The 2005- 2006
Student Learning Outcomes Report

Rio Salado College
Fall 2006

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Introduction

In 2005-06, the Student Learning Outcomes Committee was expanded with the addition of new members from Student Services to help increase the involvement and impact of this work across the college. The committee had discussions about revising and updating the Rio Salado College Plan for Assessment and Improvement of Student Learning. (See the 7th edition of this plan document)

The primary change in the college assessment plan was based on determining that college level writing and college level critical thinking were the two college wide learning outcomes instead of only being the General Education program levels outcomes. These outcomes would be assessed and improved across all programs. College level reading and information literacy will stay as General Education program learning outcomes. Student Learning Outcomes work continues to focus on understanding and increasing application of student learning outcomes that indicate a high percentage of our students have these skills. Rio's work on assessment and increasing student learning continues to demonstrate evidence of the central focus of this work for the 15th year of our work. This work is a collaborative effort including faculty, Student Services, Institutional Research and administration.

Highlights of 2005-06 Work on Teaching, Assessment and Learning

- The 7th Annual Learning Experience On Assessment and Learning for Adjunct Faculty was held, with approximately 400 adjunct faculty attending.
- Five Outstanding Adjunct Faculty were recognized for Contributions to Assessment.
- Faculty Chairs continued their work on their learning goal as part of the college strategic plan.
- The college assessment committee, formerly named the Competency Coordinators Committee, developed into the Student Learning Team and added members representing Student Services. The Competency Coordinators became the Learning Outcomes Advisors as they worked with Faculty Chairs.
- The Student Learning Team worked on updating the college assessment plan.
- All full time faculty meetings continued to be conducted with Student Assessment and Achievement as a standing agenda item.
- All Faculty Chairs were involved in work on the college and department level balanced scorecard, called the Rio Performance Management scorecard.
- The VP for Academic Affairs and the academic faculty co-coordinator for assessment participated in the national HLC Annual Meeting in Chicago and the International Assessment and Retention Conference in Phoenix, which was sponsored by NASPA and the Maricopa Community College District.
- 70% of the full time faculty participated in the district fall and spring assessment forums.
- The first full year of funding for Rio assessment grants was successfully completed. These are RioLogs, Learning Outcomes Grants, for department or program level teaching, learning and assessment research and improvement projects. Seven grants were piloted and updates were shared at the full time faculty end-of-the-year retreat which included a focus on retention and assessment. Full time faculty and adjunct faculty worked on these grants.

- The Rio Salado College 2005-06 Student Learning Outcomes Report was written and distributed to all full time faulty.
- The college was accepted to the HLC's Academy for Assessment of Student Learning for 2006-2007. The college project will focus on program review.
- The instructional design department worked with the Student Learning Team to develop a way to document and increase use of data on curriculum development and revisions in order to increase student learning.

RioLogs

Summary of results from 2005-06 RioLogs (Learning Outcomes Grants):
1) "Implementation of Grade Rubrics for Use in ENG 101 and ENG 102"
Faculty: Betsy A. Frank, Cynthia Maxson, Alexis LaDuca, Joan Snyder
The overall purpose of this grant is to ensure consistency of grading in English composition courses (all modalities) through update, review, revision, and implementation of a new writing rubric. Another important aspect of this grant is to train faculty in using the rubric so they can use it to provide more detailed and consistent feedback to students about their writing skills.
There are several different ways that the new rubric has been or will be assessed. First, an initial draft of the new rubric was piloted in four different sections of ENG 101 and ENG 102. Then the initial draft rubric was revised according to comments and feedback from participating faculty and students. Next, the new rubric was compared to the current rubric used in the MAPP English Writing Competency Assessment in an evaluation session that occurred in the Spring of 2006. Finally, after the new rubric has been implemented into all ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses, another norming and evaluation session will occur. A conclusion of data analysis indicates that instructors will have the opportunity to give more specific and consistent feedback to students.

2) "A mind is a terrible thing to have closed: Opening the mind of sociology students by increasing their ability to analyze and evaluate the world around them" Faculty: Pat Case, Sociology/Anthropology and Victoria Churbuck, Sociology Adjunct Faculty
The purpose of this project is to make "open mindedness", and thus critical thinking, a more explicit part of the course design and materials. When students successfully complete sociology courses, they will be better able to think critically about society in general, and how they experience the world around them. Selected course assignments were modified in order to capture students' written responses to the questions, and qualitative analysis was used. Specific parameters required students to defend their thoughts and opinions by incorporating the sociological information that they have learned in the course. These assignments were intentionally made similar so that before and after-course comparisons of students' written responses would capture sociological knowledge of a social institution and its perceived influence on a particular aspect of the student's daily life within the framework of one of the three classical sociological theories and its respective concepts.
The instructor assessed through qualitative analysis if students understood the sociological material as evidenced in their written responses versus simply having students regurgitate that which he or she has read. The results of qualitative analysis found that these revised assignments provided

evidence that the students increased their open-mindedness, critical thinking, and deep learning. Based on these results, revisions will be made to assignments in all sections of this course.

3) RioLog -Education Unit Impact Study, Faculty: Janet Johnson
The purpose of RioLog – Education Unit Impact Study is to ensure that Rio Salado College (RSC) continues to be in the forefront exhibiting cutting-edge practices. This is to be accomplished through the establishment of an assessment framework and process that incorporates protocols and parameters needed to collect and analyze appropriate and relevant evaluation data that aids in making targeted decisions to ensure ongoing effectiveness of the EDU Teacher Prep program in preparing highly qualified teachers. This allows RSC to demonstrate how well graduates are performing in the classroom and when needed, provides supportive information to help achieve highly performing teachers. Graduates then become eligible for prospective "incentives" that reward their high performance which has been shown through research to yield higher student achievement.
To ensure that the purpose is achieved the following elements of the Education Unit were examined and modified. The result has been inordinately helpful and instructive in providing direction and parameters to establish the intent and purpose for data collection and the clarity needed to formulate the design, execution and evaluation of RioLog.

4) "Next Generation Multi-media course components for increasing student learning capacity and/or student interest," Faculty: Angela Ambrosia, Web Tech. & Innovation
The purpose of this study was to determine the validity of the hypothesis that multimedia can increase student learning and to answer questions through surveys to support the multimedia principle demonstrates that students learn better from words and pictures than from words alone. Forty-four students completed the CIS133DA course survey after they finished their first course lesson. Over half of the students indicated that the use of multimedia applications will affect their motivation or interest level in learning the course content. Over four-fifths of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that "various options for the delivery of course materials are an advantage for learning the course content" while the majority of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that using multimedia applications will increase their learning. Additionally, many students either agreed or strongly agreed that the use of multimedia will increase their satisfaction with their online course experience. Post-survey data is still being collected

5) "Effective Decision-Making = Effective Communication: a formula for success for all COM students," Faculty: Laura Helminski, Communication, Jim Fountain, Lori Gesch
The purpose of this project was to enable COM faculty to assess and increase COM students' skills for the COM department level student learning outcome (SLO) of effective decision-making. This learning outcome directly aligns with the college level Critical Thinking competency / outcome. This log focused on communication decision-making as a learning outcome for the COM department and on helping students increase the skill of analysis as part of their critical thinking skills. COM students need to be able to analyze a specific communication situation in order to make decisions about the skills they need in order to be effective communicators in that situation. Work during fall 2005 included research, revisions of current curriculum, and dialogue with all COM adjunct faculty members. The adjunct faculty developed a decision making tool and drafted revised curriculum for pilot sections of COM 100 and 110 to integrate this tool and content that would enable students to transfer and apply skills in communication decision making, therefore

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increasing their analysis skills. In Spring 2006, these adjunct faculty taught the revised curriculum in pilot sections. Students in the two pilot sections and in two control group sections completed pre and post surveys. The COM faculty determined that the results of the pre and post surveys indicate students increased their understanding of the value and necessity of using a decision making tool. The faculty agree that the results of the pre and post surveys indicate students increased their understanding of the value and necessity of using a decision making tool and this contributed to helping these students increase and use this aspect of their critical thinking skills.

6) "Foreign Language pre- and post tests," Faculty Chair – Vernon Smith
During the last HLC accreditation visit, the use of pre and post testing in Foreign Languages was cited as a best practice. This RioLog updated and expanded this assessment process. Specifically it created valid, copyright free, pre-post tests for all language courses across all delivery modalities: Dual, RioLearn, and In-person.
These pre-post tests are available electronically (via the internet) to all students with information provided to their instructors to indicate that students have completed the tests. Direct learning measures have been collected to be analyzed in the aggregate (program level) down to the individual section level. Storage of data is being organized as part of the Institutional Research Data Base that will in turn be utilized for analysis to improve learning and as a specific measure on a Balanced Scorecard for Foreign Languages. The next steps will be the evaluation of these measures as part of a cycle of relentless improvement.

7) "Library Services for Adjunct Faculty: A CD Guide," Faculty: Hazel Davis, Faculty Janelle Underhill and 10 adjunct faculty members representing a variety of disciplines, teaching modalities, and levels of familiarity with Rio's library resources. Information Literacy is the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information. The purpose of this RioLog grant project was to increase information literacy skills across the ranks of adjunct faculty and students. An interactive CD was produced to serve as a guide to Rio's library services and an information literacy skills development tool. After the CD was developed in draft form, a focus group of adjunct faculty was held to assess the product and gain feedback regarding improvements and specific information that participants would expect to find in the product. As a direct result of this feedback, the CD framework was considerably redesigned in order to make the navigation more intuitive and the content more accessible. The CD is newly-completed and distribution to students and adjunct faculty will begin shortly. An assessment measure in LBS 101 will require students to view the CD and answer questions to assess the usefulness of the information provided and the skills learned. It will also be distributed as required material in ENG 101, by request to registered students at the library's website, and to adjunct faculty at the spring All-Faculty Learning experience.