apparent in the 2-credit model we presented, the faculty responded in overwhelmingly supportive ways.

Campus Survey Results

SA = Strongly Agree  A = Agree  N D/A = Neither Disagree nor Agree
D = Disagree  SD = Strongly Disagree
Q 2: A first-year seminar should be required of all first-year students . . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College or Other Designated Group</th>
<th>SAA</th>
<th>ND/AD</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library (3)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Arts (29)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Professions (16)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (21) (w/1 not answered)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science &amp; Technology (23)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals (92) (1 not answered)</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*I disagree unless it can be made part of the core then I would switch this to agree)

Summation of Comments & Concerns Across Colleges & Library: See Appendix B

Most Common Narrative Threads (2): 1) Great idea in principle—are we ready for this at Armstrong? 2) This will only work if it is in Core. (Oft-cited suggestion—Area B)

This QEP is the result of examining the two primary concerns of faculty—

integrating the seminar into the already existing core, and demanding across-campus collaboration. After attending the annual First-Year-Experience conference, we concluded that the embedded 3-credit FYSE tagged courses in the core would address the concerns across campus.

Other Schools with Approved QEPs that focus on civic engagement, critical thinking, and/or First Year student success:

2007

Christopher Newport University, Newport News, Virginia  Enhancing Critical Thinking through First-Year Seminars

College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina  Going Further Faster: The College of Charleston First-Year Experience

Hollins University, Roanoke, Virginia  First-Year Seminars: Shaping Women’s Voices for the Twenty-First Century

Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, Georgia  Global Learning for Engaged Citizenship
Mary Baldwin College, Staunton, Virginia  Learning for Civic Engagement in a Global Context

Piedmont College, Demorest, Georgia  Cultivating Curious Minds: Critical Thinking across the Curriculum

University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky  Ideas to Action: Using Critical Thinking to Foster Student Learning and Community Engagement

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia  Enhancing Student–Faculty Engagement

2008

Bethel College, McKenzie, Tennessee  Improving Critical Thinking: A Plan for Quality Enhancement

Centenary College of Louisiana, Shreveport, Louisiana  Experiential Learning Focusing on Career, Culture, and Community

Dallas Baptist University, Dallas, Texas  Service Learning

Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina  First Year Writing Seminars

Francis Marion University, Florence, South Carolina  Expanding Student Horizons through Real World Connections

Instituto Tecnologico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, Monterrey, Mexico  Ethics and Citizenship Education: Our Commitment

Norfolk State University, Norfolk, Virginia  R.E.A.S.O.N: Creating Coherent Pathways to Develop Critical Thinking Skills in Students

Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, Alabama  The First-Year Experience Begins with Orientation to Academic Success Using Innovative Strategies

2009

Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee  Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum (CTAC)

Florida A & M University, Tallahassee, Florida  Enhancing Performance in Critical Thinking

Instituto Centroamericano de Administracion de Empresas, Alajuela, Costa Rica  Critical Thinking for Action
Kentucky State University, Frankfort, Kentucky  Academics with Attitude: Building the Foundation for Student Success

Oglethorpe University, Atlanta, Georgia  Fostering a Culture of Engaged Learning for First Year Students

Our Lady of the Holy Cross College, New Orleans, Louisiana  Preparing Students for Success Program

Shenandoah University, Winchester, Virginia  Going Global: First Year Seminar

Southern Polytechnic State University, Marietta, Georgia  Engaged Communities: Engaging Entering Students through Learning Communities

University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Florida  Community-Based Transformational Learning

1 The other six beliefs are: “Institutions can intentionally and successfully help FYs achieve their academic and personal goals; Involvement is enhanced by interaction between FYs and others in the academic community; Institutions must take into account the racial, ethnic, age, and gender diversity of FYs; FYs should be treated with dignity and respect; Institutions should have very deliberate goals for FYs; There are very specific and proven ways of enhancing FY success, if there is an institutional commitment to doing so” (Upcraft et al 4-5).

Appendix A
Select Bibliography


Keup, Jennifer R., & Stolzenburg, Ellen Bara (eds). The 2003 Your First-Year College Year Survey: Exploring the Academic and Personal Experiences of First-Year


Skipper, Tracy L., & Argo, Roxanne, (eds). Involvement in Campus Activities and the Retention of First-Year College Students. (Monograph No. 36). Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for the First-Year Student and Students in Transition. 2003


Tinto, V. Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition. (2nd ed.) Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993


Appendix B

Summation of Comments & Concerns Across Colleges & Library:

14  Unconditionally supportive

25  Suggestions for content of course

17  University/College Concerns—Core, Staffing, Cost, Time

3   Unconditionally opposed

Representative Comments

University Concerns—“where in curriculum? Needs to be core. Area B? Who teaches? This can’t dilute already overly-taxied programs? Everybody has to be ‘all in’ for this to work— are we really ready for this? Engineering? Must be part of faculty load, not an addition; Funding”

Course Content—“needs to be academically rigorous, quality of course depends on who’s teaching it—faculty development needed; can certain test scores exempt students out? Collaborative teaching is incentive for faculty; two one-credit seminars—one general and one discipline specific—into core; 1, 2, or 3 credit?; Themes are the way to go; Class must teach decision making skills”

Opposition—“insulting to students w/ high SAT scores, and who are already motivated and strong—could be a waste of time—what about honors students?; Issues with a credited course that teaches how to find library and how to pay parking tickets”

Support—“excellent plan; Great idea, would love to teach; It will benefit students, faculty, and the college; Much needed here; Efforts to strengthen the connections between students and AASU and students and the disciplines would be helpful”
Proposal for a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

Armstrong + Information Literacy = Lifelong Learners

Submitted by:
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doug.frazier@armstrong.edu

April 4, 2011
The focus of this QEP proposal is integrating information literacy (IL) into the Armstrong curriculum. Information literacy is the ability to find, evaluate, analyze, synthesize, and use information ethically and legally to meet specific needs. It is critical thinking about information, how it is created, where and how to find it, how to know if it’s trustworthy, how to build on it, and how to present it. IL has been called “a new liberal art” (Shapiro, 1996) and a “neglected core competency” (Weiner, 2010). Armstrong students need to acquire IL abilities to succeed academically and to support critical decision making in their working and personal lives (Rollins et al. 2009, 465).

Twenty-five years ago, college students used sources relatively unfamiliar to them to find information. Bibliographic instruction, as it was called, involved teaching students how to use a few easily-distinguished tools: the library catalog, general and subject-specific periodical indexes, and standard reference works like encyclopedias and directories. Finding information available outside the library required surmounting various obstacles, so such information was relatively scarce.

Students today are intimately familiar with the primary information-locating tool, an internet-connected personal computer (Ibid., 454). These “digital natives” have grown up using computers and searching Google, and they tend to be very confident in their ability to find information independently. Though much more information is easily available today, students’ actual ability to find the information they need, especially for academic work, often lags behind their perception of their own skills (Holman 2011, 24; Gross 2007, 347), and many do not understand what kind of information they need for their research assignments (Holman 2011, 20).
The introduction of the internet into students’ academic lives has not been problem-free. Easy access to huge amounts of information coupled with electronic cutting and pasting has led to a rise in plagiarism. A Rutgers University study of 18,000 students on 23 campuses found that 38% had “engaged in one or more instances of cut & paste plagiarism using the internet” (Muha, 2003). Nearly half did not regard the practice as dishonest. Wang and Artero’s survey of 647 students in 2005 found that 21% thought there was nothing wrong with copying from the internet, and another 15% were undecided (2005, 76). Anecdotally reports from Armstrong faculty indicate that plagiarism is a problem here as well.

Beyond plagiarism concerns, recent surveys of students’ knowledge, abilities, and practices reinforce the need for inclusion of IL in the higher education curriculum. The Educational Testing Service administered the ICT Literacy Assessment to 6,300 students in 2006 and found that many were lacking in IL knowledge. When judging websites for objectivity, authority and timeliness, “only 49 percent of test-takers identified the one website that met all criteria” (Katz 2007, 36). Students also had difficulty recognizing an appropriate research question for a specific assignment, using search strategies to reduce the number of irrelevant results, and limiting points made in a presentation to those that were relevant to the topic (Ibid.).

A 2009 Project Literacy study of students’ information seeking behavior found that nearly all turned to their assigned reading first when doing research for a course. Searching Google was their second preference; over 90% reported using it for research related to an assignment. Almost as many reported using scholarly research databases, which is good news. (Head and Eisenberg 2009, 18). Still, in examining students’
research methods, the authors found that “nearly all the students in our sample had
developed an information-seeking strategy reliant on a small set of common information
sources” (Ibid., 3). The authors go on to say that students seldom varied in their search
routines and almost never consulted with librarians. A similar pattern appeared in a 2010
survey, which found that while college students say they value accuracy and
trustworthiness in sources, their behavior indicates a preference for speed and
convenience. Students believe that

personal knowledge and common sense can determine credibility [of
sources]. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of students use Wikipedia and 93%
use search engines for finding online information. Just over half use the
library Web site (57%) (OCLC 2011, 55).

Armstrong students exhibit some of the same patterns. On the 2007 LIBQUAL+
survey, students were asked how frequently they used three types of resources: 1.) library
resources on library premises, 2.) library resources via the library web page, 3.) Google
or similar search engines. Students could respond “Daily,” “Weekly,” “Monthly,”
“Quarterly,” or “Never.” Students favored Google, etc. by a wide margin (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Daily or Weekly Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Materials in Library</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Web Site</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google or Other Search Engine</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1

Senior students reported Google use at a significantly higher level (p<.05) than first-year
students, even though presumably many of these advanced students had been advised
repeatedly to use books and peer-reviewed articles for their studies.

Examination of library circulation statistics reinforces the view that students
strongly prefer non-print materials, possibly to the point that they avoid using high
quality print resources in favor of whatever can be retrieved easily from the comforts of home. Among Armstrong students graduating in calendar year 2009, 49% borrowed 5 or fewer items over the course of their studies at Armstrong, including items placed on reserve by instructors; 28% never borrowed anything at all.

Results from the 2008 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) offer another, somewhat more complex perspective on IL at Armstrong. NSSE has established benchmarks for several behaviors related to engagement; these benchmarks gather results of related survey items into categories, like “Level of Academic Challenge” (LAC) and “Active and Collaborative Learning” (ACL). LAC in particular has several component questions directly related to IL. Armstrong’s LAC results are close to the median score when compared with other institutions in the same Carnegies class (Masters-L), suggesting that Armstrong students are getting IL instruction on a par with many other institutions. On the other hand, seniors at institutions ranked in the 90th percentile in student engagement scored significantly better (p<.001) than Armstrong students, and the effect size, i.e. the degree of difference, was moderate (-0.41). Armstrong seniors were also significantly behind the high-engagement schools on the ACL benchmark, though that effect size was smaller at -0.37. Given Armstrong’s vision of becoming a selective institution of choice, these statistics might indicate areas that need attention.

To sound a positive note, on five NSSE questions about students’ cognitive activities, Armstrong students show significant IL activity. Students were asked the degree to which their coursework emphasizes analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, applying, and integrating information. For these cognitive activities that exemplify
critical thinking about information (Paul and Nosich, 1993), Armstrong seniors’ mean responses were significantly higher (p<.001) than those given by the first-year students, with effect sizes ranging from 0.28 to 0.52 (table 2).

**Mean scores (unweighted)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1st year</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
<th>Effect size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesizing</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

(1=Very little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Very much).

These data give a strong indication that Armstrong students perform cognitive tasks in areas central to IL, and that they perform these tasks more often as they progress through their studies. On these measures, Armstrong seniors compare favorably to their peers at Masters-L and Masters-M selective and very selective institutions.

Two caveats are in order. First, these results are self-reported experiences, not assessments of abilities. Second, other NSSE measures raise doubts about the level of engagement in these IL activities. NSSE asks students how often they have examined their own views on an issue, tried to understand another’s views better, and learned something that changed their understanding of an issue. These questions correspond to Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) IL standard three, which specifies that information will be incorporated into one’s knowledge base and value system (ACRL 2000). The differences between Armstrong’s first-year and senior students on these measures are very small, and in fact there is no statistical difference between the two groups on learning something that changed one’s views (table 3).
Mean scores (unweighted)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st year</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
<th>Significant change (p&lt;.05)</th>
<th>Effect size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examined own views critically</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tried to understand another's views</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned something that changed views</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3
1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often

Like the NSSE measures discussed earlier, these ratings are self-reported, and they too may be inaccurate. Students may have made subtle changes in their thinking as a result of things they have learned without being aware of it, or they may be reluctant to admit changing long-held beliefs. Nevertheless, the results in Table 3 do not suggest that these IL-linked thinking processes increase in frequency as Armstrong students progress toward graduation.

Reports from librarians and faculty in the disciplines indicate that many, perhaps most, Armstrong students do receive instruction in IL. On the other hand, IL is not included in the General Education Outcomes (computer literacy does not count), and while it may be included in some departmental learning outcomes, overall its implementation is spotty. For a given course with multiple sections, some instructors will ask librarians to make presentations on finding and using scholarly information, some prefer to do it themselves, and some choose to devote that time to other material. With roughly 30% of freshmen and 15 to 20% of seniors reporting that they seldom or never engage in IL learning activities (NSSE 2008), it is apparent that IL instruction is not reaching everyone.
This proposal does not seek to introduce Armstrong to information literacy. Clearly, IL teaching and learning is already happening here. The QEP’s purpose would be to build a framework around current activities so that IL instruction becomes intentional and systematic institution-wide, and so that students are assessed on IL and results are used to improve instruction. As George D. Kuh, founding director of the Center for Postsecondary Research (home of NSSE), and Robert M. Gonyea have written, “students who perceive that their campus emphasizes information literacy gain more in this area, net of other influences” (2003, 268).

**Methods**

In this early state of the QEP process, the specific methods for advancing IL among our students have not been chosen, and they really cannot be until and unless the University decides to move forward with IL. Any methods chosen must involve partnerships with librarians and teaching faculty, because teaching faculty are in the best position to address the problems students have with IL. Head and Eisenberg found that “defining a research inquiry is the fundamental research competency for completing college course assignments—yet it stymied over two-thirds of the students in our sample.” (2010). Many of the difficulties students have with research stem from difficulty understanding “the nature and scope of a research assignment and what it required from them” (Ibid.). Helping students address these problems requires knowledge of the discipline and an established teaching relationship with the students.

While we have not settled on an implementation method, we do have a model in mind. We envision a three-phase plan for systematically including IL in the Armstrong
curriculum for most students. In phase one students in entry-level required courses, like Eng 1101, Eng 1102, Hist/Poli Sci 1100, and/or FYE, would receive introductory level instruction presented by instructors and/or librarians. Phase two would include specific IL outcomes in some core courses selected from areas B through E. Colleges and departments would have flexibility in determining which courses would have IL components and what to include. The third phase would add IL learning outcomes to the majors. The IL outcomes included here would be at a higher order of thinking than the basic material presented earlier and would be more specific to the discipline. The focus would be on integrating and synthesizing information from several types of sources into student work, like capstone projects, and on presenting discipline-specific information effectively.

The learning outcomes for first-year students would emphasize the basics: how to find articles, how to find books, the difference between scholarly and popular literature, the difference between specialized and general resources, and perhaps most important, what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. Instruction would be presented by librarians, departmental faculty, online tutorials, or some combination of the three. Librarians would also assist in designing assignments that would assess what students had learned. We plan to test some ideas for instruction at this level in Fall of 2010, when one librarian will teach an FYE class on IL in coordination with an English 1101 class. Experience and assessment from this pilot project will help us plan for future instruction.

In the discipline-specific core courses, students would get additional instruction from librarians on search strategies, information types, evaluating information, and documenting sources. Librarians would also work with interested faculty to design
assignments, assist students, assess student work, and deliver instruction sessions. Instructors would work with students on developing and narrowing search topics and on the goals of scholarly research, the meaning and importance of peer review, and ways to avoid accidental plagiarism. In this phase of the IL plan, it would be important to choose the area where students will get their IL instruction, so that it is not repeated in every core course. Focusing on one area, perhaps Area B (Ethics & Values and Global Perspectives), would cover most students, but the colleges and the teaching faculty may prefer a different approach. Implementing phases one and two would ensure that nearly every student who completes Armstrong’s core would get some instruction and assessment in IL in at least two classes.

The third phase of IL instruction would take place in the major courses, with the methods and courses involved to be determined by the departments. Our sense is that much of the IL instruction that takes place at Armstrong is happening at this level, particularly in majors that require a capstone project or are otherwise writing-intensive. Librarians could introduce subject-specific databases and useful reference works and websites in this phase. Librarians could also be assigned to individual students as research coaches who could give feedback and direction as students work through their projects. Teaching higher order tasks, such as synthesizing new information from different sources, would be the domain of the teaching faculty.

Developing this project in three phases would allow us to implement it gradually over five years. The first year we would concentrate on introducing the basic IL concepts in composition, history/political science 1100, or FYE classes. In the second year we would add IL into selected core courses. By the third year some students who have
received IL instruction as part of this plan will enter their major, and by the 4th year many more will. During years 4 and 5 all phases would be in operation and assessment would be ongoing. This piecemeal strategy gives us a chance to see what works and to make changes as we go, learning from our mistakes without having to rethink the entire program.

The IL literature is replete with examples of good assignments for individual or classroom use. Some examples are creating a concept map for a topic, evaluating a Wikipedia article using published criteria and writing a short essay about it, or finding government statistics (Burkhardt and MacDonald 2010). These assignments reach well beyond library tours and scavenger hunts to get students thinking about information issues. Many also involve group work and take a constructivist approach toward learning.

To promote faculty involvement and start pilot initiatives in IL, Armstrong could make some internal grants available, modeled after the Teaching and Learning grants we give now. These grants could pay for course releases, allowing faculty to spend time developing IL teaching and assessment techniques, re-designing a course, or some other activity related to teaching IL. Grants could also support travel to other institutions with strong IL programs or allow faculty to attend IL conferences. Allowing the criteria for faculty tenure and promotion to include work on IL projects would also stimulate interest and participation.

An IL initiative would not succeed without preparation. Teaching faculty, librarians, and administrators would need to invest in the project. Other institutions have achieved this by establishing IL learning communities, bringing in experts to teach workshops on IL instruction, visiting other institutions that have implemented an IL QEP
successfully, and piloting new ideas. The project would need a coordinator, or perhaps two co-coordinators, drawn from the faculty and given release time. A committee with members drawn from the library and the colleges would make decisions on policies and procedures and oversee assessment.

**Learning Outcomes**

The committee guiding the project would specify the desired learning outcomes, which would be selected or adapted from the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Standards for Information Literacy. The ACRL standards urge faculty and librarians to work together, using the outcomes as guidelines “in developing local methods for measuring student learning in the context of an institution’s unique mission.” (ACRL, 2000). Use of the ACRL Standards is virtually a “best practice” among librarians, and they are approved by accrediting bodies (Samson 2010, 202).

The ACRL learning outcomes number over eighty, too many to list here, but below are some examples. The entire list is appended to this proposal.

1.1.b. Develops a thesis statement and formulates questions based on the information need.

2.2.a. Develops a research plan appropriate to the investigative method.

3.1.b Restates textual concepts in his/her own words and selects data accurately.

3.2.c Recognizes prejudice, deception, or manipulation.

5.2.f Demonstrates an understanding of what constitutes plagiarism and does not represent work attributable to others as his/her own
Assessment.

Several valid and reliable instruments designed to assess students on the ACRL learning outcomes are available: *The Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills* (SAILS) developed at Kent State University, *The Information Literacy Test* from James Madison University, *The Research Practices Survey* developed by a consortium of liberal arts colleges and currently hosted by the Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) Consortium, and the Educational Testing Services *iCritical Thinking Assessment*, formerly the *iSkills Assessment*. Most of these assessment tools are copyrighted, so sample questions are not readily available. The HEDS *Research Practices Survey* is the exception. Its use is governed by a Creative Commons license, so a copy is appended to this proposal.

In addition to these tools in wide use, the extensive literature on assessment of IL contains many locally developed assessment tools. For example, these assessment questions from Wartburg College link directly to ACRL learning outcomes.

**Outcome 1.1.b, "Develops a thesis statement and formulates questions based on the information need."**

A student approaches the reference librarian and says, “This summer was too hot. I wonder if it is because of global warming?”

What might be the thesis statement of this student’s paper?

A. It was too hot this summer, and I think it was because of global warming.
B. Global warming is causing the average temperature of the earth to rise, which could have disastrous effects on the ecosystems of the planet.
C. Did global warming cause abnormal heat around the planet?
D. Watch out for giant squids this summer; they now take up more space than humans because of global warming.
E. This paper will be about the effects of global warming.
Outcome 1.1.c “Explores general information sources to increase familiarity with the topic”

Where should you begin your search for information on global warming?

A. A book located through iPac, the Vogel Library online catalog
B. A web site found on the internet
C. A journal article from EBSCOhost's Academic Search Premier online database
D. An overview entry from Encyclopedia of Environmental Sciences, copyright 2006
E. An entry from Wikipedia

(Kirk, 2007)

As an added means of assessment, NSSE and Libqual+ data would provide corroboration of progress in the QEP. NSSE, as mentioned earlier, has questions directly related to IL outcomes, and using it to chart progress on IL initiatives comes at no additional cost to the institution. If Armstrong decided that NSSE does not deal specifically enough with IL, we have the option of adding supplementary IL questions that NSSE tested in 2007. Libqual + is primarily an assessment of library service quality, but it includes some questions about library use that are relevant to IL. Libqual + is not currently administered on a regular schedule, but it could be administered yearly at relatively little cost.

Feasibility

Estimated Project costs, annual

- Coordinator. Release time for 1 FTE faculty position, $80,000 including benefits, est.
- Instruction/Reference librarian. Additional position to handle increased instruction load. $60,000, incl. benefits.
• Internal grants. 5 per year, course releases. $15,000/year

• Assessments $6,500 est., depending on which assessment tools are chosen.

• Student assistants (2) for coordinator, 19hrs/week, $5,400

• 10% contingency fund, $16,690.00

• Total annual estimate: $183,590

One time costs

• Laptop cart with 30 laptops for classroom instruction, $30,000 (tech fee funding?)

• Presenters’ fees for faculty workshops, etc. $15,000

• Contingency 10% $4,500

• Total $49,500

Changes to the Current Curriculum

We do not envision adding a separate IL course requirement to the core. IL is already addressed in varying degrees in many if not all the programs at Armstrong, so we should not need to offer new courses. Changes would be necessary to the established learning outcomes for the core curriculum and for some core classes. Learning outcomes for some courses in the majors would probably have to be modified as well.

Whether there is widespread support for making changes to accommodate an IL QEP we do not know. Academic administrators, including Dean Barrett, Asst. Dean Finlay, and Asst. Dean Bergin, have been largely supportive of the idea of advancing IL, (though not necessarily as a QEP) and faculty in several disciplines have spoken to us about the need for better IL among students. The University Curriculum Committee
would have to approve some changes, and possibly the Faculty Senate as well. There would be costs to pursuing this program, but the same will be true for any QEP Armstrong selects. Anything that enhances the quality of education at this will require change, and meaningful change is rarely free or easy.

**Participation by other units of the University**

With information literacy closely linked to writing skills, any IL program would have to involve the composition program in LLP. Also, because this program would directly involve teaching, Faculty Development should take part in the planning and administration. The Writing Center would also be a natural candidate for collaboration. Support from ITS would be needed for the mobile computer lab and for general information technology support. Participation by Student Services would be necessary for planning and executing co-curricular activities. The Faculty Development Committee, which already reviews proposals for teaching and learning grants, would be the natural choice for choosing recipients of IL teaching grants.

**Information Literacy QEPs in SACS states.**

These are SACS member institutions that have done or are doing Information Literacy programs for their QEPs. In cases where the wording of the program titles was ambiguous, I checked the details to make sure IL was at the core.

• Southwestern Adventist University, *Improving Research Skills and Writing Through Information Literacy*, 2007.


• Lincoln Memorial University, *LINC-on: Learning is Now Connected (Information Literacy)*, 2009.

• River Parishes Community College, *Knowledge is Power: Improving Students’ Information Literacy Skills*, 2009.

• Belmont Abbey College, *PILOT: Promoting Information Literacy Over Time*, 2010.


References


Muha, Dave. New study confirms internet plagiarism is prevalent.  


Appendix A

Association of College and Research Libraries

Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education

Standards, Performance Indicators, and Outcomes

Standard One

The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed.

Performance Indicators:

1. The information literate student defines and articulates the need for information.
   
   **Outcomes Include:**
   
   a. Confers with instructors and participates in class discussions, peer workgroups, and electronic discussions to identify a research topic, or other information need
   
   b. Develops a thesis statement and formulates questions based on the information need
   
   c. Explores general information sources to increase familiarity with the topic
   
   d. Defines or modifies the information need to achieve a manageable focus
   
   e. Identifies key concepts and terms that describe the information need
   
   f. Recognizes that existing information can be combined with original thought, experimentation, and/or analysis to produce new information

2. The information literate student identifies a variety of types and formats of potential sources for information.

   **Outcomes Include:**
   
   a. Knows how information is formally and informally produced, organized, and disseminated
   
   b. Recognizes that knowledge can be organized into disciplines that influence the way information is accessed
   
   c. Identifies the value and differences of potential resources in a variety of formats (e.g., multimedia, database, website, data set, audio/visual, book)
   
   d. Identifies the purpose and audience of potential resources (e.g., popular vs. scholarly, current vs. historical)
   
   e. Differentiates between primary and secondary sources, recognizing how their use and importance vary with each discipline
   
   f. Realizes that information may need to be constructed with raw data from primary sources

3. The information literate student considers the costs and benefits of acquiring the needed information.

   **Outcomes Include:**
Appendix A

a. Determines the availability of needed information and makes decisions on broadening the information seeking process beyond local resources (e.g., interlibrary loan; using resources at other locations; obtaining images, videos, text, or sound)
b. Considers the feasibility of acquiring a new language or skill (e.g., foreign or discipline-based) in order to gather needed information and to understand its context
c. Defines a realistic overall plan and timeline to acquire the needed information

4. The information literate student reevaluates the nature and extent of the information need.
   Outcomes Include:
   a. Reviews the initial information need to clarify, revise, or refine the question
   b. Describes criteria used to make information decisions and choices

Standard Two

The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.

Performance Indicators:

1. The information literate student selects the most appropriate investigative methods or information retrieval systems for accessing the needed information.
   Outcomes Include:
   a. Identifies appropriate investigative methods (e.g., laboratory experiment, simulation, fieldwork)
   b. Investigates benefits and applicability of various investigative methods
   c. Investigates the scope, content, and organization of information retrieval systems
   d. Selects efficient and effective approaches for accessing the information needed from the investigative method or information retrieval system

2. The information literate student constructs and implements effectively-designed search strategies.
   Outcomes Include:
   a. Develops a research plan appropriate to the investigative method
   b. Identifies keywords, synonyms and related terms for the information needed
   c. Selects controlled vocabulary specific to the discipline or information retrieval source
   d. Constructs a search strategy using appropriate commands for the information retrieval system selected (e.g., Boolean operators, truncation, and proximity for search engines; internal organizers such as indexes for books)
   e. Implements the search strategy in various information retrieval systems using different user interfaces and search engines, with different command languages, protocols, and search parameters
   f. Implements the search using investigative protocols appropriate to the discipline

3. The information literate student retrieves information online or in person using a variety of methods.
   Outcomes Include:
   a. Uses various search systems to retrieve information in a variety of formats
   b. Uses various classification schemes and other systems (e.g., call number systems or indexes) to locate information resources within the library or to identify specific sites for physical exploration
Appendix A

c. Uses specialized online or in person services available at the institution to retrieve information needed (e.g., interlibrary loan/document delivery, professional associations, institutional research offices, community resources, experts and practitioners)
d. Uses surveys, letters, interviews, and other forms of inquiry to retrieve primary information

4. The information literate student refines the search strategy if necessary.
   
   **Outcomes Include:**
   a. Assesses the quantity, quality, and relevance of the search results to determine whether alternative information retrieval systems or investigative methods should be utilized
   b. Identifies gaps in the information retrieved and determines if the search strategy should be revised
   c. Repeats the search using the revised strategy as necessary

5. The information literate student extracts, records, and manages the information and its sources.
   
   **Outcomes Include:**
   a. Selects among various technologies the most appropriate one for the task of extracting the needed information (e.g., copy/paste software functions, photocopier, scanner, audio/visual equipment, or exploratory instruments)
   b. Creates a system for organizing the information
   c. Differentiates between the types of sources cited and understands the elements and correct syntax of a citation for a wide range of resources
   d. Records all pertinent citation information for future reference
   e. Uses various technologies to manage the information selected and organized

**Standard Three**

The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.

**Performance Indicators:**

1. The information literate student summarizes the main ideas to be extracted from the information gathered.
   
   **Outcomes Include:**
   a. Reads the text and selects main ideas
   b. Restates textual concepts in his/her own words and selects data accurately
   c. Identifies verbatim material that can be then appropriately quoted

2. The information literate student articulates and applies initial criteria for evaluating both the information and its sources.
   
   **Outcomes Include:**
   a. Examines and compares information from various sources in order to evaluate reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, and point of view or bias
   b. Analyzes the structure and logic of supporting arguments or methods
   c. Recognizes prejudice, deception, or manipulation
Appendix A

d. Recognizes the cultural, physical, or other context within which the information was created and understands the impact of context on interpreting the information

3. The information literate student synthesizes main ideas to construct new concepts.
   Outcomes Include:
   a. Recognizes interrelationships among concepts and combines them into potentially useful primary statements with supporting evidence
   b. Extends initial synthesis, when possible, at a higher level of abstraction to construct new hypotheses that may require additional information
   c. Utilizes computer and other technologies (e.g. spreadsheets, databases, multimedia, and audio or visual equipment) for studying the interaction of ideas and other phenomena

4. The information literate student compares new knowledge with prior knowledge to determine the value added, contradictions, or other unique characteristics of the information.
   Outcomes Include:
   a. Determines whether information satisfies the research or other information need
   b. Uses consciously selected criteria to determine whether the information contradicts or verifies information used from other sources
   c. Draws conclusions based upon information gathered
   d. Tests theories with discipline-appropriate techniques (e.g., simulators, experiments)
   e. Determines probable accuracy by questioning the source of the data, the limitations of the information gathering tools or strategies, and the reasonableness of the conclusions
   f. Integrates new information with previous information or knowledge
   g. Selects information that provides evidence for the topic

5. The information literate student determines whether the new knowledge has an impact on the individual’s value system and takes steps to reconcile differences.
   Outcomes Include:
   a. Investigates differing viewpoints encountered in the literature
   b. Determines whether to incorporate or reject viewpoints encountered

6. The information literate student validates understanding and interpretation of the information through discourse with other individuals, subject-area experts, and/or practitioners.
   Outcomes Include:
   a. Participates in classroom and other discussions
   b. Participates in class-sponsored electronic communication forums designed to encourage discourse on the topic (e.g., email, bulletin boards, chat rooms)
   c. Seeks expert opinion through a variety of mechanisms (e.g., interviews, email, listservs)

7. The information literate student determines whether the initial query should be revised.
   Outcomes Include:
   a. Determines if original information need has been satisfied or if additional information is needed
   b. Reviews search strategy and incorporates additional concepts as necessary
   c. Reviews information retrieval sources used and expands to include others as needed
Appendix A

Standard Four

The information literate student, individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.

Performance Indicators:

1. The information literate student applies new and prior information to the planning and creation of a particular product or performance.

   Outcomes Include:
   a. Organizes the content in a manner that supports the purposes and format of the product or performance (e.g. outlines, drafts, storyboards)
   b. Articulates knowledge and skills transferred from prior experiences to planning and creating the product or performance
   c. Integrates the new and prior information, including quotations and paraphrasings, in a manner that supports the purposes of the product or performance
   d. Manipulates digital text, images, and data, as needed, transferring them from their original locations and formats to a new context

2. The information literate student revises the development process for the product or performance.

   Outcomes Include:
   a. Maintains a journal or log of activities related to the information seeking, evaluating, and communicating process
   b. Reflects on past successes, failures, and alternative strategies

3. The information literate student communicates the product or performance effectively to others.

   Outcomes Include:
   a. Chooses a communication medium and format that best supports the purposes of the product or performance and the intended audience
   b. Uses a range of information technology applications in creating the product or performance
   c. Incorporates principles of design and communication
   d. Communicates clearly and with a style that supports the purposes of the intended audience

Standard Five

The information literate student understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally.

Performance Indicators:

1. The information literate student understands many of the ethical, legal and socio-economic issues surrounding information and information technology.

   Outcomes Include:
   a. Identifies and discusses issues related to privacy and security in both the print and electronic environments

Appendix A

b. Identifies and discusses issues related to free vs. fee-based access to information
c. Identifies and discusses issues related to censorship and freedom of speech
d. Demonstrates an understanding of intellectual property, copyright, and fair use of copyrighted material

2. The information literate student follows laws, regulations, institutional policies, and etiquette related to the access and use of information resources.

   Outcomes Include:
   a. Participates in electronic discussions following accepted practices (e.g. "Netiquette")
b. Uses approved passwords and other forms of ID for access to information resources
c. Complies with institutional policies on access to information resources
d. Preserves the integrity of information resources, equipment, systems and facilities
e. Legally obtains, stores, and disseminates text, data, images, or sounds
f. Demonstrates an understanding of what constitutes plagiarism and does not represent work attributable to others as his/her own
g. Demonstrates an understanding of institutional policies related to human subjects research

3. The information literate student acknowledges the use of information sources in communicating the product or performance.

   Outcomes Include:
   a. Selects an appropriate documentation style and uses it consistently to cite sources
   b. Posts permission granted notices, as needed, for copyrighted material
HEDS Research Practices Survey

This 15-minute survey explores the experiences and opinions of college students concerning academic research. Its purposes are to (1) study students’ research habits, (2) use these findings to improve the ways we help students develop their research skills, and (3) determine what changes occur in research abilities as students progress through their academic careers.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and there are no penalties if you decide not to participate or if you choose to skip any questions. All of your responses will be kept strictly confidential. This means that at no time will your response to any question be publicly linked with your name or with any other identifying information.

In completing this survey you are giving permission for your responses to be used for research, and you understand that your institution agrees to keep your identity and your responses confidential.

For most of the questions below, you will be asked to select the response that best represents your experiences or opinions. A few questions will ask you to “check all that apply.” The last question asks for a brief response in your own words.

Your Experiences with Research

1. How often in the past academic year did you use resources from each of the following kinds of libraries (whether in person or on the Internet) for course assignments, research projects, or other academic purposes?

   (3) (2) (1) (0)

   a. Public or community library o o o o
   b. College or university library o o o o

Response options:

(3) Once a week or more
(2) Once or twice a month
(1) A few times a year
(0) Never

2. People use libraries for many reasons. In the past academic year, which of the following was your MOST FREQUENT reason for using a library?

   o Recreation or other non-academic purposes (leisure reading, checking out music or videos, checking e-mail, etc.)
   o Conducting research for course assignments or projects
   o Doing other academic work (studying, doing homework, doing a group project, etc.)
   o Other
   o I did not use a library in the past academic year
Appendix B

3. In the past academic year, did an instructor or librarian talk with one or more of your classes about how to use library resources, including Internet resources?

- Yes
- No

4. How many assignments, papers, or research projects have you completed in the past academic year that required you to include at least three sources in a Bibliography, References, or Works Cited list?

- Five or more
- Three or four
- One or two
- None

5. Which of the following PRINT sources have you used for research in the past academic year? Check as many as apply.

- Library books
- Encyclopedias, almanacs, dictionaries, etc.
- Academic or research journals
- Newspapers or magazines for the general public
- Other
- I did not use any print sources for research in the past academic year

6. Which of the following ONLINE sources have you used for research in the past academic year? Check as many as apply.

- Google, Yahoo Search or other general Internet search engines
- Online journals, magazines, newspapers or encyclopedias
- Online library catalog
- Online booksellers (such as Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com, etc.)
- Online indexes or databases (such as EBSCO, JSTOR, Expanded Academic ASAP, etc.)
- Google Scholar
- Other
- I did not use any online sources for research in the past academic year

7. Which of the following have you used in the past academic year to organize or manage the information you gathered for your research projects? Check as many as apply.

- Paper folders, files, or note cards
- Computer folders or files (My Documents, Microsoft Word files, etc.)
- Online tools (bookmarks, blogs, MySpace, etc.)
- E-mail
- Bibliographic management software (Endnote, Refworks, ProCite, etc.)
- Other
- I did not use any tools for organizing or managing research information
8. In the past academic year, when you were given research project assignments, how often were you required to use a specific format (such as APA, MLA, Chicago, or some other style) for the sources in your bibliography?

- Almost always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never/not applicable

9. In the past academic year, when you were working on research assignments, how often did you seek help or advice from each of the following?

a. Teachers or professors
b. Librarians
   - Five or more times
   - Three or four times
   - Once or twice
   - Never

c. Parents or other adult family members
   - Almost always
   - Often
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely
   - Never/not applicable

d. Friends, classmates, or siblings
   - Almost always
   - Often
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely
   - Never/not applicable

e. Writing labs, writing centers, or help groups
   - Almost always
   - Often
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely
   - Never/not applicable

f. Help screens, online tutorials, or other electronic resources
   - Almost always
   - Often
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely
   - Never/not applicable

10. Over the course of the past academic year, how often did you talk with a librarian about a research project you were doing?

- Five or more times
- Three or four times
- Once or twice
- Never

11. Which of the following best describes the way you pace your work on a research assignment?

- I do most of the work soon after an assignment is given.
- I divide the work pretty equally across the available time.
- I do a little work soon after the assignment is given, but do most of it toward the end.
- I do all of the work just before or on the due date.
Appendix B

Your Attitudes and Beliefs About Research

12. How challenging are the different components of research for you? Please rate the difficulty of each of the following activities in your experience as a researcher, using the scale below:

a. Narrowing your topic o o o o o
b. Developing a list of sources to investigate o o o o o
c. Revising your search strategy as necessary o o o o o
d. Developing your main argument or thesis statement o o o o o
e. Writing the paper o o o o o
f. Documenting your sources o o o o o

Response options:
(4) Very easy (“I can usually do this easily without assistance from a teacher, librarian, or peer tutor”)
(3) Somewhat easy (“I can usually do this with some initial assistance”)
(2) Somewhat difficult (“I need a fair amount of help to do this, but I can manage”)
(1) Very difficult (“This is hard for me even when I’ve received help”)
(0) No experience (“I have not had any assignments requiring this kind of activity”)

13. How challenging is it for you to identify and retrieve sources? Please rate the difficulty of each of the following activities:

a. Using a library catalog o o o o o
b. Using an electronic index (Academic Search Premier, ProQuest Research Library, etc.) o o o o o
c. Using a print index o o o o o
d. Using an Internet search engine o o o o o
e. Physically locating sources in a library o o o o o
f. Obtaining materials through inter-library loan o o o o o

Response options:
(4) Very easy (“I can usually do this easily without assistance from a teacher, librarian, or peer tutor”)
(3) Somewhat easy (“I can usually do this with some initial assistance”)
(2) Somewhat difficult (“I need a fair amount of help to do this, but I can manage”)
(1) Very difficult (“This is hard for me even when I’ve received help”)
(0) No experience (“I have not had any assignments requiring this kind of activity”)

14. How challenging is it for you to use sources? Please rate the difficulty of each of the following activities:

a. Determining whether a source is appropriate for an academic project o o o o o
b. Deciding what information from your sources to integrate into your project o o o o o
c. Knowing when to document a source o o o o o
d. Knowing how to document a source o o o o o

Response options:
(4) Very easy (“I can usually do this easily without assistance from a teacher, librarian, or peer tutor”)
(3) Somewhat easy (“I can usually do this with some initial assistance”)
(2) Somewhat difficult (“I need a fair amount of help to do this, but I can manage”)
(1) Very difficult (“This is hard for me even when I’ve received help”)
Appendix B

(0) No experience (“I have not had any assignments requiring this kind of activity”)

15. In general, how much do you enjoy doing research?

- Very much
- Quite a bit
- Some
- Very little

16. People have different beliefs about the research process. Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following belief statements:

   a. Skillful researchers know the best way to approach any research question. 0 0 0 0
   b. A course in research skills would be useful. 0 0 0 0
   c. When two researchers disagree, one of them must be wrong. 0 0 0 0
   d. Successful researchers understand things quickly. 0 0 0 0
   e. Careful researchers can ultimately get to the truth. 0 0 0 0
   f. If a researcher cannot understand something within a short amount of time, she should keep on trying. 0 0 0 0
   g. Good research yields clear results; poor research yields ambiguous results. 0 0 0 0
   h. When it comes to research, some people are just naturally better at it than others. 0 0 0 0

Response options:
(1) Strongly agree
(2) Agree
(3) Disagree
(4) Strongly disagree

Your Familiarity with Research Terms and Strategies

In this portion of the questionnaire, some of the terms and concepts may be familiar to you, but others may not. Please respond as accurately as you can, and feel free to use the “don’t know” response wherever appropriate.

17. Which of the following searches would retrieve the MOST results in an online search?

- movies OR films
- movies AND films
- movies NOT films
- movies INSTEAD OF films
- Don’t know

18. Which of the following is the correct way to truncate a search word?

- Typing in only the first syllable of the word as a keyword
- Combining search words with “and,” “or,” or “not”
- Using the * or ! symbol in place of the last few letters of the word
- None of the above
- Don’t know
19. You retrieve the following information from a library catalog search:

Gothic modernisms / edited by Andrew Smith and Jeff Wallace.  
Stacks PR888.M63 G67 2001 AVAILABLE  
xii, 232 p. ; 23 cm.  
Includes bibliographical references and index.  
English fiction -- 20th century -- History and criticism.  
Modernism (Literature) -- Great Britain.  
Modernism (Literature) -- United States.  
Gothic revival (Literature)  
Smith, Andrew, 1964-  
Wallace, Jeff, 1958-  

Which of the following would be the most efficient way to find a comprehensive listing of other books in the catalog on this topic?

- Identifying other books written by the same authors
- Examining the bibliography in the book
- Scanning the shelves where the book is located to see what books are nearby
- Searching again using the subject headings that most closely match your research topic
- Don’t know

20. Researchers must distinguish between academic journals and popular magazines. Which of the following statements is LEAST ACCURATE?

- Academic journal articles provide objective facts; popular magazine articles do not.
- Articles in academic journals usually include a list of references to other scholarly works; articles in popular magazines usually do not.
- The intended audience for academic journals is mainly other scholars; the intended audience for popular magazines is the general public.
- Authors and editors for academic journals are usually employed in higher education; authors and editors for popular magazines are usually employed by the for-profit media.
- Don’t know

21. You find the following entry in the References section of a recent article:


In what issue of Latin American Politics and Society will you find this article?

- Volume 2002, Number 44
- Volume 44, Number 1
- Volume 1, Number 145-153
- The issue cannot be determined
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22. For each of the following, indicate whether the item is an entire book, a journal article, or a portion of a book.


Response options:
(1) Entire book
(2) Journal article
(3) Portion of a book
(4) Don’t know

23. Researchers must distinguish between primary and secondary sources.

Which of the following statements is MOST ACCURATE?

o Primary sources are more scholarly than secondary sources.

o Primary sources are old; secondary sources are new.

o Primary sources examine subjects first-hand; secondary sources examine the findings of other scholars.

o Primary sources are more appropriate for academic projects than are secondary sources.

o All of the above are equally accurate.

o Don’t know

24. Which of the following is likely to yield the most comprehensive list of relevant scholarly articles for a research project?

o Searching an electronic index or database in a specific academic field (History, Biology, Music, etc.)

o Using a general Internet search like Google or Yahoo

o Paging through print volumes of an academic journal in a specific academic field

o Searching the library catalog

o All of the above are equally effective

o Don’t know

25. A peer-reviewed or refereed journal is BEST described as:

o A journal that publishes reviews of other articles

o A journal that publishes articles that have been approved by other scholars

o A journal that includes only articles written collaboratively by peers

o A journal that includes references for each article it publishes

o Don’t know

26. In a scholarly article or research paper, a citation is:

o A direct quotation from someone else’s written work

o Source information for any ideas or text from someone else’s written work

o The physical location of a source (book, journal, etc.)

o All of the above

o Don’t know
Appendix B

27. A citation is NOT required when:

- You are paraphrasing, rather than quoting, a source
- More than one source says the same thing
- You are describing your own findings or analysis
- All of the above
- Don’t know

Your Approach to Evaluating Sources

28. Among the challenges of research is determining whether a source is scholarly. Below is a list of source characteristics. For each characteristic, if this were the only information you had about a source, what conclusion would you draw about whether the source is likely to be scholarly?

If a source...

- Is available online
- Is translated from another language
- Is published in a peer-reviewed journal
- Is posted on a political blog
- Was recently published
- Has a lengthy list of references
- Was published by a university press
- Was published in Time, Newsweek or US News & World Report

Response options:
(1) Scholarly
(2) Non-scholarly
(3) Cannot be determined
(4) Don’t know

29. You are required to write a research paper for your American History class examining the roles of women in the American Civil War. An initial search turns up the following sources. Which one is LEAST likely to be appropriate for your paper?


30. On what basis did you select your response to the preceding question?

- Whether the source is likely to be scholarly
- How recently the source was published
- Whether the source was a print or Internet source
- The number of pages with information about this topic
- All of the above equally influenced my response to the preceding question
31. Suppose you have more relevant sources than you can use in a short research assignment. Which of the following is the best way to determine whether to use a particular source?

- Whether the source is a print or Internet source
- How recently the source was published
- How easily you can get the source
- Whether the source is scholarly
- Whether the author is highly respected
- All of the above are equally valid criteria for choosing among sources

32. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

33. What is your ethnicity? Check as many as apply.

- White/Caucasian
- African American/Black
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian American/Asian
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latino
- Other

34. Is there anything else about your research practices or attitudes that you would like your course instructors or campus librarians to know, or something specific you are hoping to learn about doing high-quality academic research? If so, please write a brief statement below: Thank you very much for taking time to complete this questionnaire!