

Assessing a First Year Experience Information Literacy Instruction Program within the General Education Program

California State University San Marcos
June 2007

INTRODUCTION

This project aimed to measure information competency among first-year students at CSUSM using the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Core iSkills test as the backbone. Students were tested in the Fall 2006, however data will continue to be gathered and analyzed for another year ending in 2007-2008 to coincide with presentations made during the WASC accreditation visit to CSUSM.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROJECT

Three main authors of the project are Gabriela Sonntag, Coordinator of the Information Literacy Program and Reference Services, Sharon Hamill, Professor and Chair of the Psychology Department who is currently the General Education Assessment Coordinator, and Joanne Pedersen, Professor of Psychology and the Associate Director of First-Year Programs. Also participating in the project were Professors Metzger, Ribble, Romero and Dawson, and librarians Meulemans, Chu and Carr.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

Much preparation work was begun late summer 2006 including submission of an IRB proposal, development of additional questions to supplement the iSkills questionnaire, orientation for professor and librarian participants, and preparation of the computer labs where testing would occur. During the week of September 16th and again during the week of December 4th, 261 students in several sections of the GEL101 (General Education Lifelong Learning), a first-year experience college success course and several sections of GEO 102, the General Education Oral Communications course took the iSkills test. As they entered to take the pre-test, they were given a copy of the IRB form and asked to sign a copy for our files. Just before the post-test they were asked to complete a supplementary questionnaire. Additional questions were also part of the iSkills test itself.

FUNDING

Project funds were used to grant partial release time to three librarians on the team (\$200 per section), to compensate 4 professors for their participation (\$100 per section) and pay the 3 project collaborators. Additional funds were available for administrative support and for one student assistant.

Name		Units	amount
Sharon Hamill, Faculty,	stipend		\$600.00
Joanne Pedersen, Faculty,	stipend		\$600.00
Gabriela Sonntag, Faculty, Grant Administrator	Overload		\$1,600.00
Yvonne Meulemans, Librarian,	stipend	3	\$600.00

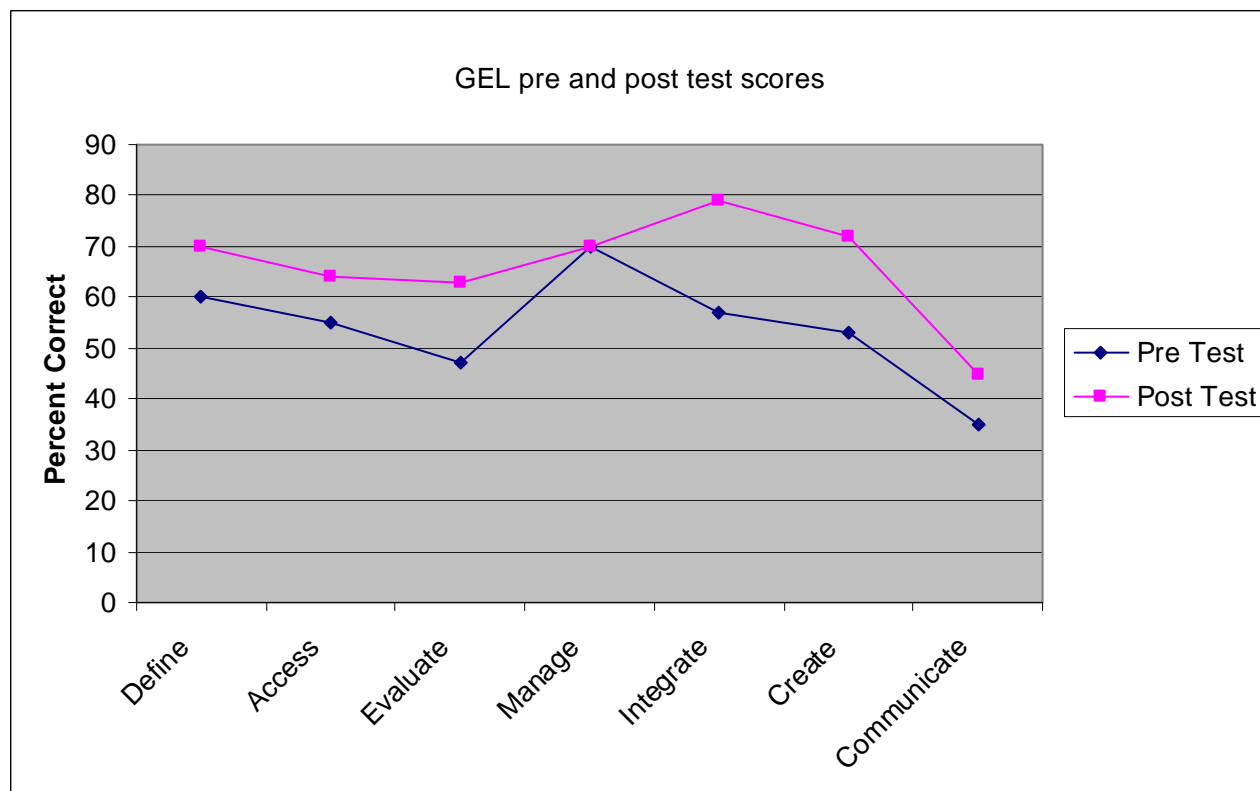
Melanie Chu, Librarian,	stipend	1	\$200.00
Allison Carr, Librarian,	stipend	1	\$200.00
Marilyn Ribble, Adjunct Faculty,	stipend	5	\$500.00
T. Metzger, Adjunct Faculty,	stipend	3	\$300.00
Brian Dawson, Adjunct Faculty	stipend	1	\$100.00
Devan Romero, Adjunct Faculty,	stipend	3	\$300.00
Student Assistant			\$688.00
Library Administrative Support			\$600.00

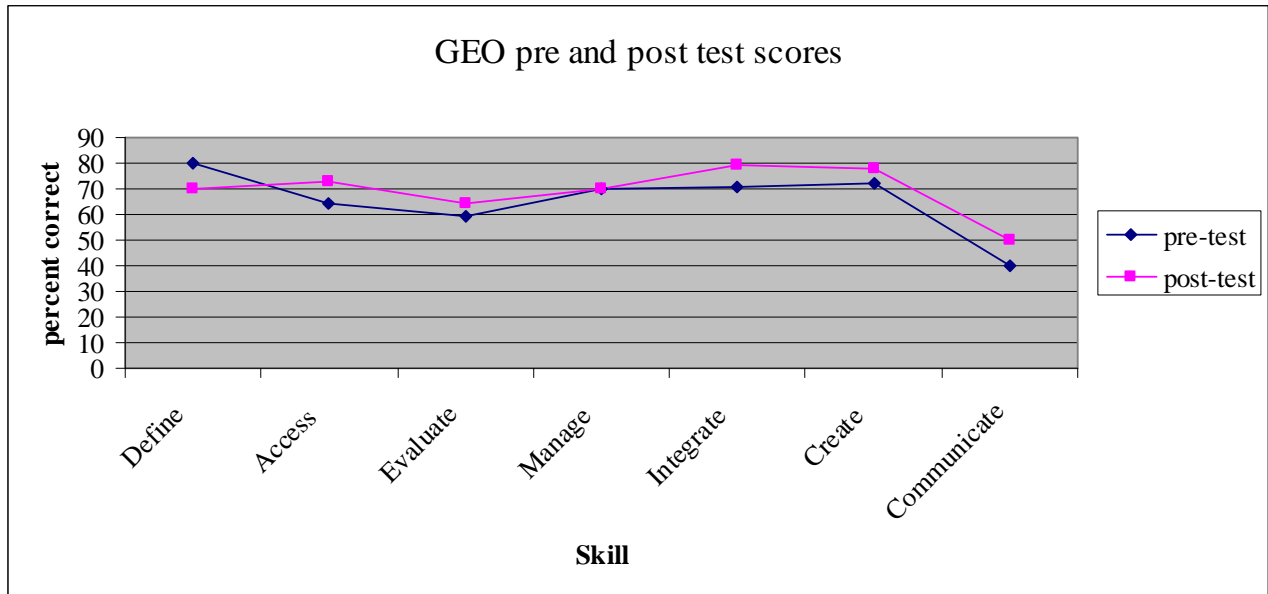
TOTAL **\$6,288.00**

OUTCOMES

There were four goals established for this project. They were:

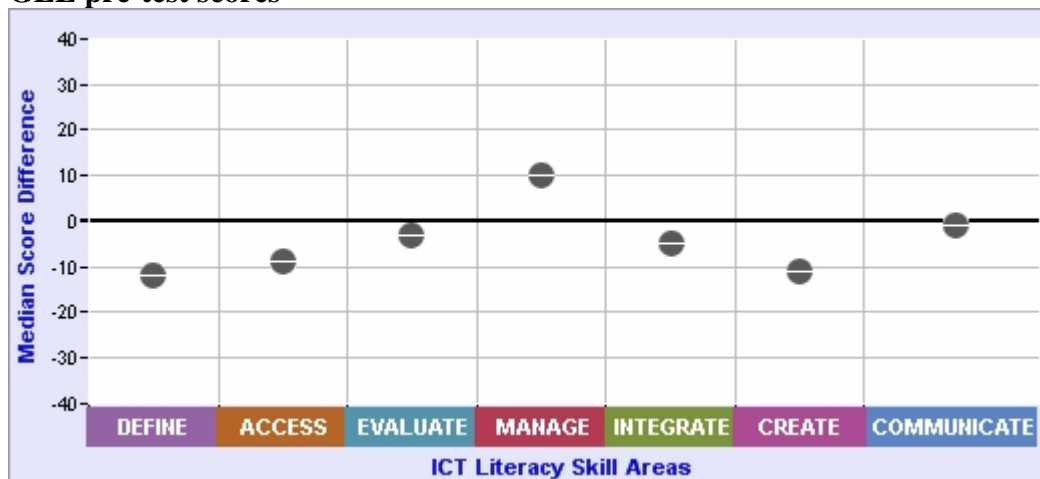
Goal 1. To measure student information literacy learning within the GEL first year experience course by using the Core iSkills test as a pre/post test. The following chart, with data provided by ETS from the iSkills score report shows the progress made by the GEL students. We are particularly pleased with the improvement in both the Evaluate and Integrate skill areas. While neither the Manage or Communicate skill areas are ones that are stressed in the course the fact that they do not do well, or show no improvement, will be one area of discussion in the follow-up to this project.



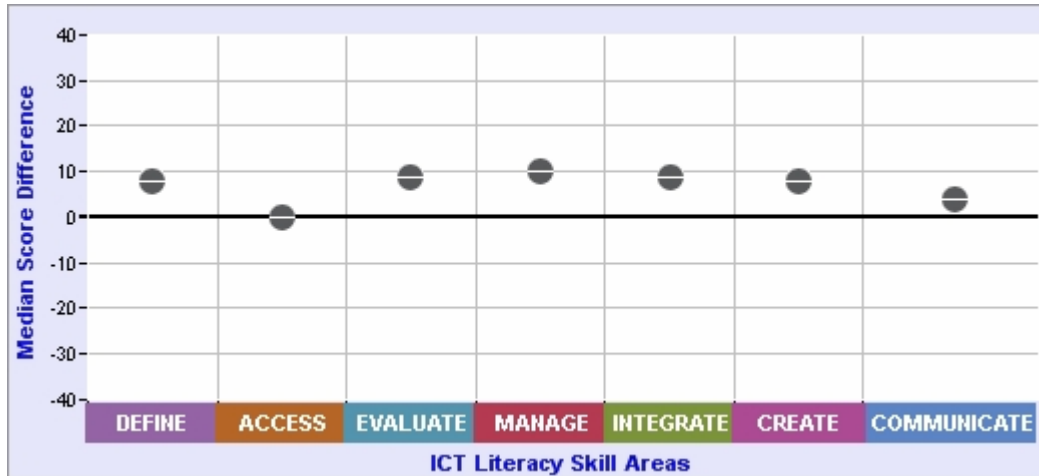


Goal 2. To compare GEL students with non-GEL students in terms of information literacy learning as measured by the Core iSkills test as a pre/post test. We are generally happy with the results as shown for Goal 1, but we see that the GEO students outperformed the GEL students. While at first we are disappointed that this went against our hypothesis that the GEL students would have benefited more from the three weeks of information literacy instruction received, we hope to clarify this with further analysis. Below is a chart showing the comparison pre/post scores.

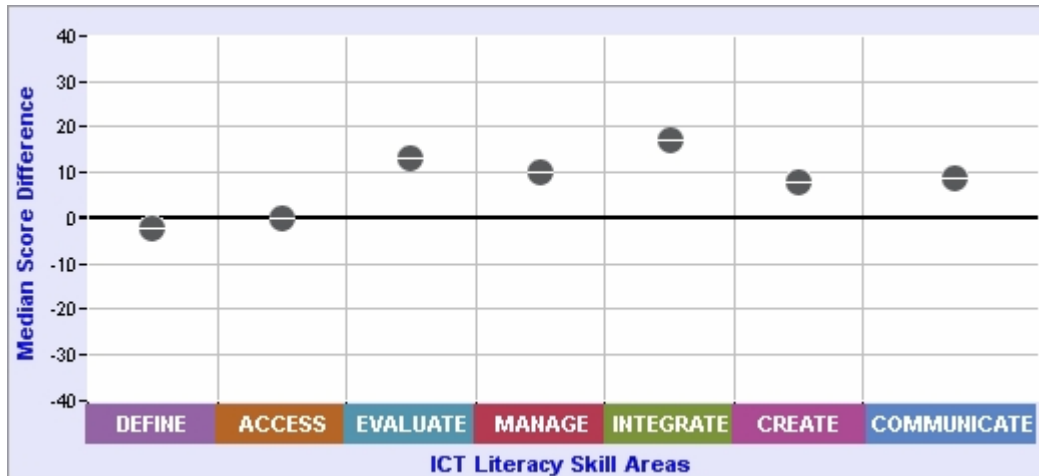
GEL pre-test scores



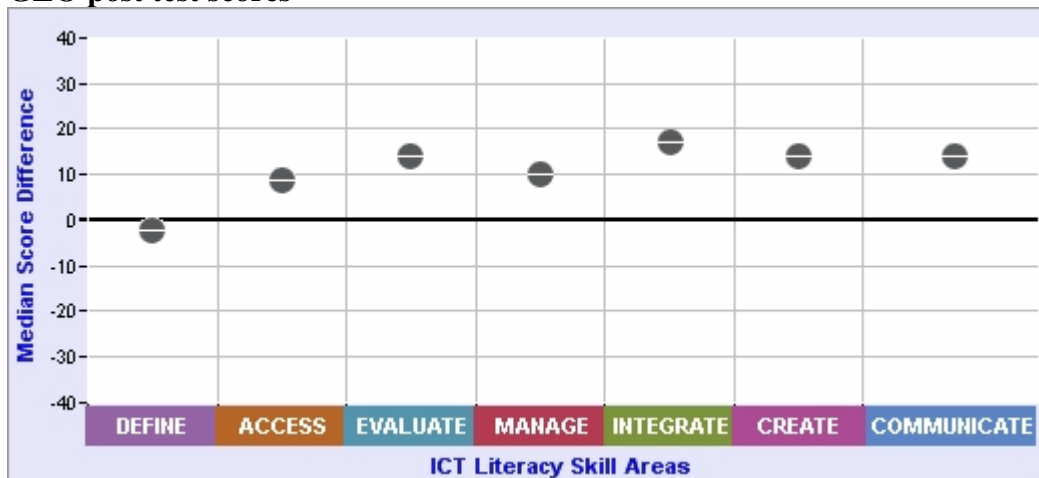
GEO pre-test scores



GEL post test scores



GEO post test scores



These graphs are taken directly from the ETS score reports. They show the score of our students as compared with a reference group of all high school students who have taken the same Core iSkills test. Again, we hope to have more information as we analyze the data ourselves. This is particularly important for our third goal.

Goal 3. To gather information for each student that would allow us to determine retention motivators to include ethnicity, socio-economic background as well as measure the impact of participation in campus programs such as service learning, faculty mentoring programs; athletics; residency in UVA, participation in EOP. The various additional background questions we asked will help us meet this goal as will data from the Institutional Research Office on campus.

Goal 4. To generate campus discussions surrounding the role of the library faculty and more specifically the ILP in supporting first year student success. We expect to meet this goal when the project is finalized.

In a recent trip to Spain Gabriela Sonntag presented the initial findings of this project to illustrate her lecture on information literacy assessment as part of a course for Spanish librarians. We expect to get much more information as we continue to analyze the data and especially as we cross the ETS scores, the background questionnaires and the data from Institution Research. Additional campus and conference presentations as well as an article on this project are expected.