8-24-2010

# 2010 RISING JUNIOR EXAMINATION (CLA PERFORMANCE TASK) REPORT

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**FINAL DRAFT** Submitted to John Brooks, Director of University College,
by Gregory B. Sadler, Coordinator of Rising Junior Exam Project, June 15, 2010

## 1. Executive Summary:

The FSU Rising Junior Examination in 2010 involved use of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) instead of the College Basic Academic Subjects Examination (CBASE), which had been used in previous years to assess FSU students' current level of academic skills. The students were divided into two groups, one group taking a national CLA Performance Task exam, the other group taking an Institutional (FSU faculty generated and graded) CLA Performance Task exam. The process and the results for the Institutional CLA are summarized in this report.

A CLA Performance Task requires students to investigate and take a position on real-life-like situations. They must address another person's claims, argument, and position, and they must do so in reference to seven documents containing different types of information. The documents also contain a mixture of relevant and irrelevant, and reliable and unreliable, information. The examination is scored holistically using rubrics.

Using Title III funds, faculty were recruited to develop, administer, and grade the 2010 institutional CLA Performance Task exam. A Performance Task previously developed by the Philosophy faculty was selected, reviewed, and adapted (see appendices C and D)

Student performance on the institutional Rising Junior Exam was fairly weak (see Appendix A). Mean and median scores were relatively low, indicating weaknesses in Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and to a lesser degree Written Communication skills among our rising junior students. Another measure (see sec. 6 below) which differentiates good, adequate, and inadequate performances indicates that about one tenth of our students perform well, a little over a quarter perform adequately, and more than half our students exhibit less than adequate performances.

Our primary goal has to be to change these numbers by ensuring that students develop and continue to use Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Written Communication skills in the curriculum at FSU. The CLA is one significant means not only for measuring student ability and development in these skills, but also as CLA in the Classroom, providing an approach for inculcating these skills.

Among the recommendations of this report are that subsequent Rising Junior Examinations should build off of the base now established by this year's Rising Junior Examination and continue administering national and institutional CLA Performance Tasks. All of the processes involved in that effort (faculty selection and training, Performance Task development, administration, and grading) should be reviewed, and where necessary, be improved. Other recommendations are that the infusion of CLA-like activities through the FSU curriculum should be continued, but in a more coordinated and deliberate way, building off of the numerous successful efforts made so far by FSU faculty. Information should be gathered, compiled, and made available to faculty and administrators about all of the past and ongoing uses of CLA at FSU.

**2. Reason(s) For Moving from Multiple-Choice Examination to CLA Performance Tasks:**

In recent years, the administration and faculty of Fayetteville State University has made significant commitments to incorporating the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) into the curriculum, using the CLA and CLA-like activities as assessment tools, and building a pool of faculty well-versed in developing and using CLA performance tasks.

On February 4, 2010, John Brooks met with the University CLA workgroup to propose the idea, and to examine the feasibility of changing the Rising Junior Examination from the College Basic Academic Subjects Examination (CBASE) to a CLA examination. He provided several reasons in favor of the proposed change.

The CBASE is a standardized multiple choice examination, and two main connected sets of problems have marked FSU's use of that tool for the Rising Junior Examination. First, FSU rising juniors' test results have been low. This is partly attributable to FSU has traditionally serving a population which typically does not do well no standardized tests, and partly attributable to the fact that FSU students on the whole tend to enter the university with weaker academic skills than students at many other institutions. Second, the standardized multiple choice examination does not readily "link up" in meaningful ways with the FSU curriculum, pedagogical initiatives, course design, and genuine (rather than proxy) assessment of student learning. The CBASE, as J. Brooks put it, "has not been integrated into the overall educational; assessment of our students."

The CLA offers a number of clear (and mutually leveraging) advantages as a tool for the Rising Junior Examination, and these advantages were either presented to the CLA workgroup by J. Brooks, or brought up by workgroup members in the discussion following his presentation.

One main advantage is that the CLA offers authentic assessment of a number of the skills which FSU rising juniors ought to have developed by that point in their academic progression. These include in particular a wide range of Critical Thinking skills, broader Problem-Solving skills, and Written Communication skills. Not coincidentally, these arrays of skills are among those which are highlighted in UNC Tomorrow documents, FSU's most recent Strategic Plan, and in the QEP currently in development. They are also among the skills consistently cited by employers as those which they desire and expect college graduates to possess. By "authentic assessment," what is meant is that through CLA examinations, students are required to actually demonstrate skills in practice, allowing FSU to assess their development and mastery of these skills in a much more direct fashion than proxy assessment permits.

Another main advantage stems from the commitment made by FSU to progressively incorporating and infusing the CLA into the curriculum. As this process continues, Rising Junior Examinations would assess not only our students' level of development of Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Written Communication Skills, but also the degree to which students have developed these skills through faculty incorporation and use of the CLA. When well-integrated into a curriculum, the CLA by its very nature also affords the possibility of educative (or "forward-looking") assessment. This means that in their classes taken prior to the Rising Junior examination, students can be assessed on their CLA-like Performance Task activities in such ways as to enable them to progressively improve their skills, and thus performance. A motto used by the CLA/CAE encapsulates this: "You can teach to the test when you have the right test."

## 3 Narratives:

**3a. Development of 2010 Rising Junior Examination: Institutional CLA Performance Task**
As mentioned above, J. Brooks met with the University CLA Workgroup on February 4, 2010 to propose changing the Rising Junior Examination to an Institutional CLA Performance Task examination and involving faculty in its development, administration, and grading. He provided a document reviewing the history and rationale of the Rising Junior Examination, reasons for advocating change from CBASE to CLA, and a proposed timetable for the project. Many of the faculty involved in the CLA Workgroup indicated that they would be interested in such a project. J. Brooks then asked Gregory Sadler to take the role of Coordinator for the project, which he accepted. J. Brooks also sent out an e-mail (on February 12, 2010) setting out a slightly revised proposed timetable for the CLA Rising Junior examination Project.

The faculty members recruited for the CLA Rising Junior Project were drawn from three somewhat overlapping groups possessing particular experience with CLA Performance Tasks: the CLA Workgroup, University College, and the Philosophy faculty. The CLA Rising Junior Examination Project members met on February 23, 2010, to determine how best to proceed in the first step of the project, i.e. producing a Performance Task for the 2010 examination. Members examined the available performance tasks previously produced by FSU faculty, many of which were those developed by faculty participating in the CLA Workshops and the Course Redesign Grants during Spring 2009. These were available in the Digital Commons.

It was decided that, given that the deadline for administering the examination was approaching, the best option for the 2010 Rising Junior Examination was to adopt an already existing Performance Task that was of general scope and had already undergone some collaborative review. From 2011 onward, new Performance Tasks would be generated by faculty involved in the project.

The performance task that was chosen for adoption was the "Educational Corporation" performance task developed originally by five of the Philosophy faculty from the Government and History Department. The scenario, questions, documents, and rubric were posted in Blackboard and members of the CLA Rising Junior Examination workgroup were asked to review these materials for any typographical errors or unclarities. They were also asked to scrutinize the rubric, and offer any suggestions. Taking this workgroup member input into consideration, G. Sadler then made slight revisions to the scenario, questions, and documents, and more substantive revisions and corrections to the grading rubric. These materials were then supplied to J. Brooks and University College for reproduction.

**3b: Administration of the Rising Junior Examination:**
Administration of the Institutional Rising Junior CLA Exam was carried out on March 27, 2010. A run-through session was scheduled by J. Brooks on March 24, 2010, and used to go over protocols for the administration. J. Brooks provided information about procedures for proctoring and student check-in to the administrators. The following rooms were scheduled for CLA testing: National CLA: Chick 216A, 216 B, and 216C; Institutional CLA: SBE 214, 218, 221, 224, 231 and Butler 317.

Roughly 140 students registered to take the Rising Junior Examination on March 27 (60 for the national CLA, and 80 for the institutional version); however only 112 students actually took the examination on that date (53 taking the national CLA, and 59 the institutional one). Two make-up examination sessions were scheduled. One was scheduled on April 10 administered by University Testing Services, with the

assistance of A. Muhammad. 43 students took exams during that session (24 national, 19 institutional). The other session was scheduled on April 13, 2010, and administered by University Testing Services. 52 students took exams during that final makeup session (17 national, 34 institutional).

**3c: Grading of the Rising Junior Examination:**
Grading of the Institutional Rising Junior CLA Examinations occurred on two dates. The bulk of the grading (78 student responses) took place on April 10, 2010. The remaining 35 student responses were graded on April 28, 2010.

Each CLA response was graded by one faculty member, and was then reviewed by another faculty member to ensure consistency in grading. The coordinator answered all graders' questions about the rubric or grading. The graders engaged in some degree of discussion about student responses as they were being graded.

## 4. University Resources Used In Development, Administration, and Grading:

Use of an Institutional CLA was not expensive to the University. Stipends for $200 each (and an additional $200 for the coordinator) for the faculty involving in development, administration, or grading, totaled $2,400. The project also made use of university resources already in place. Testing Services was involved in administration of the make-up exams. The faculty members employed in the project were drawn from the pool of those FSU faculty already trained and experienced in the CLA.

Investing in a CLA Rising Junior Examination has produced dividends not only for this year but also for future years of testing and assessment. The CBASE examinations results have not been used in recent years, whether to simply assess the current status of Rising Juniors or to provide data to guide evaluation and improvement the FSU curriculum and student learning. By contrast, this year's CLA institutional examination has provided us with usable data bearing on the levels of FSU student abilities in Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Written Communication. This is data which can be used to improve instruction at FSU, and to support further infusion and incorporation of CLA performance Tasks into FSU courses.

In the future, if FSU continues use of institutional and national CLA Performance Tasks in place of the CBASE, the University will capitalize on the inexpensive investment already made this year in three important and mutually supporting ways.

First, comparisons between the CLA results data from different years will permit authentic assessment of measurable increases or decreases in key academic skills. This will also allow determination of whether the long-term strategy of involving faculty in the CLA and gradually infusing it throughout the FSU core and major curricula is producing meaningful results.

Second (making the reasonable assumption that involving students in CLA performance tasks increases and enhances student learning), continuing a Rising Junior CLA examination both creates further opportunities for students to encounter the CLA and maintains faculty involvement with CLA projects.

Third, this year's Rising Junior CLA project has yielded valuable experience in what is involved in carrying out the processes involved in such a project. Reflection on those processes (cf. Feedback and Recommendations sections below) will place us further along on the "learning curve" in future CLA Rising Junior Examinations. In addition, this year's project set into place an apparatus which can be

readily used for next year's Rising Junior Examination with little modification, improved and expanded, or even more closely coordinated with other CLA-related activities and groups at FSU.[1]

## 5. Data/Scores from 2010 Rising Junior Exam:

Raw data (i.e. individual students scores) from the Institutional CLA Rising Junior Exam is provided in appendix A. An abbreviated table of those results is provided here

| | Measure 1. Evaluation of Evidence | Measure 2. Analysis/ Synthesis | Measure 3. Drawing Conclusions | Measure 4. Acknowledging Alternative Explanations | Average of Critical Thinking/ Problem Solving Measures (1-4) | Measure 5. Written Communi-cation | Average of All 5 Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mean Score Group 1** | **2.7797** | **2.67797** | **2.69492** | **2.4746** | **2.65678** | **3.339** | **2.7932** |
| **Median Score Group 1** | **3** | **2** | **3** | **2** | **2.5** | **3** | **2.6** |
| **Mean Score Group 2** | **2.2632** | **1.94737** | **2.21053** | **2.1053** | **2.13158** | **2.526** | **2.2105** |
| **Median Score Group 2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **3** | **2.2** |
| **Mean Score Group 3** | **2.6061** | **2.15152** | **2.3125** | **2.2188** | **2.31818** | **2.788** | **2.4121** |
| **Median Score Group 3** | **3** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2.25** | **3** | **2.4** |
| **Mean Score All Groups** | **2.6396** | **2.3964** | **2.4955** | **2.3333** | **2.46622** | **3.036** | **2.5802** |
| **Median Score All Groups** | **3** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2.5** | **3** | **2.6** |

## 6. Interpretation of Data from 2010 Rising Junior Exam:

The CLA scores answers qualitatively according a well-articulated rubric in 5 different skill areas: Evaluation of Evidence, Analysis and Synthesis of Evidence, Drawing Conclusions, Acknowledging Alternative Explanations/ Viewpoints, and Written Communication. The scores for each component of the rubric may range from 0 to 6. 0 is assigned if the student does not demonstrably attempt to use the skill at all (and is thus rarely assigned). 1 and 2 represent Emerging levels, 3 and 4 Developing levels, and 5 and 6 Mastering levels. While the last two scoring areas measure student levels of more global skills

[1] On this subject, it should be noted that the current QEP White Paper calls for a CLA Performance task with the subject matter of Personal Responsibility to be produced by FSU faculty and given to FSU sophomores, next academic year. At the QEP meeting of March 19, 2010, it was suggested that next academic year's Rising Junior Examination could fit this purpose

and are graded in light of the entire student response, the first three scoring areas differ from these global skills in two significant ways.

First, for each of their skills, the rubric includes question-specific measures as well as a general overall measure (which takes into account the question specific scores) for the skill. Second, the three skills and scoring areas follow each other in a logical sequence. Students must correctly determine what evidence is pertinent to their task. Then they must properly analyze and synthesize the evidence, i.e. they must use the information correctly. Last, they must in fact draw the right conclusions using the information which they have processed. It is possible for a student to perform better in one of these areas than the other, but unlikely that a student will perform very well in one of these three areas without likewise doing well in the other two.

**6a. Preliminary Observations**. The scores from this year's Rising Junior Exam provide us with a picture of the range and average level of current abilities of our mid-career students in the skills tested. In general, those current abilities are unfortunately fairly low. The overall mean and median scores for each area provide some useful information.

The overall means for the Critical Thinking/Problem Solving portions of the exam are:

| | |
|---|---|
| Evaluation of Evidence | 2.6396 |
| Analysis and Synthesis | 2.3964 |
| Drawing Conclusions | 2.4955 |
| Acknowledging Alternative | 2.3333 |

Although one might point to the higher average score in Evaluation of Evidence as something positive, these scores are fairly uniformly low. All of them portray a condition in which many of our students, after two years of University education, remain quite weak, indeed at a rudimentary or beginner level (Emerging, in CLA Rubric terminology) in key areas of Critical Thinking. To be sure, some of our students attain higher scores in these areas, bringing up the average, so that as an aggregate, they are on the border between Emerging and Developing scores. But, what one would hope to see in Rising Juniors would instead be solid Developing scores, or even better, Developing to Mastering scores. The slightly higher score in Written Communication might be taken as another bright spot as well. But, the mean score of 3.036 just barely makes it into the Developing range (a solid Developing score would be 3.5-4.0). Median scores confirm this picture. The only Critical Thinking area score in which the median is a 3 is Evaluation of Evidence. Written Communication is also a 3. These are not particularly good median scores, and one way of understanding these scores is to imagine a mid-level (i.e. 200-300 level) class at FSU in which the middle-of-the-road students, the ones who are necessary to form any "critical mass" in classroom educational situations, remain at a low level in their Critical Thinking abilities, after having gone through some if not most of the core curriculum, and most likely a course specifically on Critical Thinking. Likewise, the writing abilities of these middle students are fairly low. An instructor teaching such a class cannot build on the assumption that students are carrying through whatever Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Written Communication skills they have been developing in previous classes.

The three lowest scoring skills areas should be of some concern. A low mean or median score in Analysis and Synthesis of Evidence, for example, means that students are in general not processing the information they are given. They are not using the various techniques for making sense of, critically analyzing and comparing, and putting together information, techniques which they are exposed to and practice at numerous points in their classes, both in their majors (granted, more in some disciplines than

in others) and in the Core curriculum. For example, fallacies of reasoning are studied thematically in the Critical Thinking course, and are addressed in a number of other courses as well. Nearly every CLA Performance task includes some easily identifiable fallacies of reasoning in the documents, in the scenario prompts, or in both. Answers which identify fallacies tend to earn a 5 or 6 (Mastering) score in this skill area. So, if students we retaining their knowledge about the fallacies from their classes, and they were able to apply that knowledge, they ought to have been earning higher scores in this area.

There are interesting disparities between the scores for the first group who took the Institutional CLA when it was scheduled and the scores for the make-up sessions. The mean and median scores in some of the categories are noticeably lower for the students who took the CLA in make-up session students than they are for students who took it when scheduled. What is particularly interesting to note is that the three overall lowest–scoring areas are precisely those in which this disparity most exists.

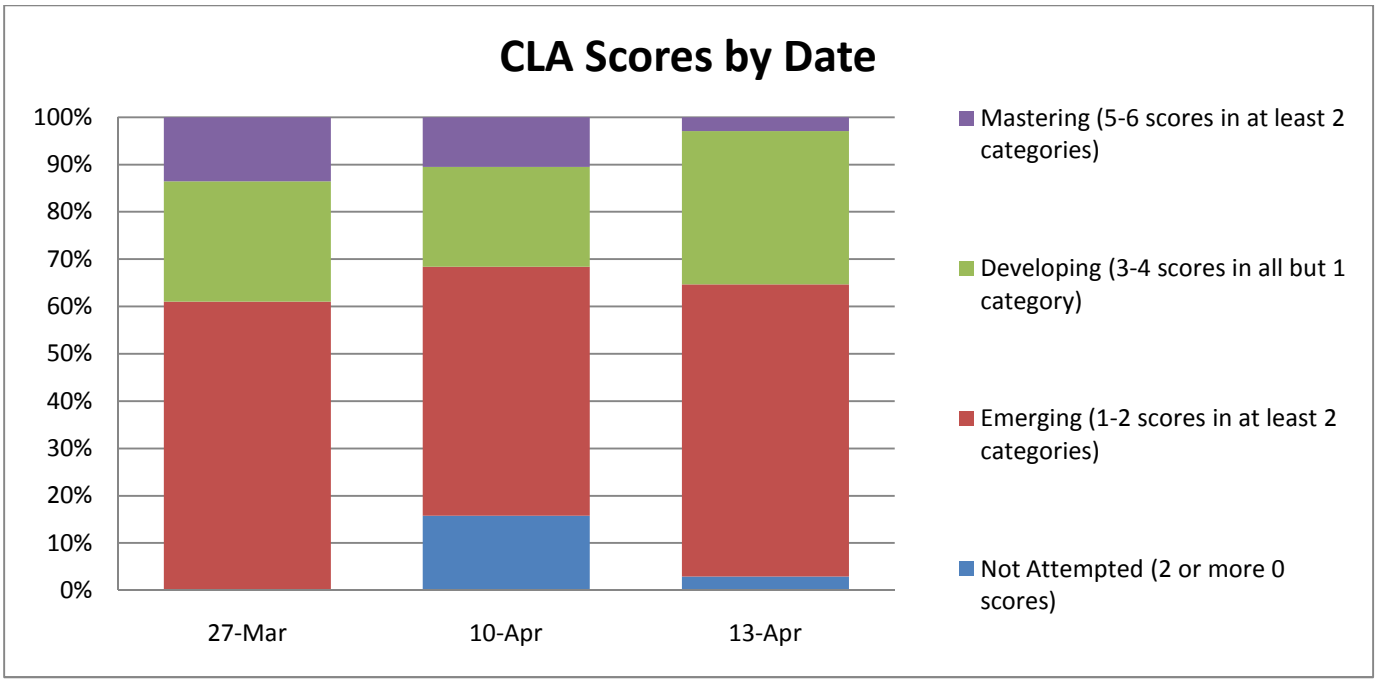
**6b. Another Measure and Implications.** Another useful measure is to divide students into four groups:
1) Students who received a 0 score in 2 or more scoring areas on the rubric
2) Students who received a 1 or 2 score in 2 or more scoring areas on the rubric
3) Students who received primarily 3 and 4 scores in the scoring areas on the rubric
4) Students who received a 5 or 6 score in 2 or more scoring areas on the rubric

These can be roughly understood as students with very poor, poor, acceptable, and good performance levels on the CLA. The data arranged according to this measure is summarized in the table below

| | Students with 2 or more 0 scores or no answer at all | Students with 1-2 scores in at least 2 scoring categories | Students with 3-4 scores in all but 1 scoring category | Students with 5-6 scores in at least 2 scoring categories |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| First 59 Students | | 36 (61 %) | 15 (25.5 %) | 8 (13.5%) |
| Makeup 19 Students | 3 (15.8%) | 10 (52.6%) | 4 (21%) | 2 (10.5%) |
| Makeup 34 Students | 1 (2.9%) | 21 (61.8%) | 11 (32.4%) | 1 (2.9%) |
| Total 112 Students | 4 (3.6%) | 67 (60%) | 30 (26.8%) | 11 (9.9%) |

Several points are interesting to note about the data arranged according to this measure. First, this measure adequately picks out the proportion of our students who are doing quite well in the skills measured by a CLA Performance Task. The measure likewise picks out the class of students whose performance on the CLA is on the whole adequate, students who may demonstrate weakness in one area, but who for the most part score in the 3-4 range. The measure also picks out that class of students whose performances are weak in 2 or more areas.

Second, it also allows us to get some glimpse of the proportions between the Rising Junior student body's performance levels in these skills. Unfortunately, this turns out to be much more skewed towards the low end than one would hope for. In fact, represented graphically, it is apparent that the majority of our Rising Juniors is composed of weak performers on the CLA, students who are very likely deficient in Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Written Communication skills.




Third, by looking at the numbers and at the chart, it seems evident that, according to this measure, the differences between the first group of students and the later make-up session groups become negligible. They all conform to the same pattern: many poor performers, a smaller group of adequate performers, and a small group of good performers.

## 7. Recommendations for Future Rising Junior Examinations:

Recommendations about using Institutional CLA Performance Tasks in any future Rising Junior Examinations turn on two sets of questions. First, should future examinations continue this new practice of using Institutional CLA Performance Tasks? Second, assuming that an affirmative answer to the first question, how can the process be improved?

**7a. Possible Options.** Before answering the first question, the range of possible options should be made explicit. So long as FSU remains committed to administering some sort of Rising Junior Examination, there are four main options, two not involving use of the CLA, two involving use of it.

The first option would be to return to use of the CBASE. This is not a good option for precisely the same reasons that were adduced when deciding to shift to the use of a national and institutional CLA for this year. In fact, that would represent a step back in our assessment of students.

The second option would be to change to some other test, neither the CBASE nor the CLA. While this option may have some merits, depending on the testing tool selected, it also presents some disadvantages. As far as assessing students goes, shifting to yet another type of test will render the results from this year's Rising Junior Examination essentially useless. We will not be able to make any sort of useful comparison between next year's results and this year's results. Put in another way, as far as our ever-present goal of demonstrating some sort of continual improvement goes, the only level on which we would be able to demonstrate it would be that of selection of testing apparati.

A third option would be to continue to use the CLA, but to confine ourselves to use of the national CLA. This would have only two small advantages over the fourth option of continuing this year's practice of administering both a national and an institutional CLA. One advantage would be saving the money which was spent on faculty and coordinator stipends; however, as discussed above, this is a relatively small amount of money, much less than is spent, for instance, on the Chancellor's Reading Club (which provides stipends at a similar level). In addition, the funds invested bear considerable present and future dividends to FSU. Another arguable advantage would be that we would possess a larger pool of students taking the national CLA, which would give the results from that particular examination a somewhat greater reliability. Given the numbers of students who took the CLA exams this time, the increase in reliability gained by confining them to one exam would not be particularly high. We would also lose the benefit of having two reliable measures for the same set of skills, which can be compared against each other once we have the national CLA data.

The fourth option is to continue along the lines of the precedent established this year, i.e. to administer a national CLA to half of the Rising Juniors, and to develop, administer, and grade an institutional CLA for the other half of the Rising Juniors. This is the best course of action to pursue, not only because of the disadvantages involved in the other three options identified above, but also because of several other advantages involved in this fourth option. By developing, administering, and grading our own CLA Performance Tasks, we clearly demonstrate an understanding of the CLA as an apparatus for measuring student abilities in academic skills on the part of FSU faculty and administration. Instead of simply purchasing a test and examining its purported *results,* we can justifiably make the claim that we are involved in and fully understand the *process* of assessing our students' skills. Another considerable advantage is that by administering two different Performance Tasks to the same cohort of Rising Juniors, we are able to get what might be likened to a "binocular" view of their performance and their abilities. To continue that analogy, administering a national and an institutional exam provides us "depth perception" lacking when only a national examination is administered. Other advantages are more closely connected to the matters discussed in section 8 below.

**7b. Improvements to Process.** The Institutional CLA Rising Junior Examination at FSU is a worthwhile and sustainable activity. Granted that, we ought to ask: how can the processes of developing, administering, grading, and feedback be improved? There are a number of recommendations which can be made at this point.

***7b1. Faculty Selection and Training.*** The faculty involved in this year's Rising Junior Examination project possessed visibly differing levels of familiarity with, understanding of, and experience with CLA Performance Tasks, activities and concepts. Fortunately, as a group the faculty possessed requisite levels of these. It would be preferable, however, to develop several ways of assuring a high level of competency on the part of all faculty involved. One way, for instance, might be participation in a workshop specifically on CLA grading.

It would also be a very good idea to begin to document the involvements in CLA activities on the part of all faculty members involved with the Rising Junior Examination Project, perhaps via use of a chart detailing faculty competencies similar to those used for SACS accreditation.

The faculty members involved in this year's Rising Junior Exam project can provide a cadre of CLA developers, administrators, and graders. We should also expand that pool, however, so that we

constantly assure ourselves of possessing enough committed and competent faculty members for years to come.

***7b2. Development.*** In future years, we will have a much longer time-frame for development of Rising Junior Examination CLA Performance Tasks. Development of the new Performance Task should begin once the new academic year has started, and should continue until February. This provides roughly six months to produce and improve the new Performance Task, and the improvement can take place through a number of steps.

The faculty involved in the production of the new Performance Task should include a mix of faculty members who have high levels of competence and experience with the CLA and faculty who have lower levels, so that the latter can improve through the hands-on process of working with the CLA.

The process of development should include at least one sequence of actually administering the Performance Task to some faculty members and students in order to see some sample responses, incorporate these into rubric improvement, and to discern and fix any problematic portions of the documents. Having developed, administered, and modified several Performance Tasks in my PHIL 110 classes over the last year and half, I cannot stress emphatically enough the utility of such review and revision of Performance Tasks before employing them as tests.

***7b3. Administration***. Administration of the tests did not pose great problems.

Some of the students had trouble in using Blackboard effectively to take the CLA examination, and one improvement that could be made would be to brief them ahead of time how to use Blackboard effectively. For example, they might be told and walked through how to use the Copy function to preserve the work they have written up to that point, so they do not lose their work if there is some error or malfunction.

***7b4. Grading***. Grading went fairly well, but some issues should be addressed for future Rising Junior Examinations.

First, there were differing levels of understanding of the grading procedures on the parts of the graders. Some of the questions asked indicated that certain faculty members did not have the high level of understanding of the aims and criteria for CLA grading as could be desired. It would be advisable to find some ways to assure a high level of general understanding and competence in this area on the part of the graders.

Second, a number of the graders did not seem particularly well-conversant with the Performance Task selected and developed, despite having been provided the documents for some time on a Blackboard site. This is probably a function of the shortened time to accomplish the project and of the fact that we used a previously developed Performance Task, so that relatively few of the faculty involved took part in its development or review and refining. Still, some means should be devised to assure that the faculty members involved in grading are very well-conversant with the Performance Task they are grading. One way of doing this might be requiring them as a group to actually take that Performance Task and then to grade each other's answers.

We should also institute a standardized process for review of other graders' answers. This would ensure that the student responses are being scored in a reliable way. Perhaps this could be done by not only

having a second faculty member review each graded response, but also, if there is any significant difference in scoring, to have a third faculty member review it as well, assigning a score that two of the three agree upon.

***7b5. Faculty Feedback***. We need to incorporate faculty feedback into the process of improving the Rising Junior CLA examination. This year, I devised a qualitative survey for Rising Junior Examination project members, and sent it out via e-mail, but got no responses. This again was largely a function of lack of time on faculty members' parts. For the coming year's Rising Junior Examination project, it could be very useful to administer such surveys at each point of the process, and also to use a discussion board(s) on the for Rising Junior Examination Blackboard site.

***7b6. Faculty Compensation***. A higher level of faculty compensation might be considered, taking into account the amount of work involved by the suggestions made above. While this would add to the cost of the project overall, it would also increase the value-added by this still relatively small investment, if at the same time, the requirements for faculty compensation are very clearly spelled out.

## 8. Broader Recommendations involving CLA at FSU:

The second question in the previous section asked how the *process* could be improved. Two other questions connected with that remain: First, how can the *results* be improved? Second, is it legitimate from a pedagogical perspective to focus on efforts aimed at improving these results? This second question can be put in another, more blunt way: Will raising scores by "teaching to the test" provide any real evidence of actual student improvement in these skills, or will it merely reflect student improvement in taking tests of this format? In addition to these two questions, there is also a related issue of coordination of CLA efforts at FSU.

**8a. "Teaching to the Test."** There are two clear answers to the first question. One obvious one is that the results can be improved precisely by improving our students' skills in the areas measured: Critical Thinking, Problem Solving and Written Communication. The main venues for accomplishing this, of course, are in our courses and in our classrooms. How that is to be accomplished leads into much larger issues beyond the scope of this report. Another obvious answer is that he results can be improved by getting students used to the CLA Performance Task format. Again, if this is to be accomplished, it will be are in our courses and in our classrooms. Presumably, the more exposure to the CLA our students have, the more familiar they will be with the format, and the better they will understand expectations and criteria for good scores. Of course, merely having them work on CLA Performance Tasks will not bear as great fruits as having them actually reflect upon the structure and purposes of CLA Performance Tasks.

All of this, though, begs the question whether FSU would be pursuing the right course in recommending to faculty that they "teach to the test." As discussed above, however, in the case of the CLA and other similar means of "authentic assessment," it is not only pedagogically legitimate to teach to the test, it is in fact advisable to do so, precisely to maximize student learning. The CLA can be used as a type of educative (or forward-looking) assessment in the classroom, rather than merely auditive (or backwards-looking) assessment.

**8b. Implications for the CLA at FSU** This leads then to the issue of coordination of CLA activities and of the infusion of the CLA into the FSU curriculum. At present, there are a number of CLA-related initiatives at FSU, but there is no overall coordination of, or even information-gathering about, these initiatives, some of which are connected to particular institutional entities, others of which are "grass-

roots." This lack of coordination and information-gathering both raises a set of problems and presents an opportunity to FSU.

One problem is that, while the CLA is being infused into various parts of the curriculum, including the core (particularly into UNIV 101: Freshman Seminar and PHIL 110: Critical Thinking) and the major programs, with the exception of a few areas, we possess no determinate picture about how much and more importantly how well this is taking place. Put in another way, a number of faculty members are "teaching to the test," but it is not clear that they are actually teaching to the *same* test, or how they are teaching to that test. The lack of information and coordination might pose a problem, given that the current version of the QEP being developed highlights the use of the CLA.

The lack of information also hampers better incorporation of and reflection on the CLA at FSU by committed faculty members. Simply to give one example, there are interesting pedagogical techniques, well worth emulating, incorporating the CLA, developed and used by Dean Swinford in his classes. I would have not known about these at all, or have brought these to the attention of the CLA workgroup, had I not changed to have had conversations with Dr. Swinford, those occurring only because we have our offices in the same building (and that itself is a fluke, since usually Philosophy and English professors would not be housed in the same building).

There are two pieces of good news, however. First, as a result of the CLA in the Classroom workshops, the course redesign grants, and continued CLA work here at FSU, we possess a pool of faculty who are experienced with and are actively involved with CLA-related projects. Even among the faculty not involved with the CLA, while we do not have entire faculty "buy-in," most faculty members are at least aware of the CLA, if not its precise nature, scope, or possibilities. So, better coordination and information-gathering about the CLA would probably allow us to leverage this pool of faculty talent.

Second, there are several entities at FSU particularly involved with the CLA, providing a useful institutional core for continued, expanded, or improved CLA efforts. University College is particularly important in this respect, and has played a leadership role both in infusing the CLA into the curriculum and in using the CLA for assessment of student learning. In a smaller way, the Philosophy faculty members of the Department of Government and History have also played a role in this. The CLA workgroup, initiated by the Provost, and strongly supported by the Office of Faculty Development, has also played a vital role, particularly in bringing in faculty from a wide range of disciplines.

The Rising Junior Examination project, as noted earlier, drew on all three of these entities, and will likely continue to do so in the future. It might be seen as providing a small-scale model for what is possible to accomplish with the CLA at FSU, given the requisite leadership, resources, coordination and organization, and information-gathering.

As to how fuller coordination of and information-gathering about CLA activities at FSU could take place, that is an issue that largely lies beyond the scope of this report. Four possible candidates for consideration might be mentioned, however. This could be a task to assign to the CLA workgroup, probably necessitating restructuring of that workgroup. Alternately, the Office of Faculty Development might be the entity to assign such a task, but might require some additional resources or staff. Given their commitment to the CLA, University College might also be a natural entity to take on such a task. Lastly, in their expansion budget, the Philosophy area of the Department of Government and History proposed the creation of a CLA Across the Curriculum program, which could include such coordination of and information-gathering.

## APPENDIX A: Scores from 2010 Rising Junior CLA Exam

| Essay Number | Measure 1. Evaluation of Evidence | Measure 2. Analysis/ Synthesis | Measure 3. Drawing Conclusions | Measure 4. Acknowledging Alternative Explanations | Average of Critical Thinking/ Problem Solving Measures (1-4) | Measure 5. Written Communication | Average of All 5 Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Group 1** | **March 21** | | | | | | |
| 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2.5 | 3 | 2.6 |
| 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2.25 | 2 | 2.2 |
| 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3.5 | 3 | 3.4 |
| 5 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5.75 | 6 | 5.8 |
| 6 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 7 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2.4 |
| 8 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1.5 | 4 | 2 |
| 9 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2.5 | 3 | 2.6 |
| 10 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2.4 |
| 11 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 12 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3.2 |
| 13 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2.75 | 3 | 2.8 |
| 14 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 15 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 16 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2.25 | 4 | 2.6 |
| 17 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1.5 | 3 | 1.8 |
| 18 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2.5 | 3 | 2.6 |
| 19 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4.5 | 5 | 4.6 |
| 20 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2.25 | 3 | 2.4 |
| 21 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4.25 | 5 | 4.4 |
| 22 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2.2 |
| 23 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 24 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2.5 | 3 | 2.6 |
| 25 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4.5 | 5 | 4.6 |
| 26 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2.75 | 4 | 3 |
| 27 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2.4 |
| 28 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 29 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 30 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1.75 | 3 | 2 |
| 31 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2.5 | 3 | 2.6 |
| 32 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2.5 | 3 | 2.6 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2.5 | 3 | 2.6 |
| 34 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2.25 | 4 | 2.6 |
| 35 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4.5 | 5 | 4.6 |
| 36 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 37 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4.25 | 3 | 4 |
| 38 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3.2 |
| 39 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1.4 |
| 40 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2.75 | 5 | 3.2 |
| 41 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1.25 | 3 | 1.6 |
| 42 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 | 1.6 |
| 43 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1.2 |
| 44 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 45 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1.4 |
| 46 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2.25 | 2 | 2.2 |
| 47 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3.25 | 3 | 3.2 |
| 48 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2.25 | 3 | 2.4 |
| 49 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2.75 | 3 | 2.8 |
| 50 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1.25 | 1 | 1.2 |
| 51 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 4.25 | 5 | 4.4 |
| 52 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 53 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2.25 | 3 | 2.4 |
| 54 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 3.5 | 4 | 3.6 |
| 55 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4.5 | 4 | 4.4 |
| 56 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1.5 | 3 | 1.8 |
| 57 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1.75 | 4 | 2.2 |
| 58 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3.2 |
| 59 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4.75 | 5 | 4.8 |
| **Mean Score Group 1** | **2.7797** | **2.67797** | **2.69492** | **2.4746** | **2.65678** | **3.339** | **2.7932** |
| **Median Score Group 1** | **3** | **2** | **3** | **2** | **2.5** | **3** | **2.6** |
| | | | | | | | |
| **Group 2** | **10 April** | **(Makeup)** | | | | | |
| 60 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2.5 | 3 | 2.6 |
| 61 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 62 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 63 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2.25 | 3 | 2.4 |
| 64 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2.5 | 3 | 2.6 |
| 65 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 | 1.6 |
| 66 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 1.5 | 1 | 1.4 |
| 67 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.2 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 68 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4.5 | 4 | 4.4 |
| 69 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 70 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 71 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 72 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2.2 |
| 73 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2.75 | 3 | 2.8 |
| 74 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 75 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2.2 |
| 76 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1.25 | 3 | 1.6 |
| 77 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 78 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4.75 | 6 | 5 |
| **Mean Score Group 2** | **2.2632** | **1.94737** | **2.21053** | **2.1053** | **2.13158** | **2.526** | **2.2105** |
| **Median Score Group 2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **3** | **2.2** |
| | | | | | | | |
| **Group 3** | **13 April** | **(Makeup)** | | | | | |
| 79 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2.25 | 2 | 2.2 |
| 80 | | | | | | | |
| 81 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 82 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2.25 | 3 | 2.4 |
| 83 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5.25 | 6 | 5.4 |
| 84 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2.75 | 3 | 2.8 |
| 85 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1.5 | 3 | 1.8 |
| 86 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2.2 |
| 87 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 88 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2.75 | 3 | 2.8 |
| 89 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2.25 | 1 | 2 |
| 90 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1.2 |
| 91 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1.75 | 2 | 1.8 |
| 92 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2.75 | 4 | 3 |
| 93 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 94 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2.2 |
| 95 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3.5 | 5 | 3.8 |
| 96 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2.4 |
| 97 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3.5 | 3 | 3.4 |
| 98 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2.25 | 4 | 2.6 |
| 99 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2.75 | 4 | 3 |
| 100 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 101 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3.25 | 1 | 2.8 |
| 102 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2.5 | 3 | 2.6 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 103 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3.25 | 2 | 3 |
| 104 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2.5 | 1 | 2.2 |
| 105 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1.2 |
| 106 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1.75 | 3 | 2 |
| 107 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1.2 |
| 108 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 109 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1.2 |
| 110 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1.2 |
| 111 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2.75 | 4 | 3 |
| 112 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2.2 |
| **Mean Score Group 3** | **2.6061** | **2.15152** | **2.3125** | **2.2188** | **2.31818** | **2.788** | **2.4121** |
| **Median Score Group 3** | **3** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2.25** | **3** | **2.4** |
| | | | | | | | |
| **Mean Score All Groups** | **2.6396** | **2.3964** | **2.4955** | **2.3333** | **2.46622** | **3.036** | **2.5802** |
| **Median Score All Groups** | **3** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2.5** | **3** | **2.6** |

**APPENDIX B: FACULTY INVOLVEMENT IN THE 2010 RISING JUNIOR EXAM PROJECT**

| Dates | Activity | Faculty Members Involved |
|---|---|---|
| February 23, 2010, | Meeting to determine what CLA Performance Task to use | Y. Bao, A. Muhammad, M. Orban, X. Tann, D. Phoenix-Neal, S. Brown, G. Rich, and G. Sadler. |
| March 27, 2010 | Administration of CLA Performance Task | S. Brown, C. Jewell, D. Phoenix-Neal, A. Raines, X. Tang, Xin, Y. Bee, and W. Jing |
| April 10, 2010 | Grading of CLA Performance Task | G. Rich, G. Sadler, D. Wilson, P. Hall, M. Orban, X. Tang, W. Jing, A. Muhammad, Y. Bao, S. Brown. |
| April 28 | Grading of CLA Performance Task (last makeup exams) | G. Rich, G. Sadler, D. Wilson, P. Hall, A. Muhammad, Y. Bao, S. Brown, and A. Raines. |
| Spring 2009 | Developed original version of Performance Task, adapted for 2010 Rising Junior Project | G. Rich, G. Sadler, M. Darnell, J. Osei, and R. Hall |

# Scenario

School board officials in Millsboro, a small, rural, poor town in Morgan County, are concerned that public high school education in their town has become ineffective. The standardized test scores of their students do not compare favorably with those of other students in the state or with those in other states. To remedy the problem, the chairman of the school board, Janice Green, proposes an extensive academic support program, which will include instituting a tutoring center at the high school. In contrast, another member of the board, William Jones, wants to turn the high school over to a private contractor, College Bound, Inc.

To support his view, Mr. Jones puts forward three arguments. First, he says that Ms. Green's proposal to add an academic support program will be counterproductive. His basis for this claim is a chart from a nearby school district showing a correlation between visits to school tutoring centers and low standardized test scores. This chart is document E.

Mr. Jones also says that the money that would be used for academic support programs could be better spent by bringing in College Bound, Inc., a private educational contractor, to run the school. He cites a newsletter from an educational society, the Educational Excellence Foundation, which endorses the program (document D). He also mentions a complimentary editorial in the local newspaper which quotes a recent graduate of a College Bound program and some expert testimony (document B).

Finally, Mr. Jones claims that statistical evidence supports the effectiveness of the College Bound program. He supports this claim with test score data from a suburban school district near the state capital, a district where College Bound, Inc., runs the high schools, both private and public. This data is summarized in documents C and F.

# Questions

Ms. Green hires you as a consultant to determine the strengths and weakness of Mr. Jones's three arguments. To do this, answer the questions in 1, 2, and 3 below.

In answering the questions, **explain the reasons for your conclusions, and justify those conclusions by explicitly referring to the specific documents, data, and statements on which your conclusions are based.** Your answers will be judged not only on the accuracy of the information you provide, but also on how clearly the ideas are presented, how effectively the ideas are organized, and how thoroughly the information is covered. While your personal values and experiences are important, you should base your responses to the questions on the evidence provided in the documents.

1. Mr. Jones claims that academic support programs will be counterproductive. Using the documents provided, determine the strengths and/or limitations of his view on this matter. Based on the evidence, what conclusion should be drawn about Mr. Jones's claim? Why?

2. Mr. Jones claims that money would be better spent by turning the schools over to College Bound, Inc. Using the documents provided determine the strengths and/or limitations of his view on this matter. Based on the evidence, what conclusion should be drawn about Mr. Jones's claim? Why? Based on the evidence presented in the documents, is there any reason to prefer one solution over another? Why, or why not?

3. Mr. Jones claims that statistical evidence shows that College Bound is an especially effective educational system. Using the documents provided, determine the strengths and/or limitations of his view on this matter. Based on the evidence, what conclusion should be drawn about Mr. Jones's claim? Why?

# Document A

Central State University Department of Educational Leadership

January 15, 2008

Ms. Janice Green, School Board Chairperson
Millsboro Public Schools
1000 Book St.
Millsboro, SC 20021

Dear Ms. Green:

Last month you wrote to me asking for information about the Foundation for Excellence in Education. After consulting with my colleagues here and at other universities, I have found out the following:

The Foundation for Excellence in Education was founded in 2001 at Bunyan University.
Its founder was Christine Brown.

3) Its stated mission is to improve education in the U.S.
4) Its aim is to improve education through strict classroom discipline, a self-esteem program, and computer instruction.
5) It sponsors programs each year at the national meeting for high school educators.
6) It publishes a newsletter, "Education News," once a year.
7) It is a non-profit organization.
8) Its main source of funding is College Bound, Inc.
9) Its board of directors is made up of business people and educators.

If you have further questions about the Foundation for Excellence in Education, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Eden Moore, Ed.D.
Chairperson
Department of Educational Leadership
Central State University
Broadview, SC

# Document B

## *Millsboro News*

*Morning Edition* *Monday, January 12, 2008* *$1.00*

"What's Best for Our Children"" "Educating Our Children"
"College Bound, Inc. to the Rescue"

by Steven Jones

In the last years we have seen the standardized test scores of our high school students plummet to new lows. For years now, our students' scores have been at the bottom or near the bottom in the state. Our citizens have been quick to blame our teachers, and our teachers have been quick to blame the tests or our students. In the meantime, the scores get worse. Our educational system seems incapable of solving this problem, and so I am proposing that we turn the high school over to a private educational contractor, College Bound, Inc.

Why do I propose this? First, I recently interviewed Fred Monroe, a recent Valedictorian at one of the College Bound high schools. He credited the College Bound program with helping him develop the skills he will need in college and after college. Also, my fellow journalist, sports writer Thomas Rollins, and I visited a College Bound run high school and observed first-hand the teaching methods at the school. We were both favorably impressed by the learning environment at the school. Students were quiet and well-disciplined. They never asked questions since the teaching was so clear. Anyone who tried to ask questions was punished for disrupting the lesson. They walked in straight lines in the halls. Both Thomas Rollins and I left the school convinced of the quality of education provided by College Bound.

It is true that some people have said that I am biased regarding this matter, since I am William Jones's brother. But that charge is ludicrous. No one has proven it, and until they do, it should not be taken seriously. Let me assure you that I have made every effort to be objective in my investigations into this matter. My main concern is the good of our children. The evidence I have accumulated speaks for itself. First, you have the expert testimony from me and Thomas Rollins. This testimony is based on our first-hand observations of a College Bound program. And second you have the praises sung about the program by valedictorian Fred Monroe. And I am sure that other graduates of the program would agree with him as well.

We have little choice but to turn to College Bound for the good of our children.

# Document C

Standardized Test Score Data from Capital County Schools, Correlated with Number of Years College Bound has Run School, and with Indexes of Achievement and Satisfaction

| School | Average Percentile in Standardized Test Scores | Total Number of students | Number of Years run by College Bound | % of Students Graduating | % of Graduating Students going on to College |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bentley Preparatory* | 85% | 1000 | 5 | 98% | 99% |
| Horace Mann H.S | 60% | 3000 | 3 | 95% | 87% |
| Dewey Academy* | 82% | 2100 | 3 | 98% | 100% |
| Capital City H.S. | 52% | 3500 | 2 | 85% | 85% |
| Oak Lawn H.S. | 60% | 2800 | 1 | 83% | 85% |

| School | Average Percentile in Standardized Test Scores | % of parents polled who approve of College Bound Running their School |
|---|---|---|
| Bentley Preparatory* | 85% | 90% |
| Horace Mann H.S | 60% | 95% |
| Dewey Academy* | 82% | 85% |
| Capital City H.S. | 52% | 80% |
| Oak Lawn H.S. | 60% | 60% |

*= private school

## Document D

# Education News

## from the Foundation for Excellence in Education

## "College Bound, Inc., Changes Education for the Better in El Paso"

College Bound, Inc. is a private educational group that runs many high schools across the country. The College Bound approach to education involves strict classroom discipline with a self-esteem program and computer instruction wherever possible. The founder of the program, Christine Brown, says, "We help the students learn to respect others and themselves; along the way, they learn to believe in themselves as well."

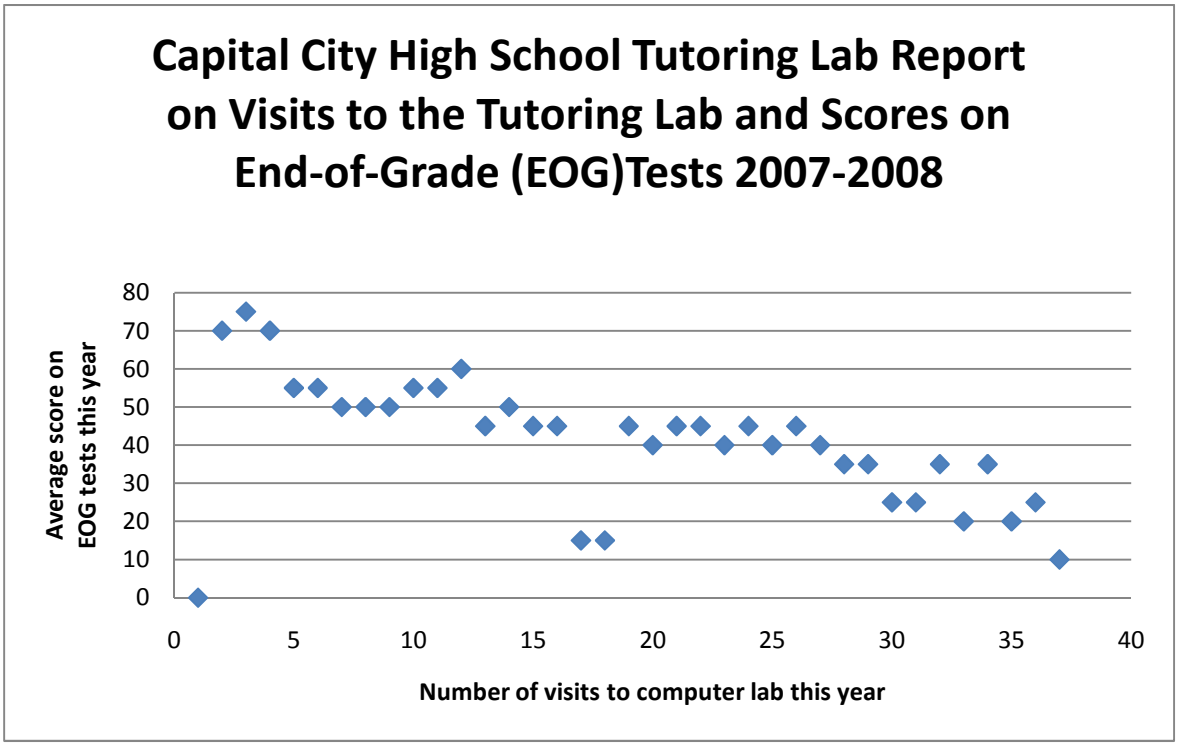
To determine the worth of College Bound programs, consider the case of a high school in El Paso. Five years ago the superintendent of schools there El Paso persuaded the school board to let College Bound run the new high school for immigrant non-English speaking students. The superintendent made the right choice in turning the new high school over to College Bound; as there is strong evidence that College Bound is doing an excellent job.

Results from experiments and standardized test scores support the effectiveness of College Bound's educational programs. To test College Bound's approach to teaching writing and reading, teachers at the school randomly divided tenth-grade students into two groups. Then for one month, they taught one group writing and reading using College Bound methods and the other group writing and reading using standard methods. At the end of the month, the teachers assigned an essay. They were pleased with the results. They unanimously agreed that the essays written by the students taught by College Bound methods were much better than the essays written by the students in the other group. Such an experiment provides a solid scientific basis for the effectiveness of the College Bound approach to education.

Standardized test results provide further support for College Bound's approach. For the last three years, the test scores of students whose last high school math class was Pre-calculus or Calculus have increased steadily.

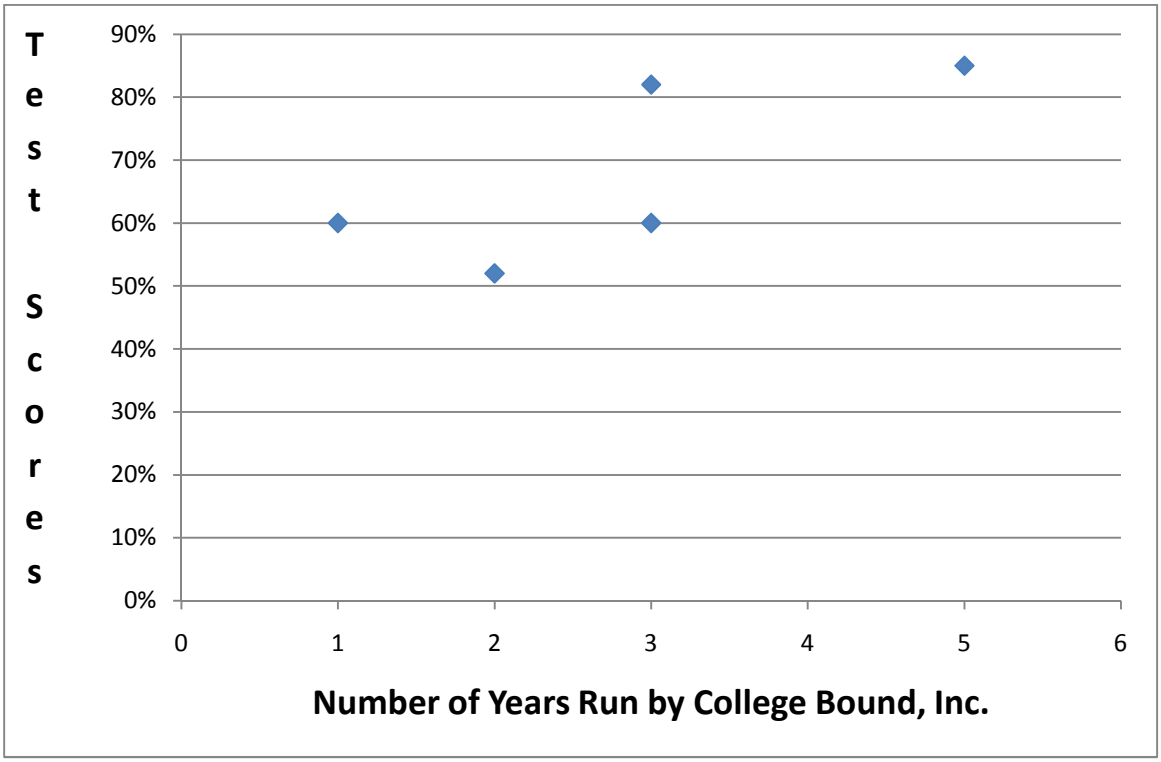
From such data, it is clear that the College Bound approach to education is a success. Results from experiments and standardized tests provide strong evidence of its effectiveness. As a result, we at the Foundation for Excellence in Education give the College Bound program our highest recommendation.

## Document E


Capital City High School Tutoring Lab Report on Visits to the Tutoring Lab and Scores on End-of-Grade (EOG)Tests 2007-2008
Average score on EOG tests this year
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
Number of visits to computer lab this year

# Document F

School Average Test Scores correlated with Number of Years Run by College Bound, Inc.



# Document G

## Educational Research Abstracts: ERAO Search

Search ID: far37quar/zz.12
Search Date: October 17, 2008
Terms: Test Scores, Tutoring, College Bound

3 Items Found

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Author(s): Noter, S.L.
Locator: 2007, Apr, J. Ed Stud. 78 (3), 128-53
Abstract: This study focused on 17 high schools that had been turned over to and subsequently administered by the private corporation College Bound, Inc. during the last seven years. All of the schools were located in suburbs of medium to large cities, and they were studied in order to determine whether College Bound, Inc. demonstrably improved student performance on educational measures such as standardized tests. Nearly all of the schools had significantly improved test scores after 3 years of administration by College Bound, Inc.

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Author(s): Walsh, E & Faraki, G.
Locator: 2006, May, Sec. Ed. Trends 3 (3), 78-109
Abstract: 15 high schools in lower-income inner city or rural areas which were taken over and administered by 3 private corporations, College Bound, Inc., Salamanca Educational Corp., and Educational Discipline. This study examined standardized test scores from the four years prior to and the four years subsequent to the private corporation taking over each school. There was significant improvement in three of the schools, marginal improvement in six of the schools, and no improvement or lower scores in the remaining six. The improvement or lack of improvement was equally distributed among the three different corporations.

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Author(s): Kazantakis, N.
Locator: 2006, Jan, J. Tut. and Tech., 45-56
Abstract: A review was conducted of 70 high schools that had been considered for being turned over to private corporations in the last ten years. All of the schools had low standardized test scores and failed to meet mandated score levels at least twice. 45 of the schools were turned over to 12 different private educational corporations. In the remaining 25 schools, new programs, ranging from tutoring centers, to peer mentoring, to multi-track course offerings were instituted. The majority of both groups of schools saw improvements in test scores over the first three years. The degree of improvement varied considerably from school to school. There was no demonstrable correlation between degree of improvement and the particular private corporation selected. There was also no demonstrable correlation between degree of improvement and the additional programs put in place.

## APPENDIX D: 2010 RISING JUNIOR EXAMINATION CLA RUBRIC

| Evaluation of Evidence<br>How well does the student assess the quality and relevance of evidence? | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Attempted | Emerging | Developing | Mastering |
| Question 1 | 0 | 1 2<br>Does not mention Document E in response or simply mentions Document E but does not discuss any of the information provided by it | 3 4<br>Discusses the relevance of Document E without noting any specific limitations of the evidence. | 5 6<br>Recognizes the relevance of Document E, but also specific limitations. |
| Question 2 | 0 | 1 2<br>Addresses no or only one relevant document (A, or B, or D, or G) in response. The response may mention relevant document but disregards the actual evidence provided. | 3 4<br>Discusses at least two of the relevant documents (A, B, D and G). Response recognizes relevance of the documents without noting any specific limitations of the evidence and/or infers more from the documents than what may be legitimately discerned. | 5 6<br>Discusses three or four of the relevant documents (A, B, D and G) with accurate detail. |
| Question 3 | 0 | 1 2<br>Does not mention documents C or F in response, or simply mentions one or both documents, but does not discuss any of the information provided by them | 3 4<br>Discusses only one relevant document (C or F) without recognizing any specific limitations of the documents and/or infers more from the documents than what may be legitimately discerned. | 5 6<br>Discusses both Document C and Document F and recognizes the lack of support from documents. An ideal response recognizes distinction between private and public schools |
| Overall | 0 | 1 2<br>Does not address relevant documents or employs irrelevant documents. Writes in generalities. | 3 4<br>Considers some of the evidence, but does not use all of the relevant sources of evidence. | 5 6<br>Considers all of the evidence, and determines what information is or is not pertinent to the task at hand. |
| | | Uses primarily personal experience / feelings / beliefs in lieu of data or evidence; fabricates information as sole means to support position. | Moves away from egocentric perspective towards a focus on the evidence presented. | Distinguishes between rational claims and emotional ones, fact from unsupported opinion. Is able to avoid purely egocentric perspectives. |
| | | Does not distinguish between fact, opinion, and value judgments. | Claims that the evidence might be limited or compromised but does not explain why. | Recognizes the ways in which the evidence might be limited or compromised. |
| | | Accepts the data "as is." Does not indicate how the evidence might be limited or compromised. | Mentions deception and holes in the arguments of others. | Spots and explains deception and holes in the arguments of others. |

| Analysis and Synthesis of Evidence<br>How well does the student analyze and synthesize data and information? | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Attempted | Emerging | Developing | Mastering |
| Question 1 | 0 | 1 2<br>Accepts Jones's statement that academic support programs are counterproductive without considering evidence provided and/or relying on personal opinion. | 3 4<br>Notes general weaknesses of evidence provided, e.g. that information has been gathered only from one school | 5 6<br>Notes that correlation between average score and visits does not establish causation and data about the students represented on the chart is limited. |
| Question 2 | 0 | 1 2<br>Incorrectly agrees with Jones's statement that money would be better spent by turning schools over to College Bound, Inc. without considering evidence provided and/or relying on personal opinion. | 3 4<br>Notes limitations to evidence provided. Some general weaknesses in the relevant documents are noted (e.g. quantity or reliability of data), but specific problems overlooked. | 5 6<br>Disagrees with Jones and notes specific weaknesses in the relevant documents, ideally including named informal fallacies (appeal to authority, hasty generalization, red herring) |
| Question 3 | 0 | 1 2<br>Incorrectly agrees with Jones's statement that statistical evidence shows College Bound is an especially effective educational system without considering evidence provided and/or relying on personal opinion. | 3 4<br>Notes limitations to evidence provided. Some general weaknesses in the relevant documents are noted (e.g. quantity or relevance of data), but specific problems are overlooked. | 5 6<br>Notes no clear correlation between College Bound and improved scores is demonstrated in the evidence.<br>Notes that College Bound does not appear to be more effective than alternatives |
| Overall | 0 | 1 2<br>Merely repeats information provided, taking it as truth; denies evidence without adequate justification. | 3 4<br>Provides a cursory and superficial analysis of the evidence. | 5 6<br>Presents own analysis of the data or information (rather than accepting "as is"). |
| | | Does not demonstrate an understanding of the flaws in the evidence. | States that there are errors in the evidence but addresses them generally. | Recognizes and avoids logical flaws (e.g. distinguishing correlation from causation). |
| | | Does not make connections among the different documents. | Loosely ties the data and information from different documents. | Draws explicit connections between the data and information from different documents. |
| | | Ignores information and maintains or defends views based on self-interest or preconceptions. | Points out general contradictions, inadequacies, or ambiguities in the information without explaining the specifics. | Attends to contradictory, in adequate or ambiguous information with explanation. |

| Drawing Conclusions<br>How well does the student form a conclusion from his/her analysis? | | | | |
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| | Not Attempted | Emerging | Developing | Mastering |
| Question 1 | 0 | 1 2<br>Incorrectly concludes Jones is correct that academic support programs are counterproductive | 3 4<br>Concludes Jones does have some reason to believe support programs may be counterproductive based on correlations shown in Document E, but that Jones cannot be "certain". | 5 6<br>Concludes Jones does not have reason to believe support programs are counterproductive because of lack of evidence. |
| Question 2 | 0 | 1 2<br>Incorrectly concludes Jones is correct that money would be better spent on College Bound, based on accepting relevant documents "as is". | 3 4<br>Concludes Jones has some reason to believe money may be better spent on College Bound based on given documents, but notes Jones cannot be "certain" because of some general concerns about possible bias in supporting documents. | 5 6<br>Concludes Jones does not have reason to believe money would be better spent on College Bound because of lack of supporting data. |
| Question 3 | 0 | 1 2<br>Incorrectly concludes Jones is correct that College Bound is an especially effective educational system. | 3 4<br>Concludes Jones does have some reason to believe College Bound may be effective (but not "especially") given some correlation between affiliation with College Bound and superior test performance, but that he cannot be "certain". | 5 6<br>Concludes Jones does not have reason to believe College Bound is especially effective in relation to other options because of lack of specific data on comparative programs |
| Overall | 0 | 1 2<br>Conclusions draw heavily or completely on unsupported opinion. Draws unwarranted or fallacious conclusions. | 3 4<br>Conclusions present a mix of unsupported opinion and evidence from the documents. | 5 6<br>Constructs cogent arguments rooted in data and information rather than speculation and unsupported opinion; avoids overstated or understated conclusions. |
| | | Does not use data and information to support conclusion(s), or reiterates a flawed claim made in the task. | Selects some data and information to support conclusions, but may also include extraneous or irrelevant data. | Selects the strongest and most relevant set of supporting data and information. |
| | | Suggests no need for further exploration. | Identifies holes in the evidence. | Identifies holes in the evidence and subsequently suggests additional information that might resolve the issue. |

| Acknowledging Alternative Explanations/Viewpoints<br>How well does the student consider other options and acknowledge that his/her answer is not the only perspective? | | | | |
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| | Not Attempted | Emerging | Developing | Mastering |
| Questions 1, 2, 3 | 0 | 1 2<br>No alternative explanations/ viewpoints are offered. | 3 4<br>Alternative viewpoints may be offered, but are not plausible or otherwise problematic. | 5 6<br>Suggests alternative reasons why a correlation is shown in Document E.<br><br>Suggests alternative reasons for why the author of Document A may be writing in support of College Bound.<br><br>Suggests alternatives to the indicators of successful teaching that are relied upon in Document B.<br><br>Suggests alternative explanations for shown correlations in Document C. |
| Overall | 0 | 1 2<br>Treats the problem as a simple one requiring an uncomplicated response. | 3 4<br>Recognizes that the problem is complex with no clear answer. | 5 6<br>Recognizes that the problem is complex with no clear answer; qualifies response and acknowledges the need fro additional information in making an absolute determination. |
| | | Fails to identify or hastily dismisses alternative options. | Mentions the possibility of alternative options, without providing any details. | Proposes other specific options and weighs them in the decision. |
| | | Does not consider the impact on other stakeholders. | Suggests other stakeholders might be affected but doesn't specify who or why. | Considers all stakeholders or affected parties in suggesting a course of action. |

| Written Communication<br>How well does the student convey his/her thoughts? | | | | |
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| | Not Attempted | Emerging | Developing | Mastering |
| Presentation<br>How clear and concise is the argument? | 0 | 1 2<br>Unclear what argument is being put forth (no thesis); rambling writing suggests no clear understanding of the topic. | 3 4<br>A position is taken, but it may be tentative. | 5 6<br>Argument is clearly articulated with context provided; conveys an accurate understanding of the topic. |
| Development<br>How effective is the structure? | 0 | 1 2<br>Includes much irrelevant evidence (or no evidence) to support vague, underdeveloped ideas; confused or absent organization. | 3 4<br>Develops some ideas more fully than others; provides some evidence but does not elaborate; organization is inconsistent. | 5 6<br>Develops ideas clearly and fully, effectively integrating relevant evidence from a variety of sources; logical and appropriate organization is evident |
| Defense<br>How well does the student defend the argument? | 0 | 1 2<br>Analysis is rare; argument is unsupported and therefore not convincing. | 3 4<br>Analysis is cursory; statements are supported by minimal evidence; information presented in a haphazard fashion. | 5 6<br>Offers insightful and through analysis; correctly interprets the evidence to defend the argument; considers counterarguments and addresses weaknesses in writer's own argument; selected and ordered information for greatest impact. |
| Mechanics<br>What is the quality of the student's writing? | 0 | 1 2<br>Mechanical and usage errors seriously interfere with writer's purpose. | 3 4<br>Mechanical and usage errors made, but they do not significantly interfere with the writer's purpose. | 5 6<br>Writing style engages the reader, is aware of the audience, and is stylistically sophisticated. |
| Overall | 0 | 1 2 | 3 4 | 5 6 |