# Table of Contents

Introduction .............................................................................................................. 3
Data Analysis ............................................................................................................ 3
Research Questions .................................................................................................. 4-5

Demographic Profile ............................................................................................... 4-6
  Gender and College Classification ....................................................................... 5
  Racial and Ethnic Data ......................................................................................... 5
  Figure 1 .............................................................................................................. 5
  Citizenship and Country of Birth ....................................................................... 6
  Academic Majors ................................................................................................. 6
  High School Graduation ..................................................................................... 6
  Previous College Experience ............................................................................ 6
  Age ...................................................................................................................... 6

Standard I: Determines the nature and extent of information needed ................. 6-8
Standard II: Accesses needed information effectively and efficiently ............... 8-9
Standard III: Evaluates information and its sources critically .......................... 9-11
Standard IV: Uses information effectively ......................................................... 11-12
Standard V: Understands economic, legal, and social issues about information .. 12-14
Relationship with Faculty ...................................................................................... 14

Summary .................................................................................................................. 14-15
Introduction

The purpose of this report is to share key data from the UMBC Information Literacy Survey (UMBC Survey) for those students who indicated English as their department when taking the survey (n=55). Each of the percentages reported in this document will be based on the number of students who actually responded to individual questions, and not the total number who completed the entire survey, with the exception of the Demographic section. In addition, since some questions allowed students to select more than one response, some results will be reported based on the number of students responding to a particular question. For information on the survey’s methodology, background, research questions, recommendations, and future directions, please refer to the Executive Summary available at: http://aok.lib.umbc.edu/reference/informationliteracy/results.php3. The complete findings (raw data) are also posted on the Information Literacy Web site.

Brown Bags to discuss the survey findings will be held on Tuesday, November 18th, from 12:00 to 1:00 pm, and Monday, November 24th from 1:00 to 2:00 pm, in the A.O.K. Library & Gallery, 3rd floor, Administration Suite, conference room.

Data Analysis

Some of the survey findings confirmed the Task Force’s hypotheses on UMBC students. Seventy-four percent indicated that they “first learned to use the library” in primary and secondary school. More than 50% of those learned in grades K-8. These findings are consistent with published research that most people learn to use the library early in life, and use that same skill set throughout their academic career. Thirty five percent reported they first learned “to use the library on their own,” and a little over 20% learned to “use the library at the public library.” Very few of those surveyed (4.34%) reported they “first learned to use the library in college.”

Other findings were more surprising. For example, when asked about the importance of learning more about the library, 60 percent of those responding indicated that it was “very important” or “important.” Also surprising were the findings indicating their experiences using libraries and using the Internet. Only 25% selected “Whenever I use the library, I find what I want,” and 65% reported, “I can usually find what I want, but there are frustrations.” Fifty nine percent reported “Whenever I use the Internet, I find what I want,” and nearly 37% admitted, “I can usually find what I want, but there are frustrations.” Very few reported “The Internet is frustrating; I find it difficult to find the information I need (3%),” and, none said they generally avoid the Internet.”

When asked “What do you generally use libraries for?,” 24 students reported that they use libraries to “check out library books.” Eighteen students reported they use libraries to “search databases for articles,” 17 use them to “search the Internet,” and 17 use them to “check out items on reserve.” Nine students reported using libraries to “read e-mail/chat rooms/IM,” 8 “use word processing/spreadsheets/database programs,” 12 use libraries to “meet friends” only 4 use libraries to “sleep”. Three students submitted text responses and reported using libraries to study and because they “work there.”

When asked how they found out about the library’s Web site, 7 students reported they did not know the library had a Web site. Eight students reported they found out the information from library signs, while 12 reported from another student. Four students reported that they only learned about the library Web site after they took the survey. Eight students reported that they found out about the Web site from a friend, 3 from the UMBC Web site or directory, and 1 from an email or flier.
from their teaching assistants and professors and 16 found it on their own. Three students found out from their friends and colleagues.

On that same note, when asked about the frequency with which they use the Library’s Web site to complete course assignments, 44% indicated that they “don’t use the library’s Web site to complete assignments;” and 44% indicated that they “used it to complete some assignments.” For additional findings in this area, see the Relationship with Faculty section (p. 14).

Research Questions

Key responses to the Research Questions for this study are relevant for the English department. Please see the Executive Summary for the entire population at http://aok.lib.umbc.edu/reference/informationliteracy/results.php3 for the complete findings for the Research Questions

Research Question #4. To what extent are [UMBC] students unable to identify the basic elements of a bibliographic citation?

• In general, English students are able to identify the basic elements of a bibliographic citation. One hundred percent of the English students participating in the UMBC Survey correctly identified the author of the article, and 98% correctly identified the date and the title of the article. Ninety-five percent correctly identified the journal title, but fewer than 70% were able to correctly identify the volume of a journal, and less than 75% were able to correctly identify page numbers.

Research Question # 8. Do [UMBC] students who self-report a high level of confidence with computers perform well when responding to questions which represent information literacy skills?1

• Thirty two percent reported they were “very comfortable” “using library computer databases” and 44% were “comfortable.” Ninety two percent of those students surveyed in English courses were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” “using an Internet search engine.” Seventy-nine percent reported they were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” “accessing sources of information, including computer-based technologies;” however, when asked about using search techniques in databases truncation 19% used this technique very frequently or frequently, 18% used Boolean operator “OR” very frequently or frequently, and 14% used proximity operators very frequently or frequently.

---

1 The UMBC Survey asked students if they had used computers in libraries and asked about their comfort level with library computer databases. No questions were asked about their comfort level with computers in general.
The next section of this report will provide a demographic profile of the students who took the survey and were enrolled in English courses.

**Demographic Profile**

Although 427 individuals logged into my.UMBC.edu, the University’s portal, to begin the survey, only 424 submitted responses for questions. As noted previously, all participating students did not answer all of the questions. Of the 424 respondents, 13.91% (59) of those agreeing to take the survey selected English as their department. Fifty-five (12.97%) of those responded to survey questions. This demographic profile is based on the number of students who responded to survey questions.

**Gender and College Classification**

Fifty-six percent (31) of those participating in the survey were male, and nearly 44% (24) were female. The majority of those participating, nearly 78% (25), were freshmen, nearly 18% (6) identified as sophomore, and one reported their status as a junior (1). There were no seniors, master’s or doctoral level students. Two of those participating identified as transfer students.

**Racial and Ethnic Data**

Figure 1 shows the racial and ethnic breakdown of the population participating in the survey. The majority of those participating were Caucasian (56%), followed by Asians (23.6%) and Blacks (12.7%). Ethnic heritage is not necessarily related to country of citizenship, e.g., ‘Asian’ could mean either Asian American or Japanese.
Citizenship and Country of Birth

The majority of those participating in the survey (85%) identified as U.S. citizens, 9% identified as permanent residents, and 7% identified as holding visas. In addition to those who listed the U.S. as their country of birth, 4 different countries were listed. Foreign born students made up 7% of the population.

Academic Majors

The most frequently listed majors (5) were in the biological sciences. There were 4 pre-professional majors and 4 computer science/electrical engineering majors. Nearly 50% listed their major as undeclared or did not indicate a major.

High School Graduation

Forty three traditional freshmen graduated in 2003 and immediately enrolled at UMBC. This total includes 2 students who indicated they attended other colleges/universities prior to attending UMBC. Among those coming to UMBC, 30.9% (17) had taken the CEEB (Advanced Placement—College Entrance Examination Board) which consists of either the College Level Exam Program (CLEP) which allows students to test out of courses, or the Advanced Placement Test in high school.

Previous College Experience

Thirty (54.5%) students did not attend college prior to coming to UMBC; 14.5% (8) did attend college previously. Of those who did attend elsewhere prior to coming to UMBC, 9% (3) attended community colleges including Anne Arundel Community College (2), and Catonsville Community College (1); and 2 attended a college or university including Bowie State University (1), and Salisbury University (1).

Age

The majority of those surveyed in English, 71% (39) fell into the 20 and under age group. The next largest group, 18-20, made up 25% (13) of those participating.

The next section of this report will present, and discuss key findings from questions representing each of the Standard areas.

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

Key components of this Standard include defining and articulating a need for information, identifying a variety of types and formats of potential sources, considering the costs and benefits of acquiring the needed information, and reevaluating the nature and extent of the information need. All of the questions in the survey written for this Standard were attitudinal, none of the questions required students to demonstrate their skills.
The very first question asked students to indicate their comfort levels with a variety of skills associated with the research process. Two of the skills directly relate to Standard I, particularly the concepts of articulating an information need and identifying a variety of types of potential sources. Students were asked to indicate their level of comfort “formulating questions based on information needs.” Twenty-three percent of those responding to this question (n=48) selected “very comfortable,” and 58.33% selected “comfortable.” Very few students (2.08%) indicated they were “uncomfortable” with this skill and no students selected “very uncomfortable.”

Additionally, students were asked to indicate their level of comfort identifying potential sources of information. Ninety percent reported they were “very comfortable,” or “comfortable” with this skill. Minimal figures (2.08%) were reported for “uncomfortable” and no student selected “very uncomfortable.”

Another question asked students to specify their level of comfort when seeking information from a variety of sources, including search engines, a library Web page, a friend, a professor/TA/GSA, a faculty or class Web site, or the library. Overwhelmingly, students responded that they were most comfortable seeking information from a search engine, with nearly 94% selecting “very comfortable” or “comfortable.” The search engine receiving the most frequent mention (24) was www.google.com. Only one student indicated he or she was “uncomfortable” using a search engine. Comparatively, only 24.44% of the respondents felt “very comfortable” seeking information from a library Web page. This is worrisome considering the Web page for the Albin O. Kuhn Library & Gallery (UMBC Library), like most library Web sites, is an access point for over 180 subscription indexes and databases, the online catalog, and many other research tools. More students (71.44%) selected “very comfortable” or “comfortable” regarding seeking information from a library itself than from a library Web site (60.44%). Another telling comparison involves the responses to seeking information from a “friend” or a “professor/TA/GSA.” Nearly 25% responded that they felt “very comfortable” seeking information from a friend; and nearly 10 percent more reported they felt “very comfortable” seeking information from a professor, TA, or GSA (33.33%). This question did not specify the kind of information that was being sought, though, and it is believed that if the question had specified a type of information, e.g. information for research purposes, the responses may have been different.

Students were given a sample topic (violence in American high schools) and asked to indicate the order they would perform various steps when conducting research on this topic. In addition to an option for not taking a particular step, three of the steps involved the early stages of the research process that fall under Standard I. More than half (53%) of those responding selected “brainstorm the concept, using the terms of the topic” as their first step in the research process, but less than 6% indicated they would not take this particular step at all. Regarding the step to “formulate question(s) based on the information needed to begin the research,” 8.82% of the respondents selected this as their first step, 44% of the respondents selected this as their second step, and none of the respondents indicated they would not take this particular step at all. None of the students indicated that they would never use “reference material that provides an overview of violence and teenagers,” while 23 students selected this section as their second, third, or fourth step. It is refreshing to see that a great number of the students surveyed realize the value in using reference sources.
The Task Force was interested in learning about students’ understanding of the value of using a variety of types (such as primary and secondary) and formats (such as multimedia, database, Web site, or book) of resources. One question provided a list of 15 types of resources, excluding basic resources such as books and journals, and asked students to select those that they were familiar with/or might use in a research project. The list included resources that the Task Force believed to be underutilized in general as resources for undergraduate students, such as speeches and conference proceedings. Students were able to select as many types of resources that were applicable. The results were not surprising, with only 11 of the respondents selecting dissertations/theses, 5 selecting conference proceedings, 13 selecting manuscripts, and 17 selecting television/radio transcripts. Conversely, 38 selected Web sites, the most of any selection. The results of this question confirmed the authors’ theory that many excellent sources of information (most of which are easily accessible through the Library and via the Library’s Web site) are underutilized by undergraduates.

Students were also asked “To what extent do you feel comfortable asking your professors for assistance in locating resources to support your research?” Responses to this question demonstrate that most students are comfortable asking their professors for some basic research assistance, but most are not comfortable asking for in-depth consultation and some are not comfortable approaching their professors for assistance with research at all. Twenty three of the respondents selected “I feel comfortable asking my professors for a few recommended title/authors in the field,” while only 18 respondents selected “I feel comfortable setting up an appointment with a professor for in-depth consultation regarding resources.” Unfortunately, 8 students selected “I don’t feel comfortable asking professors for assistance in this area.”

**Standard II: The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.**

Standard II addresses the selection of appropriate research methods, including investigative retrieval systems (databases and catalogs); the construction and implementation of effective search strategies; and the retrieval of information in a variety of formats using a variety of classification schemes. The UMBC survey questions for this Standard focused primarily on the students’ knowledge of search strategy techniques, their ability to construct an effective search strategy, and their ability to identify citations. When asked to indicate their comfort level with two skills related to this Standard, 79% reported that they were “very comfortable,” or “comfortable” “developing successful search strategies;” however, 71% of those responding to a related question reported ‘infrequent’ or ‘never’ use of “Truncation,” 59% reported ‘infrequent’ or ‘never’ use of “Proximity operators,” and 71% reported ‘infrequent’ or ‘never’ use of “subject headings, descriptors, or some form of controlled vocabulary.” ‘Occasional’ use of “Proximity operators,” “Limiters,” and “Boolean operators” was reported by less than 30% of those participating, and significant percentages of ‘infrequent’ or ‘never’ use of other searching techniques included Boolean operator ‘OR’ (42%); and Boolean operator
‘NOT’ (51.2%). “Frequent” or “very frequent” use was reported for less than 17% for all searching techniques listed.

Eighty percent of those participating reported that they were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” “accessing sources of information, including computer-based technologies.” A related question provided 12 options and asked students to respond to “Where would you go or what would you do to find current information on the following topic?—‘Terrorism on college campuses.’” Students were not asked to rate the order, and were able to select as many options as were applicable. Overwhelmingly, students selected “Online—Internet” as the place they would go to find current information on this popular topic. This option was selected by 40 students. Thirty-one students selected “television news,” 26 selected “newspaper archives,” and 25 selected “magazines.” Fewer students would seek information from “friends/colleagues” (17), “librarian” (14), “faculty/professors” (14), “radio news” (15), and “television/radio transcripts” (12). Even fewer would consider accessing “abstracts and indexes (databases)—electronic” (10) and “abstracts and indexes—print” (7).

On the other hand, when asked when they would consult a librarian for assistance, 32 students reported they would when they “needed advice about where to look for information,” and 23 each would when “they didn’t know how to use an information source,” and when “they needed help choosing the best information source.” Nineteen students selected the “all of the above option,” and 3 students admitted they “didn’t know when they would consult a librarian for assistance.”

When given a list of citations and asked to identify what each citation referred to, on two separate occasions, less than 37% of those participating (n=41), correctly identified the citations for journal articles. Less than 85% correctly identified the citation for a newspaper (83%), a government document (73.17%), and a master’s thesis (82.92%), even though the newspaper citation listed The New York Times, the government document citation included the words, United States Congress as the author, and the thesis citation listed “master’s thesis.” Only 61% correctly identified a citation as representing a book, 22% correctly identified a book chapter, and 41.46% correctly identified a citation as representing a conference proceeding, even though the citation included the word “conference.”

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

Standard III focuses on the student’s ability to evaluate information and sources. The majority of the questions written for this Standard were designed to ascertain students’ perceptions of the reliability, credibility, and usefulness of resources and sources of information. Additional questions were developed to determine how students evaluate information.

In terms of evaluating information, nearly 71% of those participating reported feeling ‘very comfortable’ or ‘comfortable’ evaluating information. However, when asked to rate the usefulness of resources when doing research, on a scale of 1 to 5 where
1=least useful and 5=most useful, “published in a refereed journal” received a rating of #5 from only 11.76% of those participating (n=34); “written by a university faculty” received a rating of #5 from less than 10% (8.82%); and “theses and dissertations,” was not rated #5 by any student. “Available in a research library received the highest #5 rating with 41.17%, followed by “published in a textbook” (38.23%), and “indexed in a computer database” (26.47%). The majority of the responses, ranging in the 20th to 30th percentile, were rated at #3 and #4 for each of the categories, with the exception of “theses and dissertations,” which was rated #4 by 11.76%.

When asked if one could evaluate an article for bias before reading it, nearly 42% selected, “No. I need to read an article to find bias;” nearly a quarter (23.53%) selected “Yes. If the article is reporting research, it should be unbiased,” 8.82% selected “Yes. The abstract usually evaluates the article and notes any bias;” and 14.71% selected “I don’t know.” Only 11.76% selected the correct response, “Yes. The reputation of a journal publisher or author may indicate bias.”

When asked how they would choose the best five articles from a search of an electronic database that yielded 77 citations to journal articles, less than 40% (38.24%) reported they would “Read the abstracts and or review the subject/descriptors to find the articles most relevant to your topic.” More disconcerting is the nearly 21% who selected “All of the above” which also included “Select the most recent articles” (14.71%), and “Look for articles published in scholarly journals” (11.76%). No student picked the “Select articles with full text only” option.

In terms of students’ perceptions of reliable sources, a list of resources was provided to find out when students felt resources were reliable. Seventy-one percent reported that they would “always” consider “sources recommended by professors, librarians, and teaching assistants” reliable; 55% would “always” consider “sources by or recommended by scholars in the subject area” reliable. Nearly 65% (64.71%) each reported they would “sometimes” consider “sources found on the Internet,” “subject-related review articles,” and “personal interview” reliable. Nearly 30% would “always” consider “sources found on the Internet” reliable. Of note, 73.53% would “sometimes” consider “sources used by other students and colleagues” reliable.

Students were also asked to indicate, from a list of circumstances, when they would use an article located on the Internet in a research project. Twenty-nine students would use an article if it was “listed in the syllabus of a professor,” 28 indicated that they would use an article when the “article was written by a well-known scholar in the field; and 23 and 22 would use an “article available from a Web site ending in .edu and/or connected to a school, college or university,” and one “written by an individual with a Ph.D,” respectively. Eighteen students would use one “published as part of proceedings of a professional organization on their Web site,” and 15 would use an article if the “full text of article is available.” Only 1 student indicated he or she would not use an article located on the Internet under any of the circumstances listed.

In an effort to ascertain what sources and resources of information students believe are reliable and credible, the Task Force asked students which news resources they would consider credible for doing their research. Fifty-eight percent or more reported that World News Tonight with Peter Jennings/CBS Evening News with Dan Rather, etc” (58.82%), “MSNBC.com” (58.82%), “Cnn.com/Headline news.com (64.71%), and “CNN News/Headline News” (70.59%), “were “always” credible sources.
At least 53% or more reported that “Andy Rooney” (53%), “Black Entertainment Television news” (53%), “The Tonight Show” (58.82%), “Rush Limbaugh, et. al.” (67.65%), “The Daily Show with John Stewart” (61.76%), and “Saturday Night Live’s Weekend Update” (79.41%) were “never” credible sources. Interestingly, many of the mainstream news sources were only considered credible “sometimes” by more than 50% of those responding including: “Wolf Blitzer Reports” (50%); “Crossfire/Meet the Press, etc.” (53%); “Larry King Live” (58.52%); “60 Minutes/Dateline NBC/Primetime” (53%), and “The Today Show/Good Morning America/The Early Show” (55.88%).

In terms of credible print sources, students were asked to respond similarly to a list of print resources that they would consider using in their research. Forty-three percent or more felt that “Time or Newsweek” (64.71%), “The New York Post” (53%), and “The New York Times/The Washington Post/The Los Angeles Times/The Baltimore Sun” (64.71%) were “always” credible. The majority of the mainstream journals and publications listed were considered credible “sometimes” by 40% or more of those responding including “Ebony” (44%), “New York Post” (47%), “Rolling Stone/Vibe” (64.71%), “Sports Illustrated” (70.59%), “People” (70.59%), and “Entertainment Weekly” (58.82%). More than 55% “never” considered “The National Enquirer” (61.76%), “Ebony” (55.88%), or “Seventeen or Vogue” (58.82%) credible.

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

Key concepts for this Standard are the ability to organize information that has been acquired, and the ability to communicate that information effectively and efficiently to accomplish a specific purpose. In other words, it is important for students to be able to think critically about the information they have acquired, in order for them to be able to communicate it in some meaningful way. A number of questions in the survey pertained to this Standard. As was the case with Standard I, it should be noted that these questions did not require students to demonstrate skills; questions were strictly attitudinal in nature.

As noted previously, the very first question of the survey asked students to indicate their level of comfort with eight information literacy skills. The abilities to think critically and successfully problem solve are major components of information literacy. Students were asked to respond regarding their comfort levels when “using information in critical thinking and problem solving.” Almost seventy one percent (70.83%) of the respondents reported feeling “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with this skill. Twenty nine percent specified “neutral” or “uncomfortable.”

Students were also asked about their level of comfort when organizing information for practical application. Twenty one percent of the respondents were “very comfortable” with this skill, and 27% indicated they were “undecided/neutral.” Few students (8%) indicated they were “uncomfortable” or “very uncomfortable.” Another skill was integrating new information into an existing body of knowledge. Almost seventy percent (68.75%) said they were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with this skill. Twenty three percent selected “neutral,” and 8% “uncomfortable.”
In terms of the research process, students responded with the level of frequency with which they complete certain related tasks. Fifty percent of the respondents indicated that they “revise outline based on research findings” “very frequently” or “frequently.” Only 5.8% selected “never.” Slightly under eighteen percent (17.65%) indicated they “synthesize major points and concepts under outline headings” “very frequently,” while 44% reported doing so “frequently.” Slightly less than nine percent (8.8%) selected “never” for this skill.

A major part of Standard IV is if and how students “use information effectively for presentations and assignments.” A list of nine methods/formats were provided for students to select from and indicate whether they had had the opportunity to use them in their academic career. Students were able to select any of the responses that were applicable. The most commonly selected method was a “written research paper,” selected by 28 students. Two other selections that received a great deal of responses were “visual projects” (24), and “presentation using PowerPoint or other presentation software” (25). Fewer students indicated they had the opportunity to present their research in Web format (17) or an audio/visual format such as CD, DVD, or VHS, which received 8, 4, and 13 responses respectively.

In response to a related question which asked students which of the options, if given the opportunity, they would feel comfortable using, 28 students reported they would feel comfortable producing a “written research paper,” 20 students chose “visual project,” and 25 students selected “presentation using PowerPoint or other presentation software.” Only 16 respondents selected “presentation using non-technical methods (flip charts, overhead transparencies, etc.).” These responses indicate that students are quite comfortable using presentation software such as PowerPoint, and also that students are less comfortable presenting without technology, using only flip charts or overheads. Fifteen students indicated they were comfortable presenting their research findings as a Web page/site; and 8 respondents indicated that they would feel comfortable presenting using a CD, while 7 selected DVD and 11 selected VHS. It is unclear if the low number of responses is related to the technological skills needed to make/burn a CD, DVD, or VHS, or the act of presenting information using these mediums.

Standard V: 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.

Standard V focuses primarily on the student’s understanding of concepts such as privacy, security, censorship, copyright, fair use, and plagiarism.

In order to determine if students understood the concept of plagiarism, the Task Force allowed them to self-select their own common practices when developing a research project. Students were provided multiple options for selection. The majority of respondents did choose options that show an understanding of the research process. Twenty-one students each reported that they would “present a combination of reflection and opinions (theirs and the authors),” and “present a combination of reflection and opinions (theirs and the authors and previously read material)” when writing up.
information found for a research project or a research presentation. Twenty would “present the opinions of the author(s) verbatim in quotation marks.” Unfortunately, 13 students reported they would “present what they believe the author(s) said,” 12 students would “present what they thought their instructor wanted to hear,” and 2 would “only present their own opinions.”

A subsequent question directly introduced the concept of plagiarism and asked students to identify examples of plagiaristic activity from a list of choices. None of the students admitted that they “didn’t know” which options were examples of plagiarism, and 1 selected the “none of the above” option. The largest majority (31) selected “using phrases and sentences of others as if they were your own without giving credit (to the author).” The second highest (30) chosen option was “copying text written by someone else and using it without quotation marks.” The lowest (25) of the chosen options was “rewording someone else’s information and using it without giving credit (to the author).” Since all of the options provided were examples of plagiaristic activity, these results indicate that not all students participating in the survey understand fully how to use information legally in an academic environment.

Standard V also includes the concept of copyright. The Survey question addressing copyright introduced the concept and required students to respond to a list of examples as to whether or not they could legally use them on their own Web page without permission. The option that revealed the highest number of “No” responses (73%) involved scanning in text from a Harry Potter book. It is good to see that the majority of the students respect copyright laws in print, however, there was 1 student (3.3%) who did not see this as a violation of copyright, and 7 (23.33%) who selected the “don’t know” option. There were several options that created the least doubt in students (had the highest numbers of “No” responses), but still reveal that a portion of the students who don’t understand copyright violations. One example, “the theme song from Titanic by Celine Dion” revealed 61.2% who reported that it would be illegal to use it on their own Web page without permission. Since the enforcement of music downloading is strictly enforced on the campus, it seems unusual that 16% said “Yes” to using the Celine Dion song, and 23% admitted they “didn’t know.”

Question number 34 introduced the concept of fair use and asked students to determine if they could legally use the examples provided when preparing an assignment for class. The first option details quoting from an article without citing a source, a clear example of plagiarism. Only 68% responded that they could not do this legally; 16% of the respondents chose “Yes” believing that it was legal, and 16% indicated they “did not know.” When students were presented with the option to use a video clip from The Rosie O’Donnell Show as part of a class presentation on talk shows, 77% correctly identified that they could legally do this, for purposes directly related to the course of study. Due to the fact that 13% responded “No,” and less than 1% “didn’t know,” it is clear there is still confusion about fair use as it applies to students in a classroom setting. Other responses further reveal this uncertainty, such as the example of copying a reserve item “your professor” placed in the library. Only a slight majority (55%) responded “Yes” to this clear example of fair use; do the other 45% think they might be committing a crime when they, and their classmates, photocopy reserve items? Does it make a difference that the item in question was a book chapter placed on reserve by a faculty member?
An additional survey question asked students to identify correct citation behavior necessary to avoid acts of plagiarism. The majority of responses indicated that most students can identify instances that require citation, however, the number dropped by 8 or more responses when the example involved rewriting article research in their own words. This means that from 26 responses for citing “when you quote one sentence from the article, using quotation marks,” and 24 responses for “when you copy a whole paragraph,” responses dropped to 16 for “when you write it over in your own words.” This indicates that an unfortunate number of students may use research in their studies, but incorrectly represent that research as their own, having not taken into consideration that they must cite it as the work of others.

**Relationship with Faculty**

The UMBC Survey included several questions on the relationship between faculty and students. Faculty are in a key position to provide exposure to and experience in information literacy directly to students. In general, at UMBC, about one half of the faculty members who have been exposed to those students participating in the survey overall model good library use behavior. It should be pointed out that students were able to select more than one answer for this particular question.

Students were asked to consider their experience(s) with faculty in completing required assignments for courses. Six students reported that “Faculty member requires no use of outside materials for completing course assignments,” and 32 students reported that “Faculty member requires use of only lectures and assigned textbook(s) for completing course assignments.” Nineteen students reported that “Faculty member requires use of library to retrieve reserve materials,” and 17 reported that “Faculty member makes use of library materials (print and/or electronic) when presenting course material and lectures.” Twenty-one students reported that “Faculty member requires or suggests use of library materials (print and/or electronic) when assigning coursework,” and only 8 students reported that “Faculty member invites librarians to introduce course-related library materials (print and/or electronic).

Only 1 student reported that a faculty member had “Referred them to a specific librarian,” 11 reported a faculty member had “Encouraged them to seek a librarians’ assistance,” 12 reported that a faculty member had “taken their class to the library for a librarian-led tour/orientation,” and 8 reported that a faculty member had “taken their class to the library for one or more instruction sessions in the library and/or classroom.” More disconcerting is the 26 students who selected the “None of the above” category, indicating that their interaction with faculty had not resulted in exposure to model library use behavior.

**Summary**

The majority of the students participating in the survey from the English department were white, and nearly a quarter were Asian Americans. The majority were freshmen, born in the United States, age twenty and under. They graduated from high school in 2003 and had not declared a major at the time of the survey. Slightly over half
(56%) were male, and nearly 4% (3.64%) were transfer students. Including the United States, 5 countries were represented.

The findings indicate that students will seek information from the Web before they will go to other sources of information (such as the library). Particularly, students self-report very high comfort levels seeking information from a search engine. However, they report that they are more comfortable seeking information from the library itself than from the Library’s homepage. Findings also indicate that students underutilize a number of quality resources such as dissertations/theses, conference proceedings, and manuscripts.

The data shows that students over estimate their comfort levels with many skills represented in the survey. In particular, students indicated that they were very comfortable or comfortable developing successful search strategies, yet they were unfamiliar with basic search concepts such as Boolean operators, truncation, and controlled vocabulary. A significant number of the respondents had difficulty identifying citations for sources such as journal articles and book chapters.

Students indicated high levels of comfort with evaluating information. However, when presented with questions that allowed them to rate the usefulness of sources, several key forms of quality research, such as theses/dissertations and refereed journals, were rated lower than less scholarly resources. Many students could not identify that the reputation of the journal or author may indicate bias. When determining when they would use an article located on the Internet in a research project, the majority of responses showed positive results, but many respondents indicated they would use an article from a Web page ending in .edu. The concern is whether or not students understand the difference between personal/student Web pages housed on education Web sites and legitimate research. Seventy-one percent of the respondents reported that would always consider sources recommended by professors/librarians/TAs reliable; however, not all students reported feeling comfortable asking professors for research assistance.

The survey included a question about steps taken after gathering research. The majority of students indicated that they review their original research questions and determine if additional resources are needed and discard irrelevant information. However, results show that less than 10% are not comfortable integrating new information into an existing body of knowledge. In addition, other results show that students are less comfortable presenting their research findings using technological methods, such as PowerPoint (25) or a Web page (15), than as a written research paper.

When presented with questions relating to copyright and plagiarism, the majority of responses indicate that students understand basic legal issues in the use of information. However, there are a significant number of students who clearly cannot or will not apply basic principles of ethical information use in their role in the academic environment. Overall, students responded favorably to a question about how they used information for a research project, such as directly quoting a source and citing it. Although many responses were positive, 12 students who indicated that they would present what they thought their instructors wanted to hear, 2 would present only their own opinion when creating research projects. Also, a majority would use information without giving credit to the author/creator, and many would violate laws by placing copyrighted works on their personal web sites without asking permission.