



## **CASE STUDY**

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CLEI Usage at a  
Four-Year Private College  
2008-09

## CLEI Usage with Conditionally Admitted College Students

This case study examines a program conducted at a private four-year institution for students admitted to college on conditional status. These students are required to enroll in an academic skills course facilitated by an academic counselor during their first semester of college. As part of a class assignment, all students take the CLEI assessment during the first week of class and again during the last week of the semester long course. The academic counselor uses the CLEI results to guide the structure of the course and work with students on an individual basis.

### I. Positive Changes in the CLEI Scales for the Class

The mean class scores on each of the six CLEI scales, representing the students' individual profiles of strengths and weaknesses, were used to intentionally design strategies for the course. The instructor intentionally incorporated class activities that targeted three CLEI scales; Organization and Attention to Study, Stress and Time Pressure, and Class Communication.

Table 1 presents positive changes in the CLEI Scales among the students in the course who received the intervention utilizing the CLEI (N = 14). Mean T-scores of the all CLEI scales increased at the end of the semester. A major goal of the course was to improve students' critical thinking skills, which encompasses improving students' oral and written communication skills. As a result, the Class Communication Scale of the CLEI shows the greatest magnitude of positive changes (marginally significance,  $p = .050$ ), followed by the Stress and Time Pressure Scale. The course also fosters a group support system that may be a factor in the improved Stress and Time Pressure score.

Table 1. Changes in the CLEI Scales among Conditionally Admitted Students

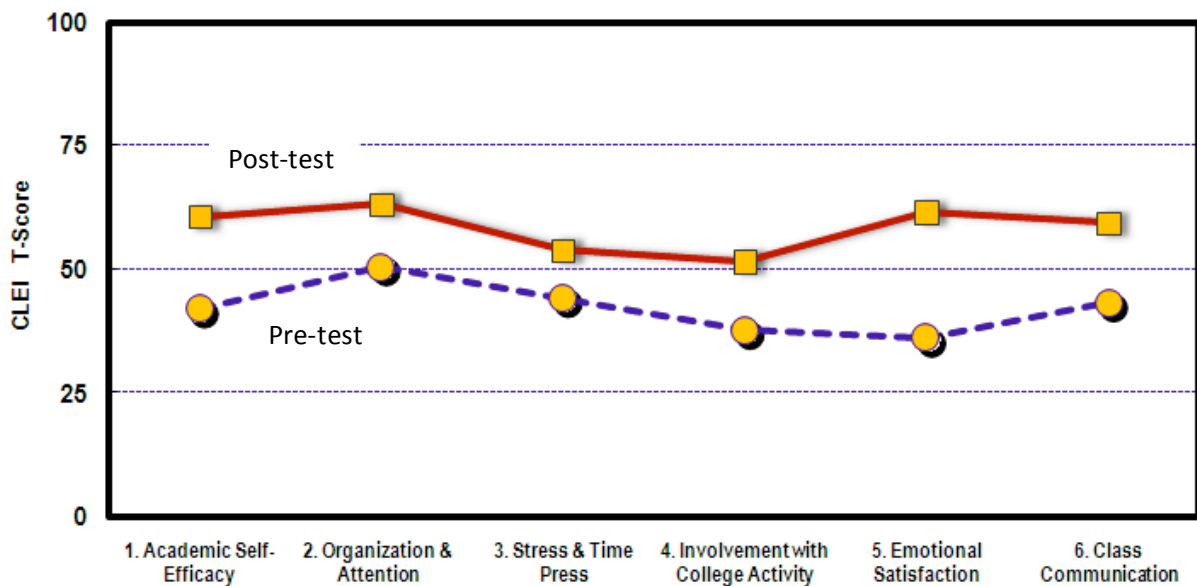
CLEI Scales (T-scores)	First Week of Class		Last Week of Class		$p$ -value <sup>a</sup>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
1. Academic Self-Efficacy	48.53	8.57	48.76	5.95	.968
2. Organization and Attention to Study	48.35	10.29	49.55	11.56	.753
3. Stress and Time Pressure	44.76	7.55	47.38	7.59	.091
4. Involvement with College Activity	52.39	10.75	53.86	10.66	.638
5. Emotional Satisfaction	50.98	7.47	51.31	8.55	.694
6. Class Communication	49.55	8.34	54.94	7.50	.050

Note.  $N=14$ . <sup>a</sup> Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Tests on differences in mean T-scores between the first week of class and the last week of the class (one-tailed tests).

## II. Case Study – Individual Results

The following three students are traditional aged students admitted to college on conditional status and enrolled in the academic skills class. As part of the course, each student met individually with the academic counselor to develop an academic success plan based on their individual results of the CLEI. The students were invited to meet with the academic counselor periodically throughout the semester in addition to participating in the course. The comments below reflect conversations held between the student and their academic counselor and refer to their individual pre-test CLEI scores. The profile for each student reflects the student's scores at the beginning of their college career as well as their post-test scores at the end of one semester of college.

### CASE 1: Charles



In Charles' individual academic counseling session to discuss goals for the semester, it was clear that Charles was very motivated to earn a high GPA so he would be able to pursue an Engineering degree. Throughout the semester he never wavered from that career goal. Charles agreed that the Organization and Attention to Study area was a strength for him. He felt he knew what to do and how to study but in the past, he just was not motivated to follow through. The academic counselor and Charles agreed that this strength would be an asset to Charles as he moved through his first semester of college.

In looking at the CLEI, Charles listed Emotional Satisfaction, Involvement with College Activity, and Class Communication as areas of concern for him. He came to college from an

inner city school where he never really learned to write effectively and where he could just get by with showing up for class and putting forth a little effort. Charles chose to talk more about the Class Communication scale. He was concerned; he felt as though all the other students at the college were "smarter." He realized that class participation was a much larger factor in his grades at college than in high school. Strategies were set up for improving his class participation. Charles set a goal to practice speaking up in the academic skills class because he felt all the students in that class were "in the same boat" (admitted on conditional status) and this made it less intimidating for him.

Charles also self identified a weakness in writing as we continued to discussed the Class Communication scale. He set a goal of working with the writing center on a weekly basis and started meeting with a tutor the second week of class. It was fun to watch Charles as he came to the Center twice weekly to work on writing assignments. The tutors learned as much from him as he from them. Charles would not have been as proactive in setting up these critical writing center appointments if it had not been for the individual CLEI discussion with his academic counselor.

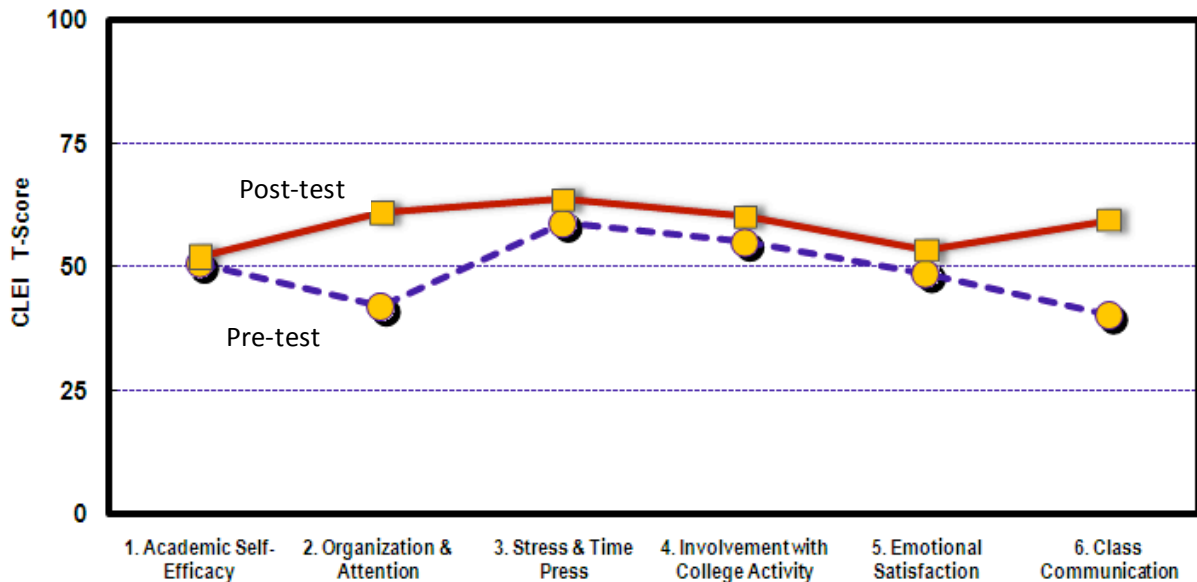
The Emotional Satisfaction scale was discussed next. Charles shared that he was scared of the professors and felt like he did not really belong at college. He agreed to meet with the academic counselor on a weekly basis to get used to talking to an instructor. Charles was very good about using the college resources and yet was intimidated by anyone he perceived to be in a higher academic position. He was overwhelmed and concerned that he would fall back into his high school habits of coasting through school.

It was a challenge to get Charles to come out of his shell and talk in class. As he worked with tutors and small groups in class he slowly started to participate more. He was still slow at volunteering information but when called on he was always ready with an answer.

Concentrating on improving class communication for Charles was an excellent place to start. Concrete strategies were developed for him to work on: weekly writing center appointments, speaking up in class one time per class period, coming to class prepared so he had something to say, writing in his notebook something to add to class each day, and meeting with his professors one time during the semester. Charles could see the results of his efforts and not only did his CLEI scores improve but he was also in good academic standing at the end of the semester.

Charles was keenly interested in all of the topics covered in class – he was insightful and wanted to learn to improve his academic skills. Charles has definitely grown from that first week of class where he begged the academic counselor: "Please don't make me talk!"

## Case 2: Marvin

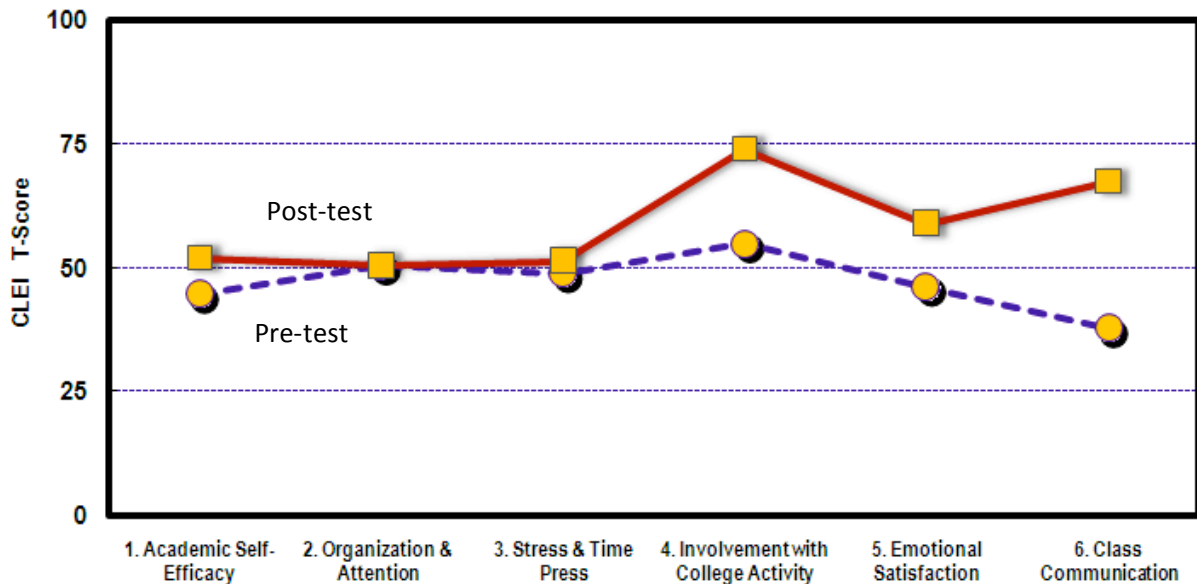


Marvin's strengths at the beginning of the semester appeared to be his Involvement with College Activity and his ability to handle stress (Stress and Time Pressure Scale). He commented that as an athlete he was always involved in activities and planned to continue that involvement in college. Marvin pointed out that he usually did better in academics while he was in-season as in the off-season he tended to get lazy with his studies.

One of the reasons Marvin chose a smaller institution to attend was to avoid getting lost in the crowd as he knew that would be "academic suicide" for him. In high school he never had to turn things in on time and was consistently able to get extensions or do extra credit to bring up his grades. Marvin understood that this strategy was not going to work in college. Marvin fully embraced his weak areas of Class Communication and Organization and Attention to Study. He never participated in "school stuff" when he was in high school and knew he needed to work on that area to succeed in college.

Marvin needed to improve his time management skills, learn study strategies, and be a more participatory student in class. This was a major focus of the course and Marvin was actually excited to be enrolled in the class. He met with his academic counselor to set up a study schedule and later shared that this simple little task was what kept him on track during the semester. Marvin consistently applied the study strategies discussed in class and met with his instructors on a regular basis. It was very encouraging to see the improvement in his scores on the Class Communication and Organization and Attention to Study scales. Marvin is in good academic standing after his first semester of college.

### Case 3: Bonnie



Bonnie's higher scores on the Stress and Time Pressure and Involvement with College Activity scales indicate strength in those areas. Bonnie commented that she was used to the pressures of academics as high school was hard for her. She had already learned to avoid procrastination and had developed the discipline to work at her homework on a daily basis. Her involvement in high school forced her to effectively manage her time to get her homework done. This strength will help Bonnie as she transitions to the college environment.

As Bonnie reviewed her CLEI scores she was most concerned about the Class Communication score. Bonnie reported concerns about being able to compete in a college setting. She had worked hard in high school but knew she would have to learn to study smarter not just longer. Bonnie was excited to learn study strategies during the course and agreed to try the strategies and determine which ones would work the best in relation to her learning style. Other strategies for Bonnie to be successful at college included working closely with her faculty and making sure she took advantage of the points she could earn with daily work and class participation. Bonnie made the commitment to work with the writing center tutors to improve her writing skills. She was also continued with the time management habits she had previously developed.

Bonnie implemented the above strategies during her first semester and is in good academic standing. She met with an academic counselor to determine which study strategies would work best with her learning style and appeared to find the right mix so she could compete at academics and also continued to be involved in extra-curricular activities. She took

advantage of the resources and would visit with her faculty on a regular basis. Bonnie has transitioned well to college and is on her way to achieving her degree in Education.

### III. OVERALL OUTCOME

The information presented in Table 2 represents the progression of a learning skills program that has developed from a workshop format to a semester long course. The program was designed to assist students admitted to the college on conditional status. The goal of the program has been to improve retention and GPAs of this group of students.

The 2006 program consisted of a Saturday workshop and follow up appointments with an academic counselor and peer mentors. In 2007, all students admitted on conditional status were enrolled in a semester long academic skills class. In the fall of 2008, the College Learning Effectiveness Inventory (CLEI) was incorporated into the academic skills class setting.

Table 2. Retention Rates and GPAs of Conditionally Admitted Students

Academic Year	Number of Students	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester (End of Fall)		% Returned (Spring)	1 <sup>st</sup> Year (End of Year)		% Returned (fall of following year)
		On Status	Mean GPA		On Status	Mean GPA	
2006	71	28.2% (n=20)	2.20	76%	25.4% (n=18)	2.25	52%
2007	47	25.5% (n=12)	2.35	85%	21.3% (n=10)	2.43	62%
2008	42	19% (n=8)	2.43	95%	t.b.d.		