

CCTDI Assessment Report

Fall 2020

Author: Joseph F. van Gaalen, Ph.D., Asst. VP, Institutional Research, Assessment & Effectiveness

1 INTRODUCTION

The Academic Success Department's goal is to permit first-time-in-college students to become independent learners proficient in critical thinking. Through course completion, students will be able to demonstrate their analytical and evaluation skills. One measurement for the achievement of that goal is the use of the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory tests (CCTDI). The Academic Success Department has identified a set criterion for defining student advancement in SLS 1515 *Cornerstone Experience*. The results of the overall means of the CCTDI are expected to statistically significantly improve in the following Critical Thinking Dispositions: Truth Seeking, Open-Mindedness, Analyticity, Systematicity, Inquisitiveness, Confidence in Reasoning, and Maturity of Judgment, as measured by the CCTDI. This report began as part of the FSW QEP and continues as course level assessment for SLS 1515 *Cornerstone Experience*.

Pre-test/post-test studies in small groups provide an assessment foundation for learning and skill set adoption under given criteria. While scores do yield some error related to the target subject such as grade level or demographic, many can be accounted for in small sub-samples (individual classes). Moreover, those correlative measures that cannot be accounted for can be better understood through assessment (Cole et al., 2011).

For additional detail or further analysis not provided in this report, please contact Dr. Joseph F. van Gaalen, Asst. VP of Institutional Research, Assessment and Effectiveness (Joseph.VanGaal@fsw.edu; x16965).

2 STATISTICS

2.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND SIGNIFICANCE TESTING

During the Fall 2020 semester, 855 total tests (pre- and post-) were administered to students. Of those, 379 of which were pre-/post- paired tests and 97 tests did not have counterparts. Pre-test and post-test mean scores for each dimension as well as the overall score are provided in Table 1. Four of seven dimensions exhibit improvements. The difference in the means from pre-to-post test scores for each dimension (Truth-seeking, Open mindedness, Inquisitiveness, Analyticity, Systematicity, Confidence in Reasoning, and Maturity of Judgment) was tested for significance using a paired means t-test according to standard methods (Davis, 1973; McDonald, 2009; Siegel, 1956; Wilkinson, 1999). The results of significance testing for each dimension are also shown in Table 1.

The paired means t-test results indicate that Analyticity and Confidence in Reasoning exhibit statistically significant improvements. In other words, we cannot reject the null hypothesis that the difference in

the means of the pre- and post-test scores are equal to 0, and we cannot conclude this with a 95% confidence that the differences in scores are not solely due to chance.

Effect size was calculated using a method devised by Rosenthal and Rosnow (1991) for meta-analytical purposes in potential comparisons with other institutions (Lipsey and Wilson, 1993). The statistically significant results exhibit what Cohen (1988) would consider small-to-medium effect sizes ranging from 0.04 to 0.22 (Table 1). In other words, non-overlap from pre-test scores to post-test scores range from approximately 4% to 17%.

	Truth-seeking	Open Mindedness	Inquisitiveness	Analyticity	Systematicity	Confidence in Reasoning	Maturity of Judgment	Overall
Pre-test Mean	34.3	41.3	46.0	43.8	38.6	45.6	39.0	287.1
Post-test Mean	34.5	40.9	46.5	43.3	38.9	44.6	38.7	288.5
Effect size	-0.04	0.108	-0.10	0.13	-0.07	0.22	0.04	0.08
p-value	0.562	0.101	0.131	0.004	0.292	0.0004	0.497	0.226

Table 1. Comparison of mean scores for Pre/post test scores. Bold denote statistically significant difference. Positive effect sizes indicate a higher mean score for Post-test scores.

2.2 SUPPORTING EXPLORATORY DATA ANALYSIS

Since significance tests only provide information under the assumption the two groups are unchanged excepting for the learning in the classroom between pre-/post-tests, it is necessary to explore in detail each dimension using multiple standard processes for support of significance testing. In this way, the most effective assessment can be presented toward instructive improvement (Elder and Paul, 2007).

Figure 1 exhibits the percentage improvement/decline of student test scores. The attributes Confidence in Reasoning and Analyticity exhibit the greatest increased percentages at 50.4% and 59.1%, respectively. Truth-seeking, Inquisitiveness, and Systematicity exhibit greater declines than improvement.

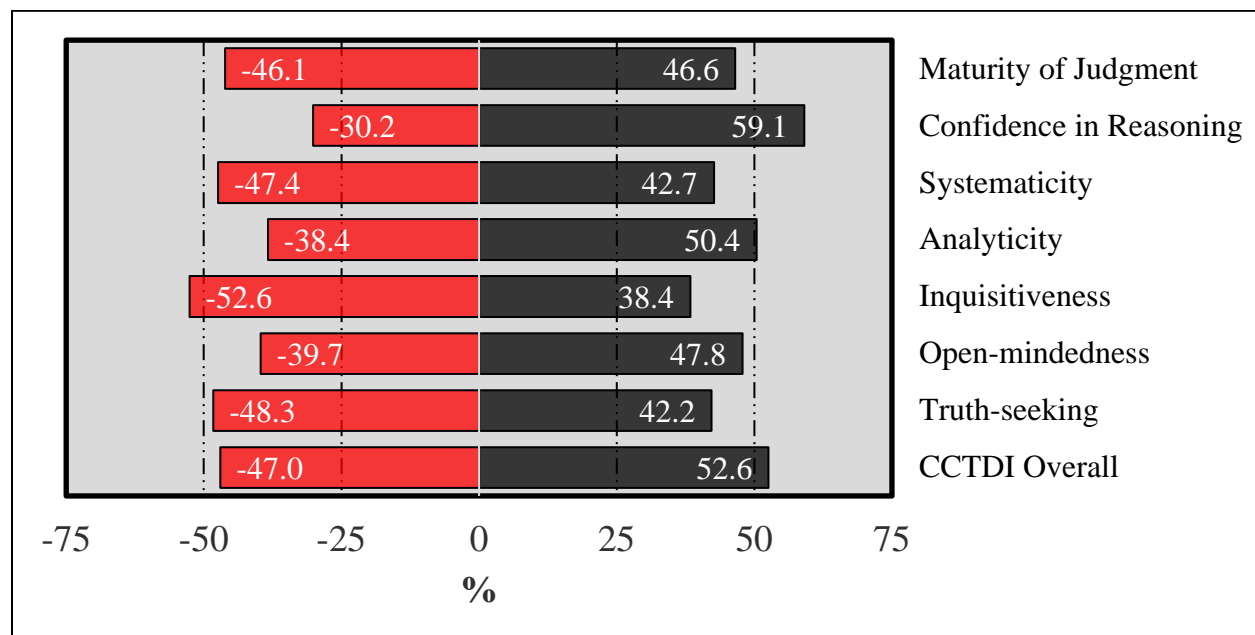


Figure 1. Percentage of students improved (black) vs. declined (red). Difference of the sum of increase and decline from 100 is the percentage of test takers that exhibited no change.

2.3 LONGITUDINAL STUDY

The results of paired means t-test of pre-/post- test scores for all semesters from fall 2012 through the present are shown in Table 2. Analyticity and Confidence in Reasoning exhibit improvements from pre-test to post-test in all terms, although not all improvements are statistically significant. The Confidence in Reasoning attribute has exhibited statistically significant improvements in all but two terms since implementation (17 of 19 terms). Analyticity exhibits a similar rate, with statistically significant improvement in 13 of 19 terms. The Truth-seeking attribute also demonstrates strong results with 9 of 19 terms exhibiting statistically significant improvement. Open Mindedness consistently exhibits positive changes from pre-test to post-test, although only 6 of 19 terms are statistically significant. A complete review of positive changes and statistically significant positive changes is listed below:

- ✚ Confidence in Reasoning
 - 19/19 positive change, 17/19 statistically significant
- ✚ Analyticity
 - 19/19 positive change, 13/19 statistically significant
- ✚ Truth-seeking
 - 17/19 positive change, 9/19 statistically significant
- ✚ Systematicity
 - 16/19 positive change, 6/19 statistically significant
- ✚ Open Mindedness
 - 18/19 positive change, 6/19 statistically significant
- ✚ Maturity of Judgment
 - 10/19 positive change, 4/19 statistically significant
- ✚ Inquisitiveness
 - 9/19 positive change, 1/19 statistically significant

	Truth-seeking	Open Mindedness	Inquisitiveness	Analyticity	Systematicity	Confidence in Reasoning	Maturity of Judgment
Fall '12	1.1	0.7	0.7	1	0.8	1.6	1.2
Spring '13	0.4	0.7*	0.1	1.2	0.8*	1.8	1.1
Summer '13	0.8	0.4	0.4	1.1	1.1	2.6	0.0
Fall '13	0.5	0.0	-0.6	0.4*	0.0	1.4	-0.1
Spring '14	1.1	0.8	0.0	1.2	0.8	1.7	1.1
Summer '14	0.8*	0.5	0.2	1.2	1.6	1.8	0.1
Fall '14	0.8	0.4*	-0.3	0.7	0.2	1.7	-0.2*
Spring '15	0.9	1.0	0.1	1.3	0.4*	2.3	-0.0
Fall '15 [#]	0.0	0.0	-0.4	0.5	-0.5	1.3	0.3
Spring '16 [#]	0.8	0.4	0.0	1.1	0.6	2.0	0.3
Fall '16 [#]	0.1	0.0	-0.1	0.5	-0.5	2.0	-0.3
Spring '17 [#]	-0.3	0.1	-0.2	0.8	0.9	2.1	0.0
Fall '17 [#]	1.5*	0.3	-0.6	0.3	0.3	0.5	1.4*
Spring '18 [#]	0.5	0.5	0.1	1.5	0.6	2.3	-0.6
Fall '18 [#]	0.1	0.1	-1.0	0.2	0.0	1.5	-0.9
Spring '19 [#]	0.7	0.2	-0.3	1.2	0.1	1.3	0.5
Fall '19 [#]	1.5	0.8	0.0	1.2	0.4	2.1	0.7
Spring '20 ^{#1}	1.3	0.0	-1.6	0.5	0.3	0.9	-0.1
Fall '20 [#]	-0.2	0.5	-0.5	0.6	-0.3	1.1	0.2

Table 2. SLS 1515 CCTDI Pre-/Post- test results mean difference. Comparison of significance test results for mean difference of pre-/post-test scores for Fall 2012 through the present. Shaded cells indicate statistically significant differences in the mean at the 95% confidence level. Red text denotes decrease from pre-to-post. *Denote marginal significance as defined by Johnson (2013). [#]Indicate scores originate from a random sample of the full SLS 1515 population.

Figure 2 is a graphical representation of the difference in mean scores of attributes across all semesters. The consistently strong improvement in scores from pre-to-post tests of the Confidence in Reasoning attribute is clearly visible (see consistent red zones in Figure 2). Analyticity exhibits the second strongest improvement over time followed by Truth-seeking.

By comparison, the attribute with minimal results across all semesters is Inquisitiveness (see consistent blue zones in Figure 2). This dimension has the lowest mean score difference across 16 of 19 semesters during the study and exhibited a decline from pre-to-post scores in the fall 2013, fall 2014, fall 2015, fall 2016, spring 2017, fall 2017, fall 2018, spring 2019, spring 2020, and fall 2020 semesters.

In terms of variability, Inquisitiveness exhibits the widest variation of any indicator, as high as +0.7 in fall 2012, and as low as -1.6 in spring 2020, a range of 2.3. Analyticity is the most stable of all attributes with a range of just 1.3 from highest (+1.5) in spring 2018 to lowest (+0.2) in fall 2018.

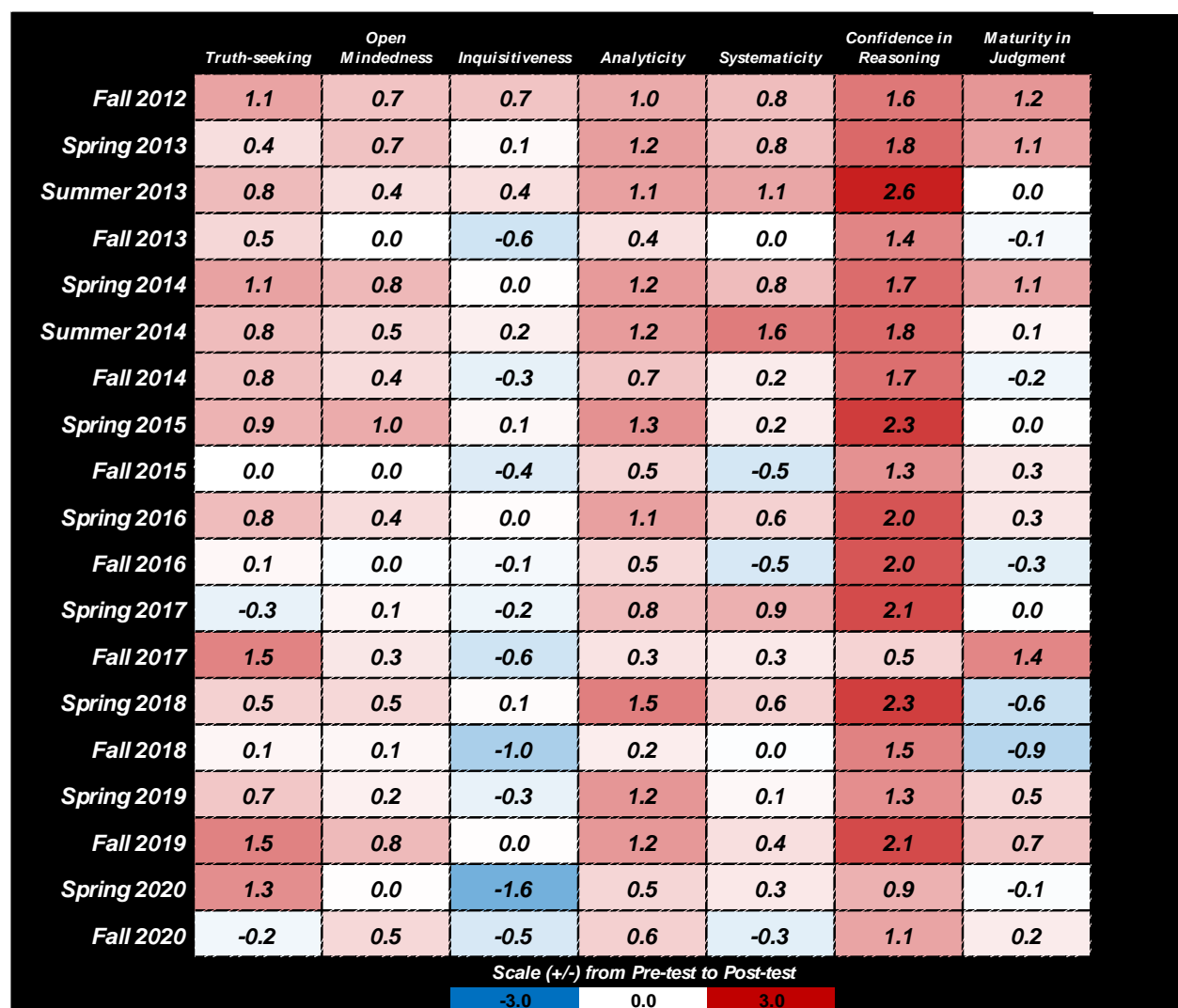


Figure 2. Colormap comparison of the difference in mean scores from pre-to-post tests across semester by attribute. Color bar represents maximum range of changes in the mean from pre-test to post-test with strongest positive changes in the mean denoted by darker reds (max = +3) and strongest negative changes in the mean denoted by darker blues (max = -3).

The attributes of the CCTDI exhibit a wide range of scores from pre-test to post-test. In some cases, the post-test scores of one attribute are lower than the pre-test scores of another. A review of this comparison can be helpful in determining if there is further room for improvement in that attribute as well as if minimal improvements are a result of an already strong attribute score. Figure 3 compares time-averaged pre-test mean scores from fall 2012 through the present to time-averaged post-test mean scores. Note that the highest pre-test scoring attribute, Inquisitiveness, also exhibits the smallest improvement from pre-to-post test with an improvement that barely registers on the graph. By comparison, the second highest pre-test attribute, Confidence in Reasoning, exhibits the largest improvement.

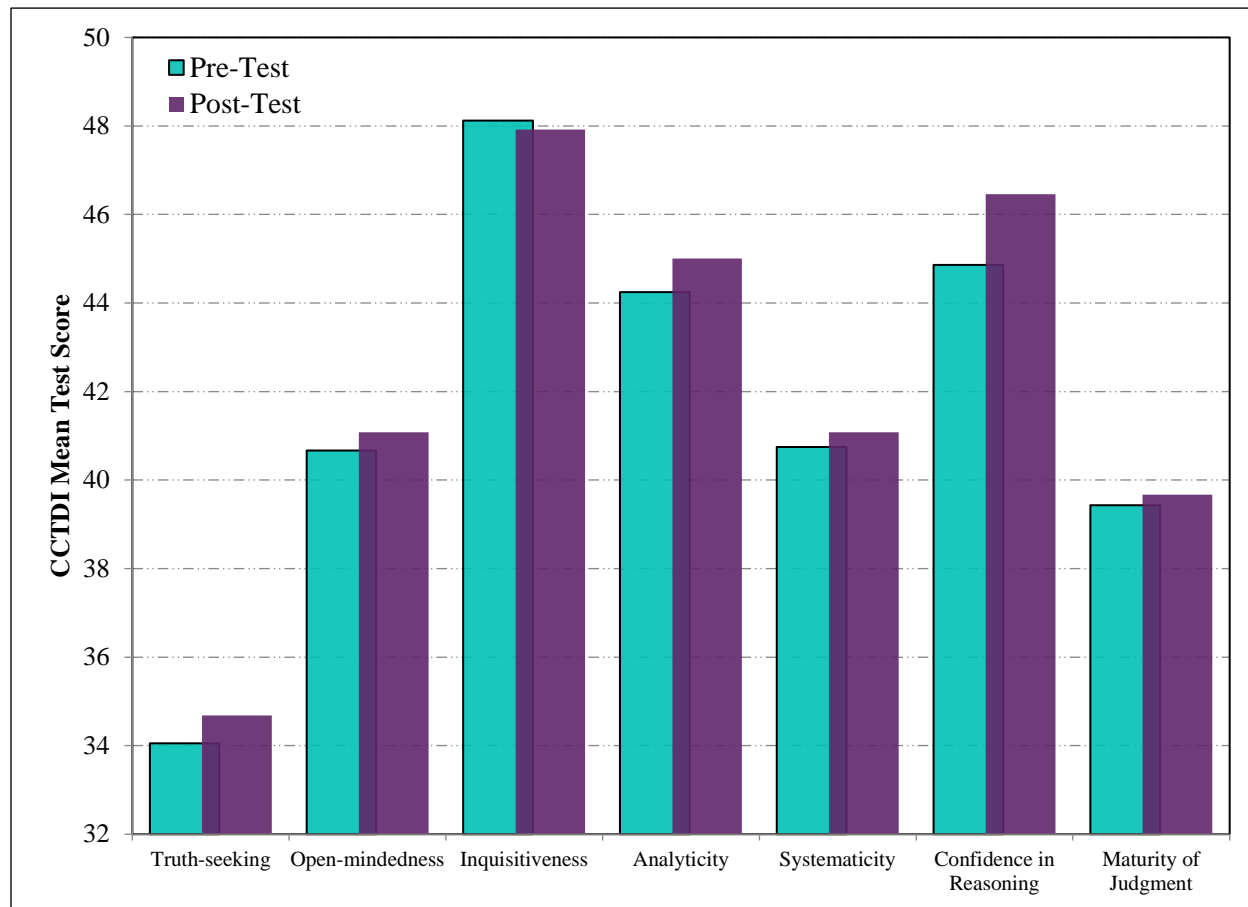


Figure 3. Average through time of the CCTDI mean scores from pre-test (aqua) to post-test (purple) from fall 2012 through the present.

3 CONCLUSIONS

In the SLS 1515 *Cornerstone Experience* course-level assessment, students are expected to improve in the seven Critical Thinking Dispositions: Truth Seeking, Open-Mindedness, Analyticity, Systematicity, Inquisitiveness, Confidence in Reasoning, and Maturity of Judgment based on exposure to these topics as a result of the course. These dispositions are measured using the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory tests (CCTDI) and analysis between pre-test (first three weeks of semester testing date) and post-test (last three weeks of semester testing date) is performed.

A drilldown of the results of the CCTDI fall 2020 assessment are as follows:

1. During the Fall 2020 semester, 855 total tests (pre- and post-) were administered to students. Of those, 379 of which were pre-/post- paired tests and 97 tests did not have counterparts.
2. Four of seven dimensions exhibit improvements.
3. The attributes Confidence in Reasoning and Analyticity exhibit the greatest increased percentages at 50.4% and 59.1%, respectively. Truth-seeking, Inquisitiveness, and Systematicity exhibit greater declines than improvement.
4. The Confidence in Reasoning attribute has exhibited statistically significant improvements in all but two terms since implementation (17 of 19 terms). Analyticity exhibits a similar rate, with statistically significant improvement in 13 of 19 terms. The Truth-seeking attribute also demonstrates strong results with 9 of 19 terms exhibiting statistically significant improvement. Open Mindedness consistently exhibits positive changes from pre-test to post-test, although only 6 of 19 terms are statistically significant.
5. In terms of variability, Inquisitiveness exhibits the widest variation of any indicator, as high as +0.7 in fall 2012, and as low as -1.6 in spring 2020, a range of 2.3. Analyticity is the most stable of all attributes with a range of just 1.3 from highest (+1.5) in spring 2018 to lowest (+0.2) in fall 2018.

4 REFERENCES

- Beser, A., and Kissal. 2009. Critical Thinking Dispositions and Problem Solving Skills Among Nursing Students. *DEUHYO Ed*, 2(3), 88-94.
- Cole, R., Haimson, J., Perez-Johnson, I., and May, H. 2011. Variability in Pretest-Posttest Correlation Coefficients by Student Achievement Level. NCEE Reference Report 2011-4033. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, U.S. Department of Education.
- CCTDI. 2013. 2013 CCTDI Manual. San Jose, California: Insight Assessment, Division of California Academic Press.
- Cohen, J. 1988. Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences (2nd ed.). Lawrence Earlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, NJ.
- Davis, J.C. 1973. Statistics and Data Analysis in Geology. John Wiley & Sons, New York, New York, 564 pp.
- Dunlop, W.P., Cortina, J.M., Vaslow, J.B., and Burke, M.J. 1996. Meta-analysis of experiments with matched groups or repeated measures designs. *Psychological Methods*, 1, 170-177.
- Elder, L, and Paul, R. 2007. Consequential Validity: Using Assessment to Drive Instruction. In: *Foundation For Critical Thinking*. Retrieved from <http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/consequential-validity-using-assessment-to-drive-instruction/790>.
- Johnson, V. 2013. Revised Standards for Statistical Evidence. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, 110(48), 19313-19317.
- Lipsey, M.W. and Wilson, D.B. 1993. The efficacy of psychological, educational, and behavioral treatment: Confirmation from meta-analysis. *American Psychologist*, 48, 1181-1209.

- McDonald, J.H. 2009. Handbook of Biological Statistics (2nd ed.). Sparky House Publishing, Baltimore, Maryland.
- Rosenthal, R. and Rosnow, R.L. 1991. Essentials of behavioral research: Methods and data analysis. McGraw Hill, New York, 692 pp.
- Siegel, S. 1956. Nonparametric statistics for the behavior sciences. McGraw-Hill, New York, New York, 312 pp.
- Wilkinson, L. 1999. APA Task Force on Statistical Inference. Statistical Methods in Psychology Journals: Guidelines and Explanations. American Psychologist 54 (8), 594–604.