

## Executive Summary

Rio Salado College's work on assessment and increasing student learning continues to demonstrate evidence of the central focus of this work for the 19<sup>th</sup> year since our first assessment plan was implemented. College level learning outcomes and program level outcomes as part of program review provide the foundation for assessment and increasing student learning. This ongoing work is a collaborative, ongoing effort that includes faculty, representatives from Student Services and other co-curricular services, Instructional Design, and administration.

## Summary of Findings

*Rio Salado Students continue to perform well on core college competency assessments.*

- On the Information Literacy assessment<sup>1</sup>, the students had an average score of 40.38 out of a possible 56 points, a 72.11% average. Students had the highest percent (83.72%) on the Understanding of Plagiarism skill set, as they earned an average of 11.72 out of 14 points.
- Rio Salado College students scored higher than two-fifths of the comparison group of students on the Critical Thinking<sup>2</sup> assessment.
- The overall scores on the ETS Proficiency Profile<sup>3</sup> improved from 2008. Additionally, subscores in all seven skills areas improved as well from the 2008 results.

*Rio Salado continues to utilize the Plan Do Check Act cycle to assess student learning.*

- College-Level Writing Skills of Rio students are currently being assessed in 22 different courses across five programs, including the General Education program, at the college. Components being evaluated include content, language, organization, and sentence structure and mechanics skills.
- Rio Salado is also currently assessing the College-Level Critical Thinking Skills of its students in 23 courses across five college programs, including the General Education program. Student skill sets currently under study include analysis, evaluation, inference, inductive reasoning, and deductive reasoning.

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<sup>1</sup> A new Information Literacy assessment was conducted in 2010. The Research Readiness Self-Assessment (RRSA) was developed by Central Michigan University. The RRSA is an online assessment tool that was designed to measure “electronic information competencies, both general and discipline specific, based on the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries.”

<sup>2</sup> The Critical Thinking assessment was administered online as opposed to the traditional paper based delivery method. This is a change from previous years and a meaningful benchmark has yet to be established.

<sup>3</sup> The ETS Proficiency Profile was formerly known as the Measurement of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP). While the name has changed, the test questions have stayed the same.

## Core Competency Assessments (FY10 Updates)

Rio Salado College ETS Proficiency Profile Summary Data 2009-2010				
	Distance Learning	Dual Enrollment	45+ Credits	Possible Range
	Avg	Avg	Avg	
Skills Subscores:				
Critical Thinking	116.64	112.80	114.78	100 to 130
Reading	122.49	119.83	121.03	100 to 130
Writing	117.12	116.69	115.97	100 to 130
Mathematics	114.30	116.41	112.22	100 to 130
Context-Based Subscores:				
Humanities	120.41	116.62	117.88	100 to 130
Social Sciences	118.00	114.63	117.13	100 to 130
Natural Sciences	119.53	117.14	118.09	100 to 130
Total Scores	457.16	451.77	450.81	400 to 500

Rio Salado College ETS Proficiency Profile Longitudinal Data				
	Spring 2006 (N = 209)	Spring 2008 (N = 210)	Spring 2010 (N = 200)	Possible Range
	Avg	Avg	Avg	
Skills Subscores:				
Critical Thinking	114.74	113.50	114.94	100 to 130
Reading	121.38	119.49	121.28	100 to 130
Writing	117.00	116.03	116.77	100 to 130
Mathematics	117.47	114.62	114.73	100 to 130
Context-Based Subscores:				
Humanities	117.62	116.96	118.62	100 to 130
Social Sciences	116.33	115.63	116.63	100 to 130
Natural Sciences	118.65	116.73	118.43	100 to 130
Total Scores	455.79	450.03	454.16	400 to 500

<b>Rio Salado College Student Learning Outcomes Summary Data 2009-2010</b>			
	<b>Distance Learning</b>	<b>Dual Enrollment</b>	<b>45+ Credits</b>
	<b>Avg</b>	<b>Avg</b>	<b>Avg</b>
Critical Thinking Competency	2.44	2.97	2.65
Information Literacy Competency	41.28	38.49	N/A

*Critical Thinking Competency uses a 1 - 4 scale*

*Information Literacy Competency has a possible 56 points*

*Note: Writing Competency outcomes were included in Academic Year 2008-2009's Summary Data Report.*

### **Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) Cycle (FY10 Updates)**

Faculty Chairs continued their focus on the Critical Thinking and College-Level Writing learning outcomes in a series of continuous PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT cycles at the program and department level. All cycle progress is recorded on Rio Salado's Student Learning Outcomes SharePoint Site. This site is accessible to SLOT team members and faculty chairs. It will soon be available to adjunct faculty and all internal Rio Salado employees.

<b>Cycle Progress for FY09-10 by College Learning Outcome</b>		
	<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<b>Writing</b>
<b>Cycle Progress Update</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>N</b>
Programs that have improvement cycles	5	5
PDCA cycles completed	4	6
PDCA cycles ended	2	5
PDCA cycles in progress	17	13
Courses involved	23	24
Students impacted during PDCA cycle*	1377	1769
Students immediately impacted by "Act" step	815	4416

*\*Note: The General Education program has 12 departments each running cycles.*

*\*\*Note: Number of students involved in "CHECK" phase*

## **Best Practices / Successful Interventions: Critical Thinking PDCA work**

Revisions to Lessons and Assessments:

- ASB102, ARH100—Clarifying assignment instructions by adding links to critical thinking sites, such as:
  - Critical Thinking: Analyzing a Process [http://www.wisc-online.com/objects/index\\_tj.asp?objID=CCS3207](http://www.wisc-online.com/objects/index_tj.asp?objID=CCS3207)
  - Critical Thinking: Applying Analysis Steps to a Situation [http://www.wisc-online.com/objects/index\\_tj.asp?objID=CCS3907](http://www.wisc-online.com/objects/index_tj.asp?objID=CCS3907)
  - Critical Reading [http://www.criticalreading.com/critical\\_reading.htm](http://www.criticalreading.com/critical_reading.htm)
- ASB102—Giving specific feedback regarding analysis on student assignments, including links for more practice
- CIS114DE—Changes to assignment instructions, making critical thinking explicit.
- DHE120, DHE133—Changes to the assessments, creating fewer questions that “dig deeper” in to critical thinking components

## **Best Practices / Successful Practices: Writing PDCA work**

Communication to Adjunct Faculty and / or to students

- DHE212—students were emailed the purpose of the college writing competency and grading rubric. The email included an attachment of the Pearsonvue and the College Writing resources. This email communication was followed up with a personal visit to the class room to address and questions or concerns the students may have regarding the grading and the interventions that were sent to the students.

Additions to RioLearn Learner Services

- ENG101—Revised the Online Writing Lab (OWL), included Pearson learning objects, and added Internet links to outside resources.

Technology applications in course materials

- BIO156—Added a PowerPoint on effective organization; model includes exemplary writing and a drag and drop fame at the end.
- CFS176—Added a vocalized PowerPoint on fragments and run-ons.
- GLG101—Added a Camtasia presentation on improving support for paragraphs.

#### Revisions to Lessons and Assessments:

- CHD100—Embedded visual on pre-writing and planning assignment (includes a graphic organizer).
- LET286—Created new directions for assignments and assessments. Also embedded a new sentence structure tutorial in a PowerPoint presentation.
- CIS105—Interventions in Lessons 1,2, 3. These interventions include referring students to the OWL, grading a poorly written paper as a 0 with detailed feedback, and monitoring students in their writing skills all through the course.

#### **Rio Salado's Leadership and Best Practices**

Rio continues to provide leadership and experience for the national accountability initiative called Transparency by Design. This is a groundbreaking project assists adult learners in becoming educated consumers of online education. The initiative's members are made up of regionally-accredited distance education institutions, including Rio Salado College, which is the only community college involved at this point. The initiative was developed by the Presidents' Forum, a collaboration of accredited, national, adult-serving institutions and programs which have embraced the power and potential of online education. Transparency by Design is the only national accountability initiative that publishes student learning outcomes at the program level. The WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET) is the third-party host of this initiative and verifies and validates the data presented on the public website called "College Choices for Adults." The Rio programs currently displayed on this website include Certificate Degrees: Advanced Computer Usage and Applications, Chemical Dependency Level I, Chemical Dependency Level II, Clinical Dental Assisting, Computer Usage and Applications, eLearning Design Specialist, Military Leadership, Networking, Organizational Leadership, Post Baccalaureate in Teacher Education, Programming, Public Administration, Quality Customer Service, Retail Management, Undergraduate in Teacher Education, Web Design, and Associate Degrees: Chemical Dependency, Clinical Dental Assisting, Computer Technology, Dental Hygiene, Early Learning and Development, Military Leadership, Organizational Management, Public Administration and Quality Customer Service. Rio will publish student learning outcomes for more programs as the data is collected. See this link for details: <http://www.collegechoicesforadults.org/>

Rio Salado College's assessment efforts continue to be based on three key characteristics that underlie Rio's culture – collaboration, continuous improvement, and consistency. The Student Learning Outcomes Team has eighteen people on it and these include faculty, administration and staff. This group is very collaborative in their work on assessment so that people can learn together and share their strategies as they work through the Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle on college assessment goals. This continuous improvement cycle gives the framework for planning, data collection, improvements, and implementation across course and programs. The collaboration that occurs during many of the PDCA steps makes the work easier since so many people from different parts of the College can help to do the work. Each Faculty Chair is using the PDCA Cycle to increase students' writing and critical thinking skills in selected courses. The consistency of using the PDCA Cycle enables everyone to maintain their focus on established goals and commit to standards that are important for increasing student learning and students' skills.

## **Rio Learning Outcomes Grants (RioLogs) 2009-10**

**1) Rio Log Title:** A Study of the Retention and Persistence in the Program Review of Organizational Leadership CCL and Organizational Management AAS

**Abstract:** The overall focus of the review is based on three questions: 1. How many students who come to Rio with the intention of completing a CCL or degree actually complete that goal at Rio Salado? 2. Do students who come to Rio with the intention of completing the CCL or degree and who do not complete that goal have a specific reason(s) why not? Do they not complete the goal anywhere or do they complete it at another college? 3. Is what we are doing making a difference? How do we know? If not, what are the next steps?

**2) RioLog Title:** Creating Interventions for Faculty to use for Writing Interventions

**Abstract:** The purpose of this grant is to work individually with each Faculty Chair to tailor some writing improvement interventions to the various disciplines, and offer tangible, practical, and helpful strategies for instructors to embed within their courses.

**3) RioLog Title:** Creating and Improving Math Exams to Increase Student Success

**Abstract:** Creating a practice exam in MyMathLab allows the student to take a different practice exam as many times as they choose to, to better prepare for their actual exam. This project will provide the funding needed to create the exams inside of MyMathLab for MAT092, MAT122, MAT142, MAT172 and MAT187. This project will also fund needed revisions in MyMathLab tests for MAT092, as part of the Student Success Initiative.

**4) RioLog title:** Collecting and Analyzing Baseline Data for the Departmental Assessment Plan for Languages

**Abstract:** This project will provide funding for our dual enrollment instructors to apply the departmental critical thinking grading rubric to 3 sections of in-person SPH245, for a total of approximately 75 assignments, as part of the PLAN phase of work on the PDCA cycle.

**5) RioLog title:** Piloting Sustainability as a Learning Outcomes Across Several Disciplines.

**Abstract:** A team of adjunct faculty focused on the Sustainability learning outcome by developing, implementing and completing work in online course materials and assessments. All adjunct faculty involved in the Rio Log believed that their assignments would provide awareness, knowledge, and decision making skills on the topic. Students indicated they would prefer all designated assignments be planned within the course rather than be optional.

**6) RioLog title:** National League for Nursing Accreditation Self Study

**Abstract:** This project will evaluate the nursing program through a review of the standards developed by the National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission. This includes development and implementation of an ongoing systematic plan of evaluation.

## Highlights of 2009-10 Work on Teaching, Assessment, and Learning

- Rio's Systemic and Comprehensive Program Review Model was updated to reflect learning from pilot work in 2008-09. Program Review was completed in 09-10 by the EDU Program. A formal examination and study process was piloted by a subcommittee of the SLOT team in order to accomplish the following four goals: 1) learn goals and quality assurance and relentless improvements of the program that may assist the Faculty Chair, faculty, administrators, and staff involved with the program; 2) learn goals and quality assurance and relentless improvements in system-wide components of the College that may assist all Faculty chairs, faculty, administrators, and staff in all programs and co-curricular services; 3) share and learn from best practices; 4) increase the effectiveness of Rio's Program Review model
- The 11th Annual Learning Experience on Assessment and Learning for Adjunct Faculty was held on August 29, 2009, with approximately 375 adjunct faculty attending.
- Eight Outstanding Adjunct Faculty were recognized for Contributions to Assessment for the 2009-10 academic year. The Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Reception was held on September 17, 2009.
- Faculty Chairs integrated student engagement and personalization work into ongoing evaluation and improvement of instructors and courses.
- Faculty Chairs established uniform criteria to be used to evaluate courses as part of program review
- The College Student Learning Outcomes Team met four times during the year to discuss learnings from college data collection and from the district assessment forums and other assessment workshops. A subcommittee was the review group for the pilot program review work completed this year. The entire team will meet in August to discuss the results.
- All Faculty Chairs have continued working on deploying a college level PDCA matrix for the College level learning outcomes of Critical Thinking and Writing. Deployment of these plans began with the Critical Thinking outcome during 2007-08 and the Writing Outcome during 2008-09.
- The Vice President for Teaching and Learning, the Faculty Chair for Curriculum, the Librarian Faculty Chair and the Faculty Coordinator for Assessment participated in the national HLC Annual Meeting in Chicago, including the Assessment Academy sessions, in April 2010.
- 30% of the full time faculty participated in the District fall and spring assessment forums.
- Redesign of the Student Learning Outcomes SharePoint site was completed and this now includes college level work, and program work based on the framework of the PDCA cycle, including faculty FEPs related to assessment and the work on the Program Review model.
- The Rio Salado College 2009-2010 Student Learning Outcomes Executive Summary Report was written and distributed to all full time faculty, to the Student Learning Outcomes Team and will be distributed the adjunct faculty during the August 2010 Fall All Faculty Learning Experience.
- Rio now offers the Sustainable Foods Program AA degree/Certificate, which is directly related to the Sustainability learning outcome. In addition, Rio now offers the course "Green in a Weekend" online in partnership with e-Renewable Resources.

## **Rio Salado College Student Learning Outcomes Team**

Vernon Smith, Vice President of Academic Affairs  
Jo Jorgenson, Dean of Community Development  
Kishia Brock, Dean of Student Services  
Rick Kemp, Dean of Instruction  
Dana Reid, Dean of Instruction  
Rachelle Clarke, Associate Dean of Instruction  
Michael Cottam, Associate Dean of Instruction  
Earnestine Harrison, Associate Dean of Instruction  
Jennifer Shantz, Faculty Chair, Curriculum Development Facilitator  
Laura Helminski, Coordinator for Assessment  
Genevieve Winters, Director of Research, Planning, and Development  
David Sweeley, Coordinator of Institutional Effectiveness  
Christina Flora, Institutional Research Analyst  
Pat Case, Faculty Chair  
Melanie Abts, Faculty Chair  
Janine Adkins, Faculty Chair  
Kirk Bowden, Faculty Chair  
Shannon Corona, Faculty Chair  
Hazel Davis, Faculty Chair  
Jennifer Freed, Faculty Chair  
Cynthia Maxson, Faculty Chair