Online Learning Readiness Survey

World Campus Undergraduate Students

2023

Executive Summary

The Assessment

The SmarterMeasure Learning Readiness Indicator (SmarterMeasure) is a web-based assessment which measures a learner's readiness for succeeding in an online and/or technology rich learning program based on non-cognitive indicators of success. The primary goal of administering the SmarterMeasure assessment to new World Campus students is to help students identify their strengths as an online learner and to gain a better awareness of academic skills where additional support and resources may be beneficial. The secondary goal is to help students devise a plan to strengthen non-cognitive target areas identified in the results of their SmarterMeasure assessment, and to learn about the resources available to help them meet their academic goals at World Campus. The seven scales measured by the assessment include:

- Individual Attributes - motivation, procrastination, willingness to ask for help, etc.
- Life Factors - availability of time, support from family and employers, finances, etc.
- Learning styles - based on the multiple intelligences model.
- Technical Competency - skills with using technology.
- Technical Knowledge - knowledge of technology terms.
- On-screen Reading Rate and Recall
- Typing Speed and Accuracy

Discussion

The results of the SmarterMeasure assessment, along with previous academic performance, and background factors, can be used to identify students who may need additional academic support and resources. Data indicates that reading and typing skills, as well as non-cognitive factors such as a student's perception of their academic skills are areas that need to be addressed to increase the likelihood of retention and success.

Reading and typing skills can directly impact the amount of time students need to spend interacting with course content and completing assignments. Students who are not used to reading college-level material may struggle understanding content within a course. This can result in longer periods of time for students to gain content mastery and progress through a course. Below benchmark keyboarding skills can negatively impact productivity, time management, study time, and class participation. A 2006 study by Lubbe, Monteith, and Mentz (p. 290) found that self-regulated learners had better keyboarding skills than less self-regulated learners. Additionally, studies by Snyder, et al., (2014) and Weerdenburg, et al., (2018) illustrated that students lacking keyboarding skills put greater demands on short-term memory by searching for keys on the keyboard. They concluded that keyboarding skills are essential to reduce the load on working memory.

Student Success Plan

World Campus Academic Development Services utilizes a multifaceted approach to help students apply their results from the SmarterMeasure assessment to prepare for online learning at World Campus. This plan includes the following:

1. Increase usage of the SmarterMeasure assessment by embedding it within World Campus New Student Orientation.
2. Expand outreach to students that includes 1:1 consultations, group webinars, asynchronous resources, and increased Starfish communication.
3. Provide resources to strengthen students' knowledge, skills, and abilities to help them succeed in their courses and remain enrolled at World Campus.

Data Collection

Penn State World Campus began offering the SmarterMeasure assessment to incoming undergraduate students admitted to World Campus in the 2010-2011 academic year. Initially, the assessment was offered as part of a host of tasks the student was required to complete prior to beginning classes. However, completion rates were low. The assessment was then embedded in New Student Orientation (NSO) which is offered asynchronously through Canvas. Although SmarterMeasure assessment is not required, embedding the assessment in NSO led to significant increases in the completion rates. In 2018, World Campus began mandating NSO for all undergraduate students. SmarterMeasure remained embedded in NSO, and the completion rates increased significantly. Today, SmarterMeasure completion rates are consistently above 70% (OAR-12084, 2019).

The results of the SmarterMeasure are shared with students in a detailed report immediately available upon completion of the assessment. The report contains information about each scale and sub-scale in the assessment and provides positive reinforcement. The appendix of the report also includes a list of resources to help students strengthen their online learning skills. Each week, Academic Development Services receives a report of all students completing the SmarterMeasure assessment. Each assessment listed on the report is flagged based on the number of scales and sub-scales that fall below a pre-determined threshold. Students with one or more flag(s) are emailed an invitation to participate in a consultation with a support specialist. The purpose of the consultation is to use the SmarterMeasure assessment to identify areas where the student may benefit from additional support, and to provide them with resources to help them succeed in online learning. Since October 2019, more than 675 students have participated in a consultation.

The following results are based on data collected between September 1, 2022 - August 31, 2023. During this time frame:

> 2162 students began the assessment.
> 1966 students completed the assessment.
> 91% completion rate

Demographics

Data was collected from September 2022 – August 2023. It is important to note that students have the option to skip or "opt-out" of any question.
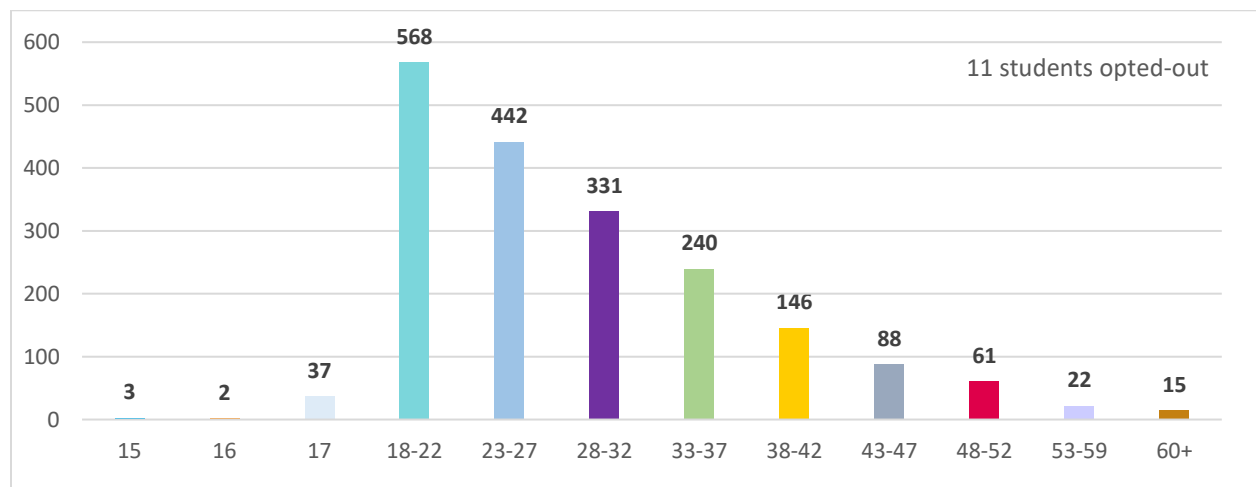
Gender Distribution (n=1966)

The distribution of male/females who have taken SmarterMeasure has remained consistent. This past year, there were slightly more females (54%) than males (46%) completing the assessment compared to 2022 data.


36 (2%) students opted-out

884, 46%

1046, 54%

- F
- M
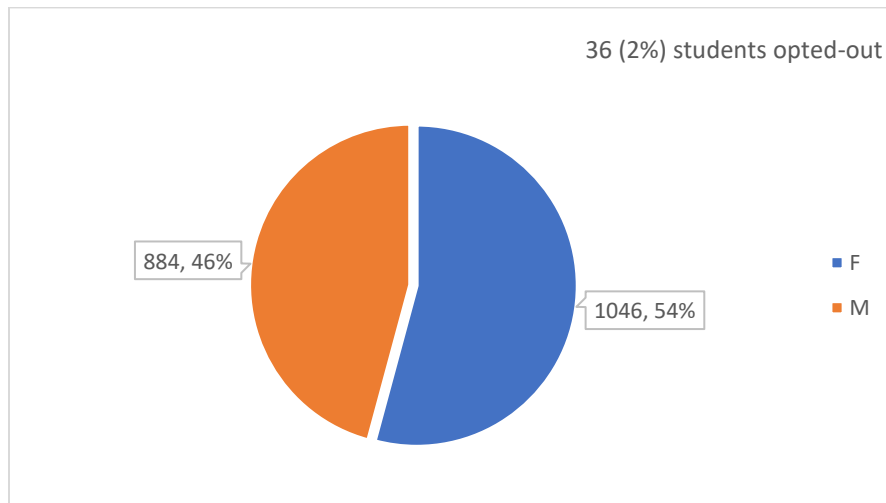
Age Distribution (n=1955)

The age distribution for students completing the assessment remains consistent with 68.6% of students falling into the 18-32 age range. The volume of students in in the 18-22 age range (29.1%) slightly decreased compared to 2021-2022 (30.5%).

11 students opted-out

| Age	Count
15	3
16	2
17	37
18-22	568
23-27	442
28-32	331
33-37	240
38-42	146
43-47	88
48-52	61
53-59	22
60+	15

Ethnicity Distribution (n=1966)

The ethnicity distribution for students completing the assessment changed slightly this past year with a decrease in Caucasian/White and Asian/Pacific Islander students and increases in African American and Hispanic or Latino students compared to previous years.
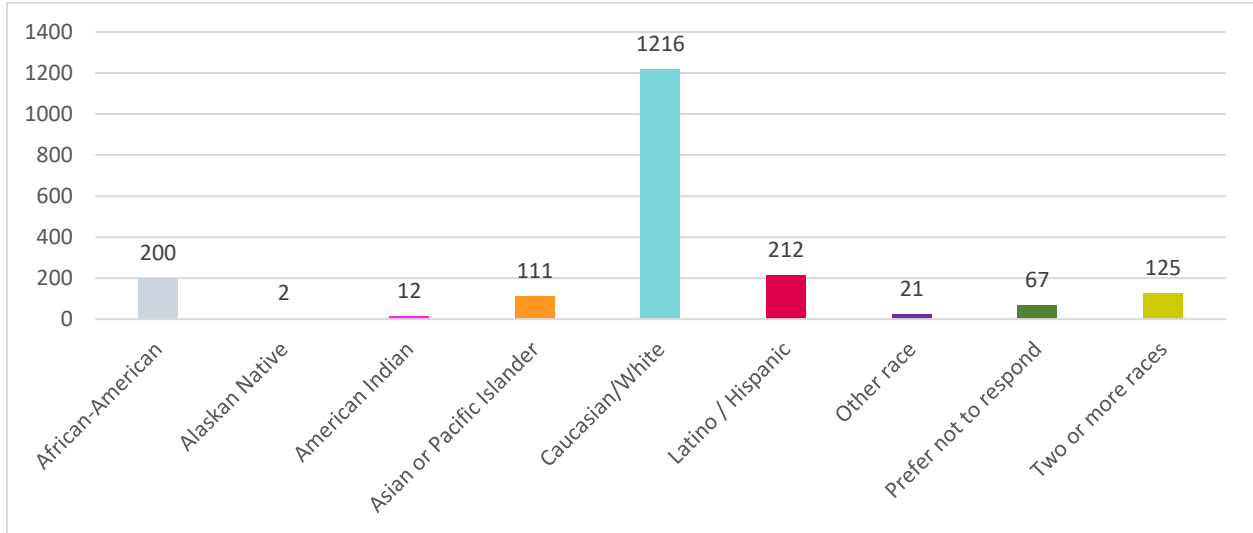
	Caucasian/White	African American	Asian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic or Latino
2022-23	61.8%	10.2%	5.6%	10.8%
2021-22	63.4%	8.8%	9.6%	10.1%
2019-21	64.1%	6.8%	7.5%	9.7%

Volume of Participants Identifying as First-Generation Learner (n=1966)

The volume of first-generation learners completing the assessment in 2022-2023 (32%) was slightly lower than 2021-2022 (33%); however, 187 more students completed the assessment in 2023.
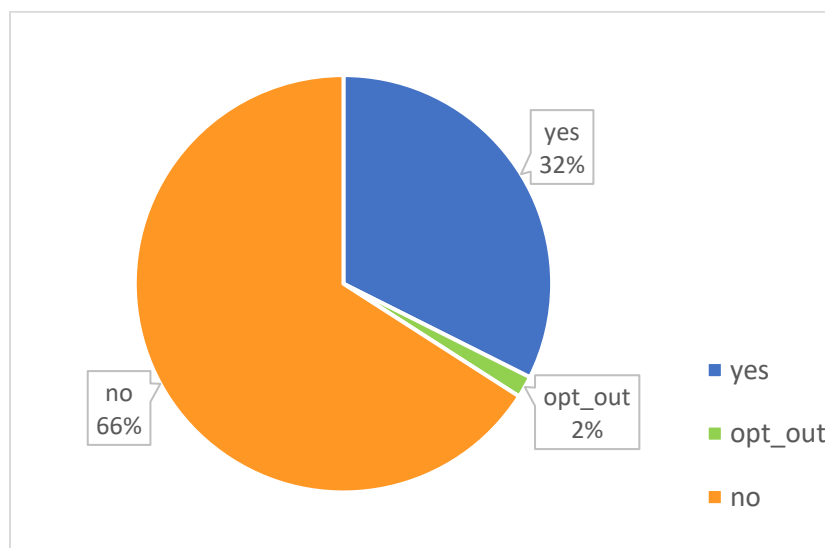
Select Assessment Data

Data Notes

- Only completed assessments are included in the data.
- Thresholds are derived from models using first-term GPA to determine cut-off scores.
- A 2020 internal study revealed key indicators for first-year student success. These include perceived academic abilities (academic skills), reading recall, and typing.
- SmarterMeasure data range from September 2022 – August 2023.
- Scores in red indicate values below threshold.

Summary of Academic Skills Scores (n=1966; Threshold = >15)

This component of the assessment involves students answering questions about their perceived academic abilities. Consultations with students scoring below threshold in this area revealed their primary concerns are math and writing.
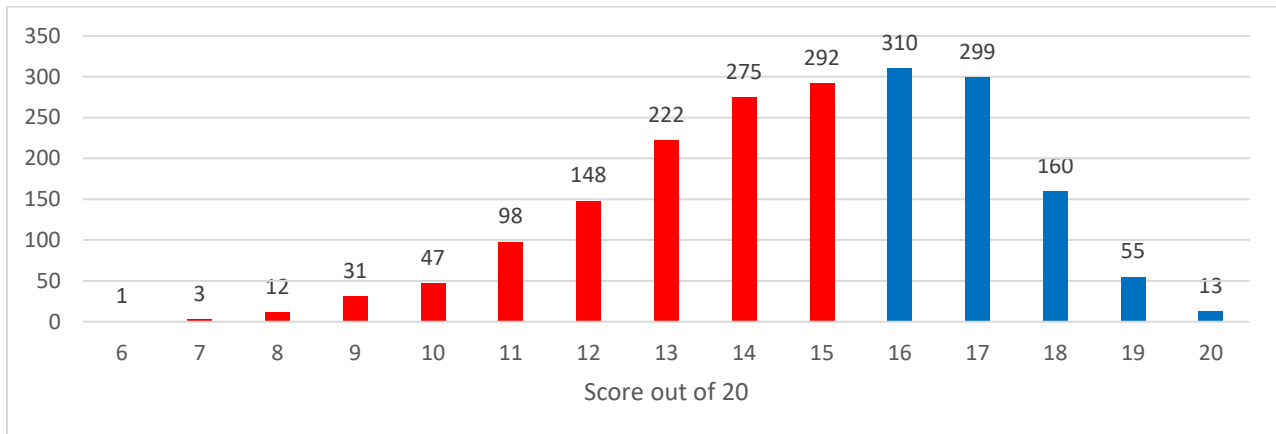

Summary of Reading Recall Scores (n=1964; Threshold = >80%)

Reading recall involves the student reading a passage and answering a series of questions about the content. This is a timed test, and the student is scored on how quickly they read the material and the number of questions they answered correctly.
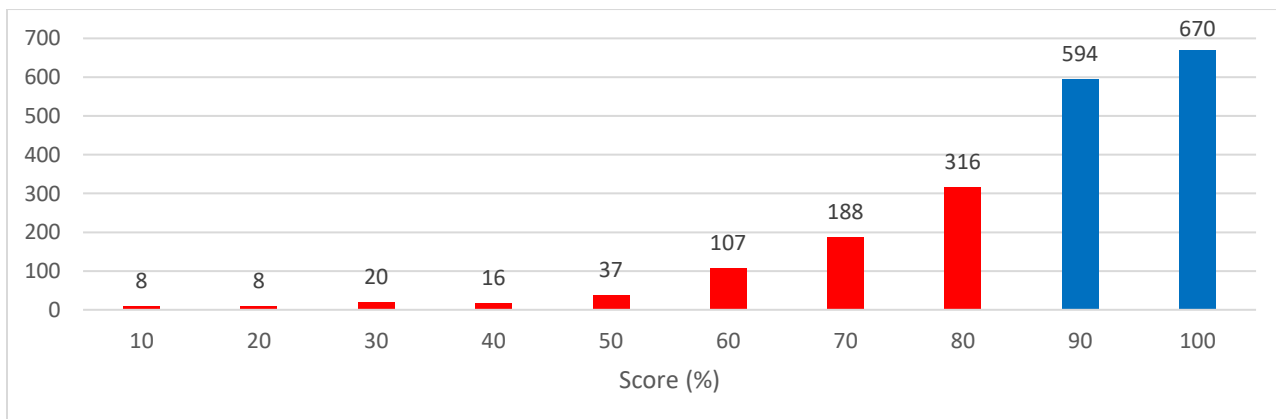
Summary of Typing Scores (n=1964; Threshold = >27 WPM)

The typing test measures the student's touch-typing skills and involves the student typing a short passage while being timed. Students are scored on speed and accuracy.
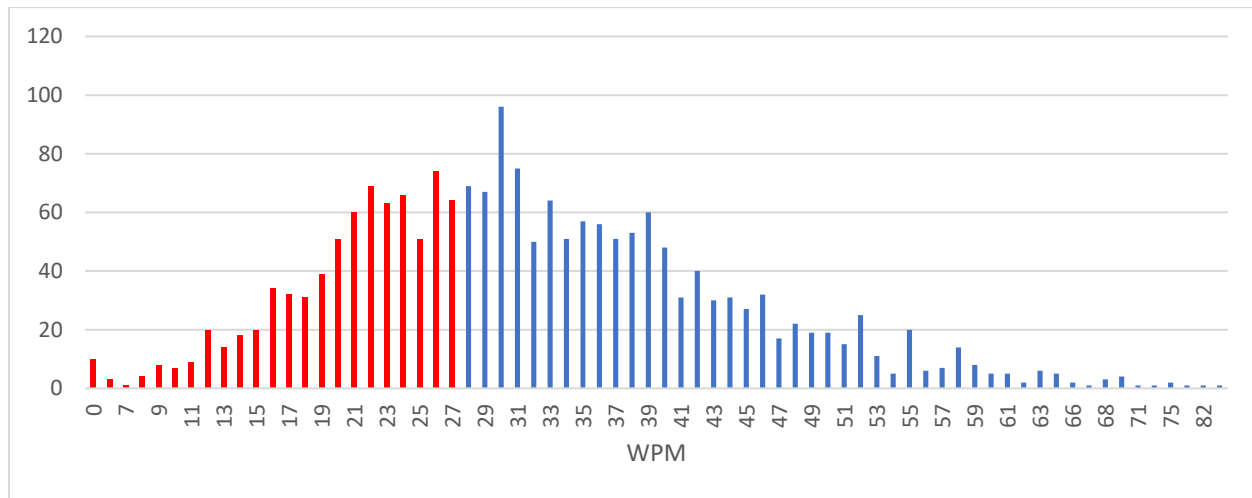
Resources

Lubbe, E., Monteith, J., & Mentz, E. (2006). The relationship between keyboarding skills and self-regulated learning. *South African Journal of Education, 26*(2), 281-293.

OAR-12084. (2019). SmarterMeasure Evaluation Update. Internal Outreach Analytics & Reporting report: Unpublished.

Snyder, K. M., Ashitaka, Y., Shimada, H., Ulrich, J. E., & Logan, G. D. (2014). *What skilled typists don't know about the QWERTY keyboard*. DOI: 10.3758/s13414-013-0548-4.

Weerdenburg, M., Tesselhof, M., van derMeijden, H. (2018). Touch-typing for better spelling and narrative-writing skills on the computer. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*. Doi: 10.1111/jcal.12323