

## Critical/Creative Thinking

2007-08

The Critical/Creative Thinking sub-committee continues to use the same self-made pre/post test to measure critical thinking gains among students. The assessment tool tests students' abilities to use components of critical thinking, challenge assumptions and think creatively. The pre-test is given in first-semester freshmen-rich courses within the first two weeks of their arrival at school, while the post-test is distributed to courses rich in second-semester sophomores within the last four weeks of their 4<sup>th</sup> semester at NJC. Sub-committee members established the goal of 75% (a score of 9.75 out of 13 points possible) on the test and hand score the instrument each semester.

As shown in the table below, a gain in critical/creative thinking skills has occurred each year for the past six years. While the 75% performance goal was reached only once (Spring 2003), the consistent use of the same assessment instrument demonstrates that students do gain in their ability to think critically and creatively during their time at NJC.

<b>Averages</b>	<b>F'00-Sp'02</b>	<b>F'01-Sp'03</b>	<b>F'02-Sp'04</b>	<b>F'03-Sp'05</b>	<b>F'04-Sp'06</b>	<b>F'05'Sp'07</b>
Pre-test	7.84	6.78	7.02	7.04	6.83	6.83
Post-test	9.1	9.9	8.36	8.12	9.49	8.81
Gain/Loss	1.26	3.12	1.34	1.08	2.66	1.98
% Gain/Loss	16.07	46.02	19.08	15.34	38.95	28.9

As NJC faculty become more aware of the importance of Engaging the Learners through Title III efforts, instructors have become more creative in teaching methods and have expected more creativity from students. Both general and specific verbiage is contained in samples of various course syllabi provided.

The Critical/Creative Thinking sub-committee also initiated the Critical Thinking Challenge in the student newspaper in Spring 2007. Each edition has 1-2 critical/creative thinking puzzles in it that students could answer and turn in for prizes. This effort continued in Fall 2007 except the challenges were created "in house." For example, one newspaper staff member created a Trivia Challenge for each edition and the Spanish class created a bi-lingual crossword puzzle.