



The College of New Jersey

Office of Institutional Research & Assessment

The CLA at TCNJ!

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As part of our ongoing effort to ensure the effectiveness of our efforts in achieving key outcomes, TCNJ will be participating in the cross-sectional administration of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) during the 2007-08 academic year. The CLA, developed by the [Council for Aid to Education \(CAE\)](#), is an assessment program that measures an institution’s contribution to the learning gains made by students. The skills measured correspond well to some of our liberal learning goals under the “Intellectual and Scholarly Growth” heading:

CLA Measures	Our Learning Goals*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Thinking • Analytic Reasoning • Problem Solving • Written Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be able to demonstrate fundamental dispositions and abilities to engage in academic discourse, including analytic and integrative skills, and the ability to formulate, defend, and communicate their own points of view. • Students will be able to navigate information resources using digital and other technology in order to support their studies, and their efforts to communicate their findings persuasively. • Students will be able to demonstrate well-developed, confident identities as good writers who can communicate clearly and effectively to an array of audiences for a range of purposes.

* From <http://www.tcnj.edu/~liberal/outcomes.html#scholarly>

Because the skills the CLA measures are intertwined (as evidenced by our own Learning Goals), the CLA measures are holistic: they require students to use these skills together to respond with written responses to tasks drawn from the real-world. Results will be reported to us in terms of whether our students are doing better, worse or about the same as would be expected given the level of their entering competencies (as measured by their SAT scores). Because we will be sampling Freshman this Fall, and Seniors this Spring, we will also receive results comparing the improvement in our average student performance between entry and graduation to that of comparable students at other institutions.

If students ask about the CLA, please encourage them to participate. Between September 26 and October 31, 100 entering freshmen, selected by a stratified random sampling process, will take the approximately 90 minute CLA in proctored computer labs on campus. In February and March, 100 exiting seniors, again selected by a stratified random sampling process, will do so. Please contact Dr. Paula Maas, Director of Assessment (x2143, maas@tcnj.edu) if you have further questions.

Thank you for your continued support of the college’s efforts as we build a culture of assessment on our campus!

For examples of the two possible assessment tasks presented to students, see http://www.cae.org/content/pro_collegiate_sample_measures.htm. Clicking the link at the bottom of this page will bring you to the CLA’s definitions and scoring criteria (http://www.cae.org/content/pdf/CLA_Scoring%20Criteria.pdf)