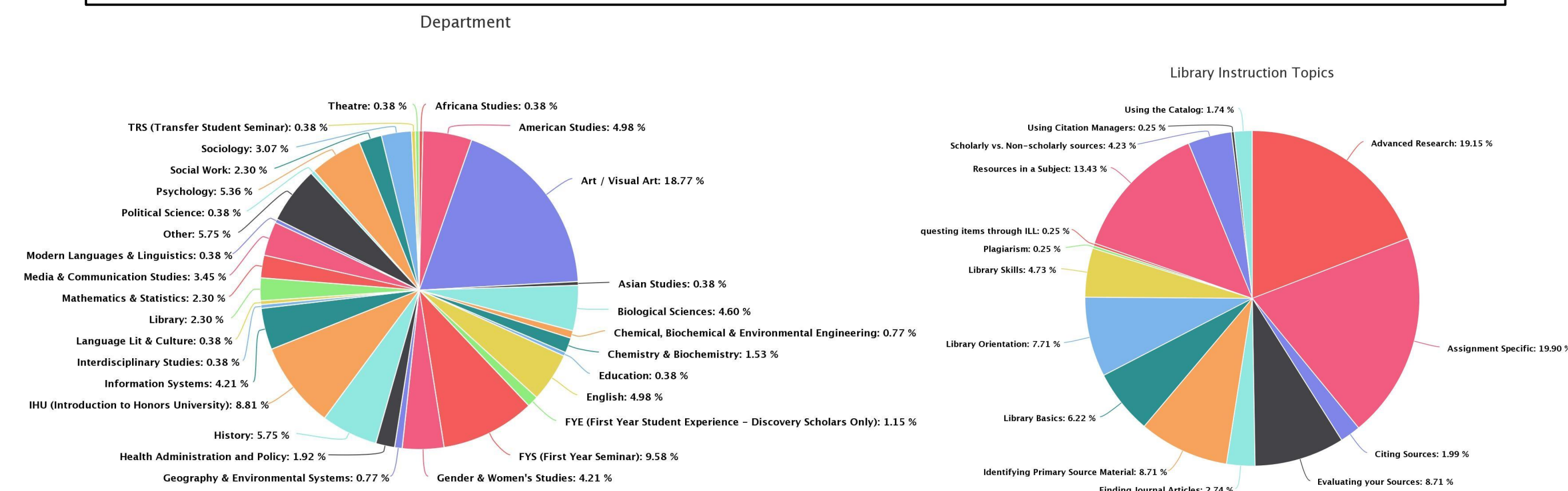


# Collaborative transformation of teaching and learning in the library: A follow up on the reflective portfolio project

During FY2018, instruction librarians, archivists, and staff worked with over 250 classes, totalling approximately 5200 attendees. To schedule a class: <https://library.umbc.edu/contact/instruction.php>



The UMBC Library Instruction Literacy Working Group (ILWG) started a portfolio project in Summer 2016. Each instruction librarian focuses on a course for which they deliver library instruction. Since 2016, we have expanded this project to include reflective practice, peer coaching, and integration with a curricular map that also links to applicable class exercises.

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## Instruction portfolios

## Learning outcomes map

## Peer coaching

The instruction portfolios are organized by academic department, with one folder corresponding to one course. Instruction librarians have access to all folders for review. Librarians use this file structure to store documents shared by the course instructor, such as syllabi, and documents created for use during the instruction session. One benefit of the portfolios is having a central location for these documents. Course materials can be easily reviewed at a later date or shared with colleagues.

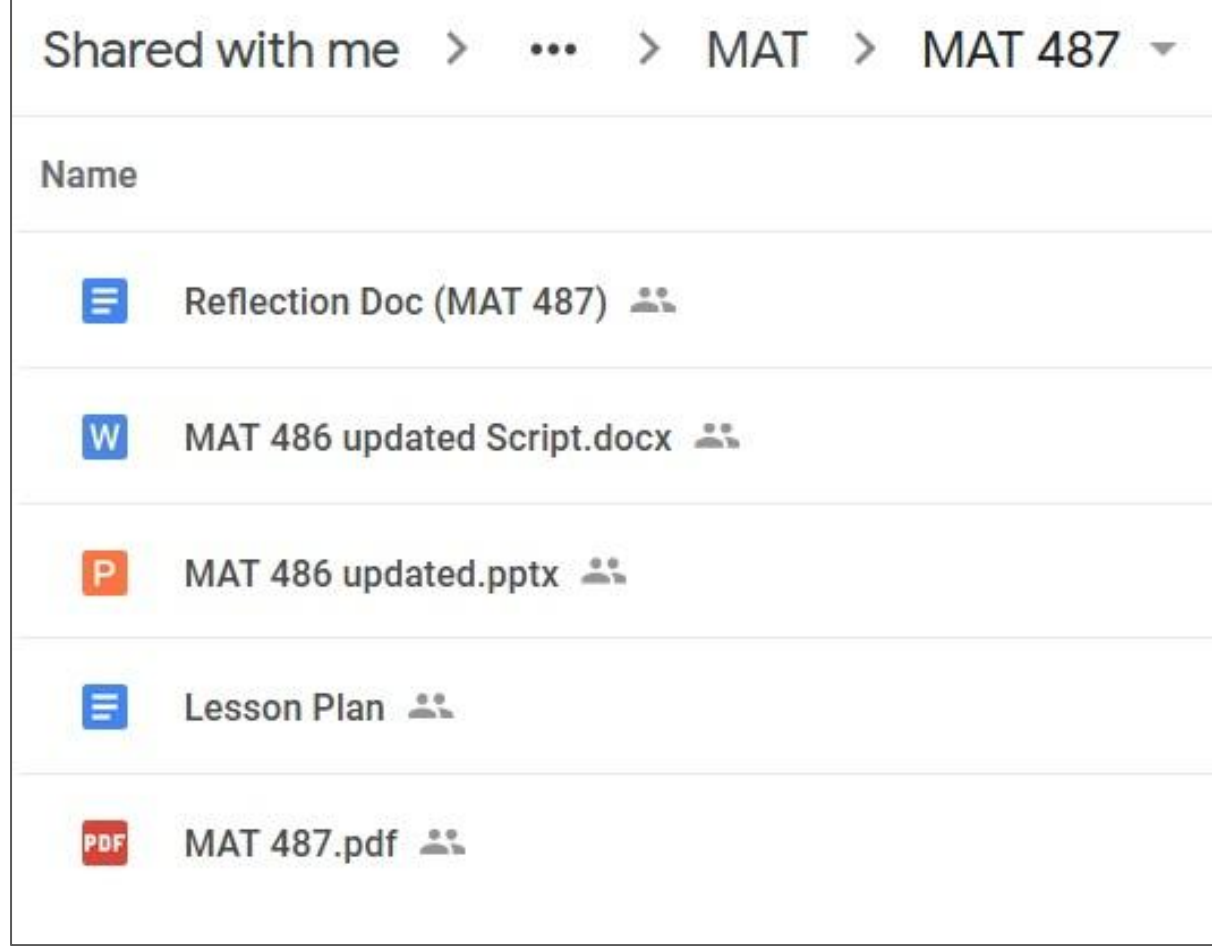
### Minimum use for each class:

**Information on lesson**  
> Program learning outcome addressed  
> At least one session learning outcome  
> Description of learning activity  
> Description of assessment or evaluation

**Artifacts**  
> Evidence of student learning  
> Explanation, if needed

**Reflection**  
> At the minimum, think about what is working for this class and what is not. What you might do differently next time?

### Sample portfolio contents:



### Reflective practice

These portfolios are intended to be dynamic spaces, not just static file storage. For this reason, we include instructor reflections on the course material that was taught as well as the evidence, or lack thereof, of student learning. The instruction librarians take time to look back on what worked for the session as well as what did not work in order to continuously improve their teaching. Some courses include student reflections as well.

#### Example of student reflection

"Today's session made me a lot more confident when thinking about conducting research. I now have a better idea of ensuring credibility, and how to look for the supporting research for the articles that I will use in research."

#### Example of instruction librarian reflection

"The students now complete the exercise twice with two different articles. I expect to see some amount of growth between the two exercises, but maybe that isn't a true measurement since there is no original research to access for the first, and in the second, it is more obvious that there is original research to access. I feel better about this assignment with the second exercise added. I think the students get more out of it when they compare the two articles."

The individual teaching portfolios are also linked to a curricular map and a bank of teaching exercises that correlate with the learning outcomes. We collaboratively developed program-level outcomes using the ACRL Information Literacy Framework (<http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>). These outcomes help to focus our instruction sessions and provide clear expectations for both the librarians and course instructors.

By organizing the teaching materials for each department, we can more easily note where our learning outcomes are being met across the curriculum. Currently, our outcomes map shows us that we focus more heavily on two frames: research as inquiry and search as strategic exploration. This has encouraged us to dedicate more instruction time to the other pieces of the framework.

We increased the value of the outcomes map by linking directly to proven class exercises located in the department portfolios. Building this exercise bank provides instruction librarians with access to methods that their colleagues have used when teaching to specific outcomes.

### Samples from the learning outcomes map and exercise bank

#### Teaching Activities for Scholarship as a Conversation

##### Activity 1 - Investigate What Perspectives Are Represented (or Not) on a Given Topic

Provide students with a list of 3-5 sources from different perspectives that shape the conversation surrounding a topic of interest.

*Sample sources: a news article, a tweet from a reputable source, a scholarly article & a literature review.*

Ask:

- What perspectives are presented?
- Who has the strongest voice in this conversation? Why?
- How would you involve yourself in this conversation?

Searching as strategic exploration					
Identify the differences between a variety of source types	<a href="#">IHU/FYE/ PHED</a>	<a href="#">SOWK 200</a>	ELCA 501	ENGL 393	
Match information needs and search strategies to search tools					
Develop multiple, flexible search strategies on their research topic	<a href="#">BIO 395</a>	<a href="#">MAT 487</a>	<a href="#">POLI 301</a>	<a href="#">SOWK 250</a>	<a href="#">MAT 355</a>
Recognize the value of an appropriate source when selecting one source type over another					
Recognize the importance of using multiple search tools, given that they will yield different results	<a href="#">BIO 395</a>	<a href="#">SOWK 200</a>	<a href="#">POLI 301</a>	<a href="#">AGNG 422</a>	MAT 487

Our team is also using the portfolios as documentation aids in our peer coaching project. We introduced peer coaching to the instruction librarians in 2017 using a model outlined by Dale Vidmar in "Reflective peer coaching: crafting collaborative self-assessment in teaching." (*Research Strategies* 20 (2006) 135–148)

***"Reflective peer coaching is a formative model for improving teaching and learning by examining intentions prior to teaching, then reflecting upon the experiences. The goal of reflective peer coaching is to promote self-assessment and collaboration for better teaching and ultimately better learning." (Vidmar, 2006)***

One goal of implementing peer coaching was to reinforce the reflection period of the instruction portfolios. This seemed to be the element that was frequently overlooked or dropped. Unlike direct class observation, we wanted to avoid any implied judgement or critical feedback; the peer coaches would provide collegial support and empower each other to try new projects, correct self-identified areas for improvement, and starting in Fall 2018, to identify goals for increasing their use of the instruction portfolios.

Peer coaching pairs were assigned by the working group and an initial training session was scheduled for all participants in Summer 2017. Each pair was given a set of suggested discussion questions for both the planning conversation, before the instruction session, and the reflective conversation, to be held shortly after the instruction session.

### Planning conversation sample questions

- What is the session going to be about?
- Are there specific learning outcomes you are hoping to meet?
- As you teach, what will the students do?
- How are you documenting this instruction class in the instruction portfolios?

### Reflective conversation sample questions

- What were your students doing or saying to indicate how the session went?
- How did what you actually did in class compare to what you had planned?
- How will you document this class and the objectives, outcomes, and reflection that we have discussed?
- As you plan future sessions, what ideas could be carried over and used?