Improving Freshmen General Education Core Competencies with Research-Based Assessment

HBCU Summit on Retention

Bowie State University
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SESSION OUTCOMES

Session participants will:

- Understand the need for the pilot project
- Review ACRL competencies and Gen Ed Program
- Discuss what Research Skills Learning Module (RSLM) was designed to do
- Examine select modules of the RSLM
- Recognize advantages/challenges of RSLM

Past Assumptions

We assumed that:

- most students were experienced with using technology

- most students were proficient with Microsoft Office

- most students understood the basic functions of a library.

* National assessments showed our students were at or above the mean for GE core competencies– but the iSkills assessment showed that our assumptions were wrong about information literacy and technological competency.

A Quick Review of GE Competencies

- Written and Oral Communication
- Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning
- Critical Thinking
- Information Literacy
- Technological Competency

American College & Research Libraries ACRL Standards

- Define
- Access
- Evaluate
- Manage
- Integrate
- Create
- Communicate

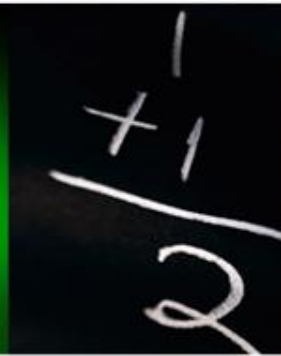**ACRL/GE Competencies: Info Lit/Tech Comp/Crit Thinking**

ACRL STANDARDS=RSLM=iSkills Test

- Define= Module 1
- Access= Module 2
- Evaluate= Module 3
- Manage= Module 4
- Integrate = Module 5
- Create= Module 6
- Communicate= Module 7

Purpose of RSLM

- Intervention designed to improve research skills of freshmen
- Improved research skills correlates to academic success
- Academic success is directly related to retention of students

Many Reasons for Intervention

- Needed to address the disconnect
- MSCHE (St. 12 Gen Ed reporting)
- Collaborative effort (librarians, admin, faculty)
- Improve student preparedness and performance in GEP courses
- Use of existing technology to work smarter!
- Assessment guiding practice in GEP

Overall Goal of RSLM

- **Impact** retention for all levels
- **Provide** opportunity to students to learn basic research skills
- **Increase** proficiency levels of 3 core competencies

Food for Thought

The 1990s Digital Divide: the gap between those who have easy access to computers and the internet and those who do not.

The 2010s Digital Divide: While access has increased substantially, the divide has shifted from an access issue to a kind of access divide (in-home broadband access vs. Internet access via cell phone).

"An entertainment vs. empowerment divide"

(Pew Research Center, www.pewinternet.org)

How many of you have written a research paper using a cell phone?

TAKING A QUICK PEEK

at RSLM

https://bsuonline.blackboard.com/

WHO developed the pilot?

- AVP for Assessment
- Several librarians
- Bb instructional technologist
- FRSE 101 instructors (5)
- Multiple collaborators on campus

WHEN was RSLM piloted?

- Fall 2013 (Fourteen learning modules)

    Five RSLM FRSE 101 sections (iSkills taken in Nov)

- RSLM worth 100 points in FRSE 101

- Five control FRSE 101 sections (iSkills taken in Dec)

- 2014 Bulldog Summer Academy (no point value)

- 2015 Bulldog Summer Academy (100 point value); iSkills given at end of summer

HOW was RSLM created?

- Used Blackboard to build every module and collect assessment data (LOTTO training)
- Developed a common theme
- Based on seven ACRL standards
- Focused on three GE competencies
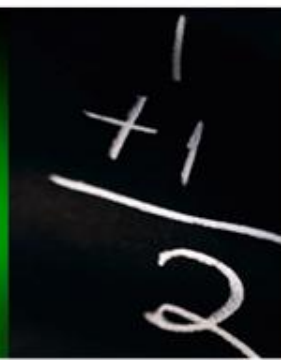- Included Badge awards

What were the initial results?

ETS iSkills (measures critical thinking, technological & informational literacy skills)
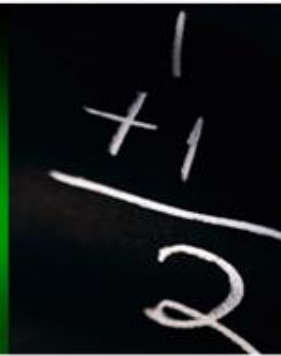
2012-2013 (Freshmen): BSU Median Score Results

	Category	Define	Access	Evaluate	Manage	Integrate	Create	Communicate
2012	BSU	55	56	62	57	50	49	44
	National	70	78	50	70	64	56	64
	Median Score Difference	-15	-22	+12	-12	-13	-7	-20
2013	BSU	55	56	57	50	50	49	49
	National	70	78	50	70	64	56	64
	Median Score Difference	-15	-22	+8	-20	-13	-7	-13

Bulldog Academy iSkills Results

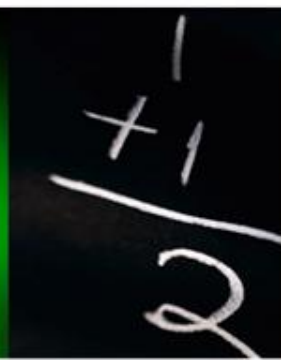|	Category	Define	Access	Evaluate	Manage	Integrate	Create	Communicate
2014 BDA **(Not integrated into English course)**	BSU	55	56	62	57	50	49	44
	National	70	78	50	70	64	56	64
	Median Score Difference	**-15**	**-22**	**+12**	**-13**	**-14**	**-7**	**-20**
2015 BDA **(Fully integrated into English course)** ** iSkills national reference group updated in 2014	BSU	55	56	57	50	50	49	49
	National**	64	61	64	64	59	57	59
	Median Score Difference	**-9**	**-5**	**-7**	**-14**	**-9**	**-8**	**-10**

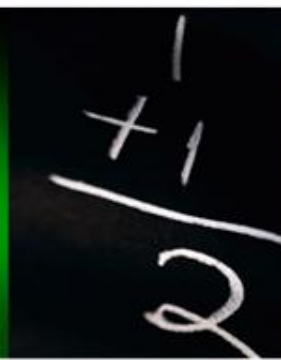# RSLM Pilot Study Results
Mean iSkills Scores

COHORT	*FRSE 101 Fall 2012 (n=100) * Testing occurred in Dec	FRSE Research Skills Fall 2013 (n=133)	Control Group (n=119) 2013-2014	BDA Students 2014 (n=83)	**BDA Students 2015 (n=81)**	All Students 2012-2015 (n=433)
Mean Score	182	185	169	182	**187**	181

TAKING A CLOSER LOOK
at RSLM

https://bsuonline.blackboard.com/

Advantages and Challenges of Process
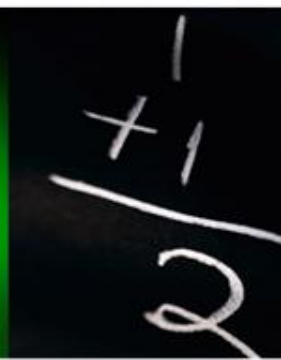
Advantages

- Paperless process (GREEN!) & cost effective

- Use of existing Blackboard technology

- Positive student feedback

- Self-paced for students at different levels

- Transferable to other GE courses by request

- Assessment data for MSCHE reporting

Advantages and Challenges of Process

Challenges

- Labor intensive in the beginning
- Learning curve with module development
- Must have assigned point value in GE course
- Smaller classes and more instructors
- Pre-college students vs. older freshmen

ON THE HORIZON…

- FALL 2016 COMM 101 launch
- Same high point-value in each section
- Add two more modules in manage/integrate
- Self-paced and mostly self-scoring
- RSLM Part 2 – COMM 240 course
(add APA style, AB, grammar, punctuation)
- Fall 2016 longitudinal data review

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS...
Thank you!

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