Project Summary

Title: Using a standardized test to assess information literacy skills of incoming freshmen.

Principal Investigators: Robert Flatley, Krista Prock, & Eloise Long, Rohrbach Library flatley@kutztown.edu

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) defines information literacy (IL) as "...the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information." It has been estimated that almost 800 Megabytes of stored information are produced per person, per year. Becoming information literate, then, can equip students to effectively use information during their college years and become independent lifelong learners. Furthermore, the importance of these skills is validated by the guidelines for integrating information literacy throughout the curriculum set forth by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

This project will assess the information literacy skills of 100 KU freshmen in the fall 2010 semester using the iCriticalThinking assessment instrument. The iCriticalThinking instrument measures a student’s ability to navigate, critically evaluate, and make sense of the wealth of information available through digital technology. The data will provide a foundation for examining and improving the current KU Information Literacy program. For example, KU librarians will now know if they should focus their teaching on evaluating sources or defining a research question or both. It will also be used to open a dialogue with local high school librarians, which will improve the KU Library Science curriculum for training future school librarians. Specifically, KU professors can share the findings with school librarians and collaborate on ways to meet shortcomings.