Pursuit – A Journey of Research and Creative Expression
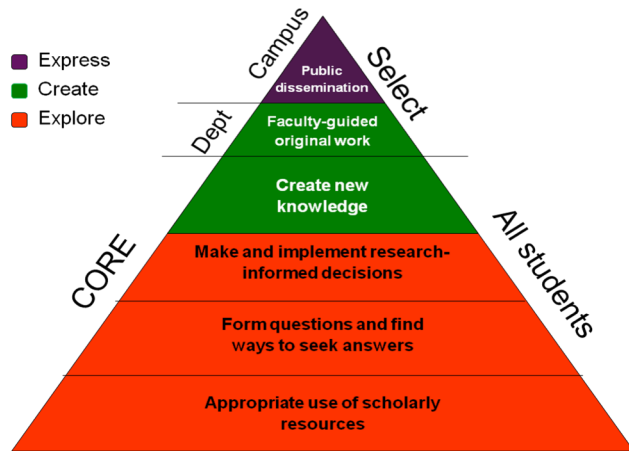
Goal 1 *Explore*--*Students will acquire information literacy competencies and skills at both the basic and more advanced research levels through exploration and inquiry*

The first Goal of *Explore* will be discussed in the next few pages as assessments for each course are described. The assessments for ***Explore*** are found in the General Education classes of CORE 110, CORE 210, and BCOR 310.

The QEP created a program in which (SLO 1.1) students will understand and appropriately use scholarly sources; (SLO 1.2) integrate knowledge to frame research questions and develop strategies to seek answers; and (SLO 1.3) analyze, interpret, and/or evaluate and implement research-informed decision.

SAILS Assessments. In order to assess student progress in achieving these outcomes, the Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS) was given to students enrolled in CORE 110 (Cornerstone) during the first three weeks of class and then repeated during the senior capstone experience. Scores for students entering in fall 2012 were utilized as pretest baseline scores and used in comparison to the scores of students enrolled in Capstone Experiences during the fall and spring of 2015-2016. Overall scores, standard error, and true group average scores for each course are compared in the chart below.

Table 1: SAILS-Overall Scores, Stand Error, and True Group Average Score

Pursuit Goal 1: *Explore*	SAILS Skill Sets	*Fall 2012* **CORE 110** **n=695**	Institution Type: Masters CORE 110 n=26,703	*2015-2016* **Capstone** **n=346**	Institution Type: Masters Capstone n=26,020
1.1.A **Determine Information needed**	1. Developing a Research Strategy	494 ± 4	503 ± 1	549 ± 6	511 ± 1
	2. Selecting Finding Tools	498 ± 5	507 ± 1	560 ± 7	516 ± 1
	3. Searching	464 ± 4	484 ± 1	532 ± 6	493 ± 0
	4. Using Finding Tool Features	506 ±6	530 ±1	555 ±8	535 ±1
1.1.B **Access and use information**	5. Retrieving Sources	488 ± 6	518 ±1	566 ± 8	523 ±1
	6. Evaluating Sources	473 ± 5	481 ±1	518 ± 7	477 ±1
1.1.C **Information use strategies**	7. Documenting Sources	444 ± 6	473 ±1	540 ± 8	492 ±1
	8. Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues	448 ± 5	466 + 1	519 ± 7	475 + 1

Comparisons in Table 1 are made in the following three ways:

(1) ***Comparison of CORE 110 to Capstone students****.* Scores on the 8 skills set improved significantly from entering students to senior-level students. After 3 years of taking CORE classes, post-test comparison data showed significant increases in the overall scores, with improvement in all skill sets. Despite mixed results in some other assessments, gains exhibited were overwhelmingly strong showing that students had been introduced, practiced, and had reinforced their information literacy scores in the years they were enrolled at ACU.

(2) ***Comparison of entering students in CORE 110 to entering students from institutions like ACU.*** The comparison group of entering students in CORE 110 in fall 2012 did NOT perform better than the Institution-type benchmark for entering students on **ANY** skill set. This provides an dismal snap shot of the information literacy skills for entering students at ACU and shows how much more unprepared they were. The comparison makes scores of pre- and post-test results even more significant when you consider the improvements gained.

(3) ***Comparisons of Capstone students to senior level students from institutions like ACU.*** Capstone students at Abilene Christian University performed BETTER THAN the similar institutions on **all** SAILS Skills Sets. This is the most significant result observed. ACU entering students went from performing lower in **all** skills sets to performing better on **all** skills sets in comparison to institutions like ACU.

Assessments of Goal 1 *Explore* student learning outcomes found in CORE classes.
Information Literacy skills are *introduced* in CORE 110, *practiced* in CORE 210, and r*einforced* in BCOR 310.

Table 2: CORE 110 Assessment Results
Percentages of Students Scoring 2.5 or Higher on a 4-Point Scale

CORE 110	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Obj. 1.1.A: Determine Information Needed	61%	56%	61.1%	84.8%	74.4%
Obj. 1.1.B: Access and use information	No assessment	67%	70.5%	84.8%	81.1%
Obj. 1.1.C: Information use strategies	40%	55%	80%	90.9%	91.1%

Note: the artifact for CORE 110 changed from a research paper after Year 1 to an annotated bibliography. With the new artifact and adapted rubric, scores from Year 2 to Year 5 showed fairly consistent improvement, **meeting all of the Acceptable Targets** (70% of samples score 2.5 or higher out of 4) and **most of the Ideal Targets** (80% of samples score 2.5 or higher out of 4). CORE 110 faculty met regularly to discuss curriculum and to brainstorm ways to improve teaching of information literacy skills. This course had embedded librarians who worked with each class to provide consistency in information literacy skills and assist students in making a connection to a librarian over their years at ACU.

Table 3: CORE 210 Assessment Results
Percentages of Students Scoring 2.5 or Higher on a 4-Point Scale

CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Obj. 1.1.A: Determine Information Needed	63.6%	75.0%	74.67%	85%
Obj. 1.1.B: Access and use information	No assessment	61.7%	72%	78.33%
Obj. 1.1.C: Information use strategies	70.5%	61.7%	66.67%	66.67%
Obj. 1.2.A: Describe relevant theories	63.6%	75.0%	74.67%	85%
Obj.1.2.B: Analysis applied to situation	63.6%	48.3%	57.33%	58.33%
Obj. 1.3.A: Evaluate information and its sources critically	50%	40%	57.33%	65%
Obj. 1.3.B: Use info effectively to accomplish a specific purpose	65.9%	55.0%	70.67%	66.67%

Results for CORE 210 from Table 3.   Objective 1.1.A, 1.1.B, and 1.2.A exhibited small but significant increases most years, making the **Acceptable Target** (70% of samples score 2.5 or higher out of 4) during the final year and with 1.1.A and 1.2.A making the **Ideal Target** (80% score 2.5 or higher out of 4) in the final year.

Year 5 exhibited some major improvements in Obj. 1.1.A *Determining information needed* and Obj. 1.2.A *Describing relevant theories*, but showed only slight gains in the other objectives. However, **all objectives Met or approached the Acceptable Targets** (70% of samples score 2.5 or higher) except for Objective 1.2.B *Analysis applied to situation*. Overall, students' thesis statements have improved and are clearly identifiable in most papers and significant gains have been made in student interpretation of findings in Objective 1.2.A.

Table 4: BCOR 310 Assessment Results
Percentages of Students Scoring 2.5 or Higher on a 4-Point Scale

BCOR 310	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Obj. 1.1.A: Determine Information Needed	36.7%	65.9%	61.7%
Obj. 1.1.B: Access and use information	43.3%	68.2%	58.3%
Obj. 1.1.C: Information use strategies	55.9%	69.7%	87.5%
Obj. 1.2.A: Describe relevant theories	51.7%	53%	46.7%
Obj.1.2.B: Analysis applied to situation	51.7%	51.5%	65%
Obj. 1.3.A: Evaluate information and its sources critically	52.0%	56.1%	50.8%

Results of BCOR 310 from Table 4. Assessment results begin in Year 3. The QEP calls for an **Acceptable Target** of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an **Ideal Target** of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. Overall, the assessment team noted the papers reviewed in Year 5 (2015-2016) were similar in quality to the Year 4 papers. Areas of increase or decrease were insignificant except for 1.1.C *information use strategies*. Scores from this learning objective have significantly improved in the three years of assessment, exceeding the Ideal Target the final year. Year 5 showed an increase in consistency in the prompts but research requirements varied by section.

Goal 2 *Create*-Obj. 2.1 Students prepare, present and assess the effectiveness of scholarly and creative products. The QEP created a program in which students demonstrate effective use of information skills through written communication; apply information to the planning and creation of a particular product or performance; and, demonstrate critical thinking as they develop produce, and evaluate a product or performance. These student learning outcomes are found in Capstone Experiences.

Table 5 Capstone Assessment Results
Percentages of Students Scoring 2.5 or Higher on a 4-Point Scale

Student Learning Outcomes	Capstone Experience	Year 4	Year 5
2.1.A Demonstrate effective use of information literacy skills through writing	Use of Sources to Answer Question	43.3%	78.3%
	Ethical and Appropriate Use of Sources	50.0%	76.7%
2.1.B Apply information to planning and creation of a product or performance	Organization or Structure	83.3%	88.3%
	Mechanics	83.3%	88.3%
2.1.C Demonstrate critical thinking as they develop, produce, and evaluate a product or performance	Purpose of Project	80%	91.7%
	Integrative Thinking	46.7%	71.7%

Results of Capstone assessments from Table 5. Research papers from Capstone Experiences were assessed for the first time in Year 4 (2014-2015) in the roll out of *Pursuit*. In the fall of Year 5, the assessment team met with faculty to share the results and discuss their understanding of the rubric and how papers were analyzed. All assessment outcomes improved from the Year 4 assessment. All **Acceptable Targets** (73% of samples score 2.5 or higher out of 4) were Met except for the target for *Integrative Thinking*, though it approached the Acceptable Target of 73%. The **Ideal Target** (85% of samples score 2.5 or higher) was Met in ½ of the outcomes.

Summary of all outcomes for the QEP are currently being prepared in the QEP Impact Report, a portion of the Fifth-Year Interim Report for SACSCOC.

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For more information:
Detailed information can be found on Yearly Assessment Reports for CORE 110, CORE 210, BCOR 310, and Capstone located at http://blogs.acu.edu/qep/