

The Collegiate Learning Assessment at UNCP, 2013-14

The Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA+) is an assessment instrument designed to measure an institution's contribution, or value added, to the development of those higher-order skills to their student body, and therefore, the institution – not the student – is the primary unit of analysis. Specifically, the CLA+ measures critical-thinking, problem solving, scientific, and quantitative reasoning, writing, and the ability to critique and make arguments.

Each student participating in the CLA+ completes a Performance Task and a group of Selected Response Questions.

The Performance Task presents a real-world situation in which an issue, problem, or conflict is identified. Students are asked to assume a relevant role to address the issue, suggest a solution, or recommend a course of action based on the information provided in a Document Library. A full CLA+ Performance Task contains four to nine documents in the library, and students have 60 minutes to complete the task. The Document Library contains a variety of reference sources such as technical reports, data tables, newspaper articles, office memoranda, and emails.

In the Selected-Response Questions section, students respond to 25 questions: 10 assess scientific and quantitative reasoning; 10 assess critical reading and evaluation; and five assess the logical flaws and questionable assumptions in a given argument. Students have 30 minutes to complete this section. Much like the Performance Task, each set of questions is document-based and requires that students draw information from the accompanying documents.

During the fall 2013 administration, 1019 freshmen were eligible for participation in the CLA+. Of that number, 204 (20%) students participated in the assessment activity. (To be eligible, each student had to have an SAT or ACT score on file). Students were notified via email and through Freshman Orientation classes. Multiple notifications and reminders were emailed to students. Approximately 30 testing sessions were used in various campus computer labs to accommodate the assessment.

In the spring of 2014, seniors were administered the CLA+. Eligibility was the same as for freshmen (SAT or ACT score on file). Approximately 800 seniors were emailed the CLA+ request to participate. Just slightly more than 18% chose to take the assessment. Again, approximately 30 computer labs across campus were used to administer the testing and several emails were forwarded to students.