

Grove City College Study Confirms Classic Learning Test Predicts College Success

An independent study conducted by Grove City College finds CLT scores are a stronger predictor of student success than the SAT or ACT.

ANNAPOLIS, MD, UNITED STATES, November 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new study from Grove City College demonstrates that the [Classic Learning Test \(CLT\)](#), an alternative to traditional standardized tests, is a highly effective predictor of academic performance and student persistence in college.

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Jeremy Tate, CEO of CLT

The study, conducted by Dr. Gary Welton, Assistant Dean for Institutional Assessment at Grove City College, analyzed data from 235 students to evaluate the CLT’s efficacy as a measure of academic readiness. The findings reveal a significant positive correlation between CLT scores and first-year GPA, retention, and graduation rates—confirming

that students with stronger CLT scores are more likely to thrive in college.

“The CLT is not only a valid predictor but also a robust and highly effective instrument for identifying students prepared for the rigors of higher education,” said Dr. Welton.

The research further indicates that the CLT’s verbal reasoning section is the strongest individual predictor of first-year academic success. Higher verbal reasoning scores also correlate with greater student persistence, suggesting that the skills measured by the CLT—deep reading, comprehension, and critical reasoning—extend beyond academics to include non-cognitive factors that support long-term success.

Outperforming Traditional Assessments

In a comparison between CLT results and data from a 2024 College Board study on the SAT, Dr. Welton found that the CLT demonstrated a five basis-point higher predictive correlation for first-year GPA. This enhancement, he notes, “suggests CLT is a more precise instrument for forecasting student success.”

“This enhanced validity may be attributed to the [CLT’s distinct pedagogical philosophy](#), which

prioritizes the analytical and verbal reasoning skills cultivated by a classical curriculum,” Dr. Welton concluded. “These are the very skills essential for success in a demanding academic environment.”

A Return to Academic Rigor

Grove City College, which began accepting CLT scores in 2017, found no significant score disparities across student backgrounds or ethnic groups. Homeschooled students outperformed peers on the writing section, and men scored higher overall—but the test proved consistently predictive across all demographics.

As colleges nationwide reassess the role of standardized testing, Dr. Welton sees the CLT as “not merely an alternative, but a potential restoration of robust academic standards” in college admissions.

“For institutions committed to academic excellence, the CLT has proven itself to be an invaluable tool,” he said. “The results of this study strongly support its continued and expanded use as a primary means of assessing collegiate readiness.”

A Validation of CLT’s Mission

Jeremy Tate, Founder and CEO of the Classic Learning Test, praised Grove City College’s leadership for its early adoption of the CLT and its commitment to empirical assessment.

“This study from Grove City College affirms what we have seen for years — that the CLT is a more meaningful measure of a student’s readiness for serious learning,” Tate said. “By assessing the very skills that a classical education cultivates — deep reading, clear writing, and sound reasoning — the CLT offers colleges a clearer picture of which students are best prepared to thrive in a rigorous academic environment.”

The full study, [“Classic Learning Test as a Predictor of Student Performance,”](#) is available here.

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