



[college&workreadinessassessment]

Sample
School

2008–2009 CWRA INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

Contents and Navigation

This Institutional Report presents College and Work Readiness Assessment (CWRA) results for high schools that assessed their students in fall 2008 and/or spring 2009.

Orange text signals sections specific to your institution.

Report

The Report introduces readers to the CWRA and its methodology, presents your results, and offers guidance on interpretation and next steps.

Introduction to the CWRA (1)
Methods (2)
Your Results (3-6)
Moving Forward (7)

Appendices

Appendices offer more detail on CWRA tasks, scoring and scaling, institutions participating in the CWRA and CLA, and the Student Data File.

1 Task Overview (8-9)
2 Task Development (10)
3 Scoring Criteria (11-13)
4 Scoring Process (14)
5 Scaling Procedures (15-16)
6 Institutional Sample (17-21)
7 Institutional Results (22)
8 Student Data File (23)
9 CAE Board of Trustees and Officers (24)

Attachments

Your Student Data File may be used to link with other data sources and generate hypotheses for additional research.

Student Data File

Introduction to the CWRA

The College and Work Readiness Assessment (CWRA) offers an authentic approach to assessment and improvement of teaching and learning. Growing commitment on the part of secondary and higher education to assess student learning makes this a good time to review the distinguishing features of the CWRA and how it connects to improving teaching and learning.

The CWRA is intended primarily to assist faculty, school administrators and others interested in programmatic change to improve teaching and learning, particularly with respect to strengthening higher order skills.

The CWRA helps high schools follow a continuous improvement model that positions faculty as central actors.

CLA Education (described on page 7) does this by focusing on curriculum and pedagogy, linking assessment to teaching and learning.

The continuous improvement model also requires multiple assessment indicators beyond the CWRA because no single test to benchmark student learning in secondary or higher education is feasible or desirable.

This, however, does not mean that certain skills judged to be important by most faculty and administrators across virtually all institutions cannot be measured; indeed, the higher order skills the CWRA focuses on fall into this measurable category.

The CWRA presents realistic problems that require students to analyze complex materials. Several different types of materials are presented which vary in relevance to the task, credibility, and other characteristics. Students' written responses to the task are graded to assess their abilities to think critically, reason analytically, solve problems, and communicate clearly and cogently.

The CWRA uses detailed scoring guides that produce reliable evaluations of student responses. It also encourages schools to compare their CWRA results with learning at other schools and on other assessments.

The institution—not the student—is the primary unit of analysis. The CWRA is designed to signal a high school's contribution, or value added, to the development of the aforementioned competencies, including the effects of changes to curriculum and pedagogy.

The signaling quality of the CWRA is important because institutions need to benchmark (have a frame of reference for) where they stand and how much progress their students have made relative to the progress of students at other schools. Otherwise, how do they know how well they are doing?

Yet, the CWRA is not about ranking. Rather, it is about highlighting differences that can lead to improvements in teaching and learning.

While the CWRA is indeed an assessment, it is deliberately designed to contribute directly to the improvement of teaching and learning. In this respect, it is in a league of its own.

Methods

The CWRA provides an authentic, stable platform for samples of your students to demonstrate performance in these higher order skills:

- Critical thinking
- Analytic reasoning
- Problem solving
- Written communication

In this report, we provide three important perspectives on institutional performance and comparisons.

The first perspective concerns “college readiness.” Results presented here compare the performance of your seniors, as a group, to the performance of college freshman tested at institutions of higher education that participated in the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA). Unadjusted scores reflect absolute performance and enable absolute comparisons across schools. Adjusted scores level the playing field for schools with dissimilar incoming student populations or imperfectly representative samples. To adjust scores, we compute an expected CWRA score for your seniors. Expected scores are based on two factors: (a) the estimated academic ability of your students (EAA) and (b) the estimated linear relationship between average CLA scores and the average EAA of first-year student

samples at colleges and universities participating in the CLA. For the college readiness metric, academic ability is defined by SAT or ACT scores, so as to provide the most direct comparison to the relevant comparison group: college freshmen. Differences between observed and expected scores are reported in standard error units. We label these “deviation scores.” For this report, mean CWRA scores quantify unadjusted performance and permit absolute comparisons. Deviation scores quantify adjusted performance and enable controlled comparisons. Percentile ranks, both unadjusted and adjusted, are based on the full range of mean CLA scores, or CLA deviation scores, respectively, across all colleges participating in the fall 2008 CLA.

A second perspective on institutional performance is presented through comparisons of high school seniors across participating CWRA schools. As with the college readiness metric, comparisons across high schools involve unadjusted (absolute) and adjusted (controlling for ability) scores. However, unlike the college readiness metric, ability across high schools is measured through the Scholastic Level Exam (SLE). Use of the SLE to calculate expected scores

enables the inclusion of high school students who have not taken the SAT or ACT and thereby strengthens the model. Unadjusted percentile ranks are based on the full range of mean CWRA scores across institutions testing high school seniors.

Effect sizes provide a third perspective on institutional performance. The effect size is a within-school metric that reflects the estimated performance of your seniors (as well as sophomores and juniors if you tested them) relative to the performance of your freshmen. We subtract the mean CWRA score of freshmen from seniors (or another class) and divide the difference by the pooled (across classes) standard deviations of CWRA scores at your school. Effect sizes are reported in standard deviation units. For context, we also provide an average effect size for CWRA seniors relative to CWRA freshmen across all schools (page 5).

The next page summarizes results for your institution across all three perspectives. It displays percentile ranks, deviation scores, sample sizes, and effect sizes. Additional scores and statistics are reported by class within the tables that follow.

CWRA Results for Sample School

Percentile Ranks versus CLA first-year students

93

Senior

Unadjusted comparison to CLA scale scores of first-year student samples at CLA colleges.

Without adjusting for academic ability, your participating seniors performed, as a group, better than 93 percent of the institutions of higher education that tested college freshmen as part of the CLA in fall 2008.

Once we take into consideration your seniors' mean EAA score, we can say that based upon your deviation score of 2.0, your seniors performed well above the expected performance of first-year student samples at CLA colleges with similar mean EAA.

Deviation Score versus CLA first-year students

2.0

Senior

Well Above

Adjusted comparison to first-year student samples at CLA colleges. This value reflects the number of standard deviations your senior mean CWRA score differed from the overall mean in the distribution of mean CLA scores of first-year student samples at CLA colleges with similar mean EAA.

Percentile Ranks versus CWRA seniors

71

Senior

Unadjusted comparison to CWRA scale scores of senior samples at CWRA schools.

Without adjusting for academic ability, your participating seniors performed, as a group, better than 71 percent of other schools that tested high school seniors as part of the 08-09 CWRA.

Once we take into consideration your seniors' mean SLE score, we find their deviation score to be 1.6.

Deviation Score versus CWRA seniors

1.6

Senior

Adjusted comparison to graduating senior samples at CWRA schools. This value reflects the number of standard deviations your senior mean CWRA score differed from the overall mean in the distribution of mean CWRA scores of senior student samples at CWRA schools with similar mean SLE.

Sample Sizes at your school

57

Senior

67

First-year

Your participating seniors scored, as a group, 159 points higher than your participating freshmen, resulting in an effect size of 0.9.

N/A

Junior

N/A

Sophomore

Counts of students with CWRA scores.

Effect Sizes at your school

0.9

Senior

N/A

Junior

N/A

Sophomore

Comparison to your first-year sample mean CWRA performance. Effect sizes calculated as difference between senior (or junior or sophomore) CWRA score and first-year CWRA score divided by the pooled (across classes) standard deviation of CWRA scores at your school.

Your Results

College Readiness: Comparisons to Freshmen Samples at CLA Colleges and Universities

1

	Student Count	Mean EAA Score	Expected Mean CWRA Score	Observed Mean CWRA Score	Unadjusted Percentile Rank	Deviation Score	Adjusted Percentile Rank	Performance Level
Seniors	57	1140	1125	1209	93	2	97	Well Above

Moving from left to right, Table 1 shows how many seniors completed the CWRA and had Entering Academic Ability (EAA)* scores. This table displays the mean EAA scores for seniors, their expected mean CWRA score based on that mean EAA score, and their observed mean CWRA

score. Unadjusted percentile ranks show how your school's mean CWRA scores compare to those of freshmen at undergraduate institutions *before* adjusting for entering ability (as defined by EAA). Deviation scores control for ability (EAA) and quantify the difference between observed and

expected mean CWRA scores in standard error units. Adjusted percentile ranks are based on deviation scores and used to assign performance levels.**

Comparisons to Senior Samples at CWRA High Schools

2

	Student Count	Mean SLE Score	Expected Mean CWRA Score	Observed Mean CWRA Score	Unadjusted Percentile Rank	Deviation Score
Seniors	57	23	1111	1209	71	1.6

Moving from left to right, Table 2 shows how many seniors completed the CWRA and the Scholastic Level Exam (SLE). This table displays the mean SLE score, their expected mean CWRA based on that mean SLE score,

and their observed mean CWRA score. Unadjusted percentile ranks show how your school's mean CWRA score compares to those of senior samples at other CWRA high schools *before* adjusting for ability (as defined by SLE).

Deviation scores control for ability (SLE) and quantify the difference between observed and expected mean CWRA scores in standard error units.

* SAT Math + Verbal or ACT Composite scores on the SAT scale. Hereinafter referred to as Entering Academic Ability (EAA). SLE scores are not part of EAA. An "N/A" indicates that there were not enough students with both CWRA and EAA scores to compute a dependable result.

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90-99th	Well Above Expected
70-89th	Above Expected
30-69th	At Expected
10-29th	Below Expected
0-9th	Well Below Expected

Your Results

Effect Sizes and Sample Sizes

3a

Your Students	Student Count	25th Percentile	Mean CWRA Score	75th Percentile	Standard Deviation	Effect Size vs. Freshmen	Effect Size vs. Freshmen
Seniors	57	1114	1209	1320	158	0.88	All Senior Samples 0.47
Juniors	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Sophomores	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Freshmen	67	934	1050	1135	167		

3b

All Students	Student Count	25th Percentile	Mean CWRA Score	75th Percentile	Standard Deviation
Seniors	1355	969	1111	1238	191
Juniors	11	873	1064	1236	189
Sophomores	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Freshmen	1033	958	1078	1191	162

The counts, means, percentiles, and standard deviations in Tables 3a and 3b include students with and without EAA and SLE scores. As a result, these data may differ from those in Tables 1 and 2.

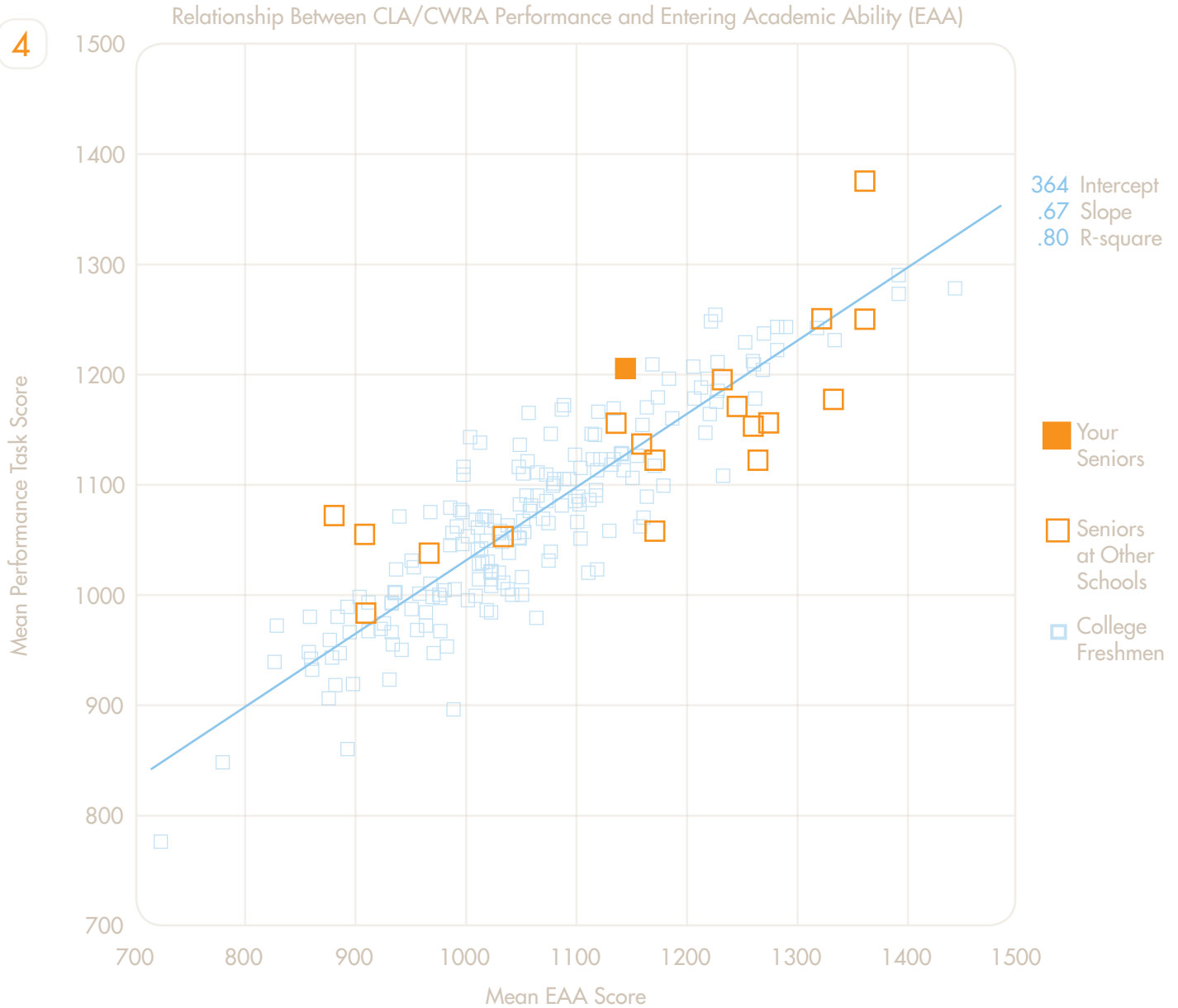
Table 3a provides results specific to your school. Table 3b provides results for students at all participating high schools.

Table 3a also includes effect sizes, which reflect the estimated performance of your seniors (as well as sophomores and juniors if you tested them) relative to the performance of your freshmen in standard deviation units. For context, the average effect size for CWRA senior samples relative to CWRA first-year samples was 0.47.

If you are interested in calculating effect sizes for classes other than seniors and freshmen, you may subtract the mean CWRA score of a particular sample (e.g., juniors) from that of another sample (e.g., seniors), and then divide the difference by the pooled within-class standard deviation at your school.

Your Results

4



The figure above presents data for 177 undergraduate institutions where at least 25 college freshmen received a Performance Task score and also had an EAA score in fall 2008. The diagonal blue line shows the typical relationship between a college's mean EAA score and its mean Performance Task score

for freshmen. Schools above the line performed better than expected, whereas schools below the line did not perform as well as expected. Orange squares represent CWRA schools that tested high school seniors. (Please see pages 20-21 for a list of these schools.) Your school is represented by the solid orange square. The position

of that square is based on the EAA and Performance Task scores of your high school seniors in Table 1. Exercise caution when interpreting the results displayed in this figure if you believe that the sample of seniors captured in Table 1 is not representative of the population of seniors at your school.

Moving Forward

We encourage institutions to examine CWRA performance, communicate results across campus, link student-level CWRA results with other data sources, pursue in-depth sampling, stay informed through the CLA Spotlight, and participate in CLA Education offerings.

Student-level CWRA results are provided for you to link with other data sources (e.g., course-taking patterns, grades, portfolios, student satisfaction and engagement, etc.).

These internal analyses can help you generate hypotheses for additional research, which you can pursue through CWRA in-depth sampling in experimental areas in subsequent years or simultaneously.

We welcome and encourage your

participation in the CLA Spotlight—a series of free informational web conferences. Each CLA Spotlight features campuses doing promising work using the CLA or CWRA, guest-speakers from the larger world of assessment, and/or CLA staff members who provide updates or insights to CLA & CWRA related programs and projects.

CLA Education focuses on curriculum and pedagogy, and embraces the crucial role that faculty play in the process of assessment.

The flagship program of CLA Education is the Performance Task Academy, which shifts the focus from general assessment to the course-level work of faculty. The Performance Task Academy provides an opportunity for faculty members to learn to diagnose

their individual students' work and to receive guidance in creating their own performance tasks, which are designed to supplement the educational reform movement toward a case and problem approach in learning and teaching.

A CLA Education web site also has been formed as a clearing house for performance tasks developed by faculty. For more information, visit www.claintheclassroom.org, or contact Director of CLA Education, Dr. Marc Chun at mchun@cae.org.

Through the steps noted above we encourage institutions to move toward a continuous system of improvement in teaching and learning stimulated by the CWRA. Without your contributions, the CWRA would not be on the exciting path that it is today. We look forward to your continued involvement!

1 Task Overview

Introduction

The CWRA uses direct measures of skills in which students perform cognitively demanding tasks from which quality of response is scored. All CWRA measures are administered online and contain open-ended prompts that require constructed responses. There are no multiple-choice questions.

The CWRA tasks require that students integrate critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving, and written communication skills. The holistic integration of these skills on the CWRA tasks mirrors the requirements of serious thinking and writing tasks faced in life outside of the classroom.

Performance Task

Each Performance Task requires students to use an integrated set of critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving, and written communication skills to answer several open-ended questions about a hypothetical but realistic situation. In addition to directions and questions, each Performance Task also has its own document library that includes a range of information sources, such as letters, memos, summaries of research reports, newspaper articles, maps, photographs, diagrams, tables, charts, and interview notes or transcripts. Students are instructed to use these materials in preparing their answers to the Performance Task's questions within the allotted 90 minutes.

The first portion of each Performance Task contains general instructions and introductory material. The student is then presented with a split screen. On the right side of the screen is a list of the materials in the Document Library. The student selects a particular document to view by using a pull-down menu. On the left side of the screen are a question and a response box. There is no limit on how much a student can type. Upon completing a question, students then select the next question in the queue.

No two Performance Tasks assess the exact same combination of skills. Some ask students to identify and then compare and contrast the strengths and

limitations of alternative hypotheses, points of view, courses of action, etc. To perform these and other tasks, students may have to weigh different types of evidence, evaluate the credibility of various documents, spot possible bias, and identify questionable or critical assumptions.

Performance Tasks also may ask students to suggest or select a course of action to resolve conflicting or competing strategies and then provide a rationale for that decision, including why it is likely to be better than one or more other approaches.

(cont.)

