Librarians’ Role in General Education:
Authentically Assessing
Information Literacy Skills
via English Composition Classes

Toni Carter  tcarter@auburn.edu
Instruction & Reference Librarian
Auburn University

• Most English Composition Classes Attend 3
  Information Literacy Sessions (there is a strong
collaboration between the Library Instruction
Program and English Composition Program)
• Learning Outcomes Based on ACRL’s
  Information Literacy Competency Standards
  for Higher Education
  • Focused on Critical Thinking Skills

Finding 1:
Students need more guidance in identifying
the important words in a thesis
statement/research question
Action Taken:
Librarians spend more time in class on
examples and practice
Finding 2:
Students stretch the definition of
synonyms and related terms
Action Taken:
Librarians stress quality or quantity of
synonyms and related terms in class
Finding 3:
Students struggle with developing realistic
topics/thesis statements/research
questions; this is not being covered by all
English instructors
Action Taken:
Librarians develop classes and online
module that focus on topic development;
this requires negotiation with English
instructors in order to spend an entire
library session on this outcome

Key Finding:
A considerable amount of disparity exists
among the English instructors on the
definition of a “scholarly” source.
Action Taken:
Librarians reexamine the scholarly/popular
paradigm and conclude that perhaps it is
time to move to an “evaluating ALL
sources” model. If English instructors
allow students to use the Web, or have
varying definitions of scholarly, librarians
must change lesson plans to meet the
needs of the students.