Rio Salado College
Assessment of Student Learning
Annual Report
2017-2018

Introduction

Rio Salado College's first assessment plan was implemented in 1991. Since then, ongoing assessment initiatives aimed at increasing student learning have continued to demonstrate evidence of the College's central focus on this work. Student learning outcomes are measured in five core areas: Critical Thinking, Writing, Information Literacy, Reading, and Oral Communication. These outcomes are assessed at the College level, the program level (as part of Program Review) and via the continuous improvement Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle at the course level. Collectively, these efforts provide a solid infrastructure for assessing and increasing student learning at Rio Salado.

Over the years, the College's assessment plan has progressed from a static document that was reaffirmed on a periodic basis, to a dynamic, ongoing, and evolving series of activities that are integrated across the teaching and learning spectrum.

The Learning Assessment Team includes representation from Faculty Chairs, Senior Administration, and Institutional Research, and has responsibility for coordinating all aspects of assessment of student learning.

The College maintains a public Assessment of Student Learning website so that the institution's assessment data and processes are transparent and available to all stakeholders. This site may be viewed at: http://www.riosalado.edu/about/teaching-learning/assessment/Pages/SLO.aspx

Overview

During the 2017-18 Academic Year, Student Learning Outcomes work has continued in the areas of Reading, Information Literacy and Oral Communication. Rubrics in a Critical Reading course were intentionally aligned with the college's reading rubric. A second phase of a study focusing on the effects of using the Ask a Librarian service to improve information literacy is on-going. Also, the Oral Communication Rubric has been implemented in several courses.

The ETS Proficiency Profile was administered to a cohort of Dual Enrollment students in the 2017-18 Academic Year. Two classes from two different high schools took the paper exam in spring of 2018. While overall performance was lower when compared to last year's assessment of graduates, these Dual Enrollment students performed just as well as Community College students in the national comparative cohort in all areas except for Critical Thinking.

Program review is continuing as scheduled, with the addition of a closed program pilot in AY2017-18. Assessment work to improve both instruction and assessment has been ongoing throughout the year, utilizing results from the Assessment Data Display. Additional efforts are planned to focus on assessment results of students with developmental needs, students who are high-risk, and students who are underrepresented in higher education.

Student Learning Outcomes Work

Rio Salado College is committed to the assessment and improvement of the following College-wide Student Learning Outcomes:

- **Critical Thinking**
- **Writing**
- **Reading**
- **Information Literacy**
- **Oral Communication**

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

During the 2017-18, just under 900,000 subjective assessment items were assessed by Rio faculty. Over half of these subjective items (452,000) were directly linked to one or more college-wide student learning outcomes. Overall, nearly 83% of items were assessed as being at or above college level. The table below shows the student performance by learning outcome.

Outcome	Assignments Submitted	Assignments @ College Level	Percentage @ College Level
Critical Thinking	82,859	66,338	80.1%
Information Literacy	175,278	145,802	83.2%
Oral Communication	2,600	1,993	76.7%
Reading	71,860	58,131	80.9%
Writing	296,888	249,281	84.0%
Total	**629,485***	**521,545**	**82.9%**

Assignments submitted during the 2017-18 academic year. Snapshot taken on 8/20/2018.

Note that because some assessment items are linked to multiple student learning outcomes, this total is higher than the distinct number of assessment items evaluated.

The data show that, overall, 80% of Rio Salado students performed at a college level in the areas of Critical Thinking, Information Literacy, Reading, and Writing. Oral Communication fell slightly below the target, and improvement efforts are detailed below.

Oral Communication

During the 2017-18 academic year, there has been a heavy focus on developing the Oral Communication Grading Rubric and incorporating the rubric in each of Rio Salado's Academic Departments. While the Oral Communication Grading Rubric was initially developed in 2016-17, it was refined, approved, and distributed in the fall 2017 semester. The Oral Communication Coordinator met with all Rio Faculty Chairs in spring 2018 to develop plans to incorporate the rubric into one assignment, in one course, in one prefix within their department. The Oral Communication Coordinator further encouraged faculty chairs to start thinking about the next assignment where the rubric could be incorporated for next year.

Of Rio's 23 Academic Departments, five departments already have the Oral COM Rubric incorporated in live courses, and six departments are prepared for the Oral COM Rubric to go live in the summer of 2018. Additionally, nine departments currently have courses in re-development and plan to incorporate the Oral COM rubric before their go live date in 2018-19. The remaining departments are either still making plans for implementation or are involved in long-term development of curriculum. Plans for implementation of the Oral Communication Rubric to all Academic departments will continue in 2018-19, and will include training on the proper techniques for grading oral delivery for the Adjunct Faculty during the fall 2018 All Faculty Meeting.

In addition to Oral Communication, significant work was accomplished in the areas of Information Literacy and Reading.

Information Literacy

A phase two, ongoing study tests the impact of using Ask a Librarian 24/7 Chat service on student performance in the area of Information Literacy. This project continues the work of an earlier study reported in Rio's Assessment of Student Learning Summary Report for 2016-17. In a collaboration between Library Faculty and the Department Chair for Reading and ESL, the current study at Rio compares two identical sections of the same online CRE101 course; eight sections from spring 2018 required students to use Ask a Librarian for help finding sources for an assignment, while eight sections did not.

As with the earlier study, Library Faculty will evaluate anonymized student reference lists and chat transcripts for those required to use the service, employing a normed rubric to score the quality of sources. Findings are anticipated in 2018-19 and will be compared to earlier statistically-significant findings which indicated that students who used Ask a Librarian were better at selecting a variety of appropriate academic sources relevant to their theses compared with students who did not use Ask a Librarian. This study is also being conducted at two sister colleges: Mesa Community College and Paradise Valley Community College.

Reading

In spring 2018, the CRE101 lesson assignment rubrics were reviewed to identify alignment with the Reading Student Learning Outcome. Several assignment rubrics were found to be misaligned and were revised to ensure that student performance on the reading learning outcome could be assessed in CRE101 lesson assignments. The rubrics for thirteen lesson assignments were revised to include at least one category from Rio's published Reading Rubric. As an example of the work that was completed, below are the original and revised rubrics for CRE101 Lesson 4.

Original CRE101 Lesson 4 Rubric

Criteria
Content: In shaping his/her response, the student provides an example from an ad and draws inferences from the visual, written, and/or spoken cues provided while describing what the ad is really trying to sell. He/she pinpoints any credibility issues by looking for fine print, spin, or unverified claims. Lastly, the student points out any instances of generalization, exaggeration, or scare tactics present in the ad. The student applies vocabulary from the lesson correctly and uses specific examples to shape his/her discussion.

Grammar/Mechanics: The assignment has been proofread and spellchecked prior to submission. There are no errors that impede comprehension.

Revised CRE101 Lesson 4 Rubric

Criteria
Content: The student describes an advertisement and discusses what the ad is really trying to sell. He/she pinpoints any credibility issues by looking for fine print, spin, or unverified claims. The student points out any instances of generalization, exaggeration, or scare tactics present in the ad. The student applies vocabulary from the lesson correctly and uses specific examples to shape his/her discussion.
Inferences and Valid Conclusion: In shaping his/her response, the student provides an example from an advertisement and draws inferences and/or valid conclusions from the visual, written, and/or spoken cues provided.
Grammar/Mechanics: The assignment has been proofread and spellchecked prior to submission. There are no errors that impede comprehension.

Assessment Data Display

Rio's Assessment Data Display is a tool used by Faculty Chairs to monitor student performance on assessment items. It allows faculty chairs to quickly identify assessment items where students are not performing at desired levels. It also allows them to evaluate the effectiveness of changes to curriculum and assessments. In 2017-18, three significant changes were made to the Assessment Data Display.

The original tool was built using an Excel interface that faculty chairs had to download to their computer. While functional, there were many difficulties in using this tool. As such, a web-based dashboard was built with the same functionality as the original tool, greatly increasing its usability and portability. Additionally, changes were made to the underlying data infrastructure, increasing the responsiveness of the report. Updates were made in the college-wide student learning outcomes alignment to the assessment dimensions. This work, performed primarily by the Learning Outcomes Coordinators, helped ensure that the most

recent additions to assessments were properly aligned with relevant student learning outcomes. Discussions were also started for developing a process to maintain this alignment going forward.

Finally, assessment item performance has been disaggregated by the following five categories: Co-curricular students, students in current or former developmental education courses, student gender, student ethnicity, and students who receive Pell grant. This allows faculty to easily identify equity gaps in assessments. The intent of this enhancement is to further reduce gaps in learning for high-risk populations and those who are underrepresented in higher education.

Rio Salado College — Assessment Data Display

The Assessment Data Display shows student performance on subjective assessments between **8/3/2017** and **8/3/2018**. Definitions may be found on page 2.

For questions, please contact Institutional Research.

Summary Table

Overall	86%
Critical Thinking	78%
Information Literacy	81%
Oral Communication	79%
Reading	81%
Writing	84%

Prefix	Course	Effective Date	Lesson	Dimension	Critical Thinking	Info Lit	Oral Comm	Reading	Writing	Std Count	%Stds@CL
COM	COM100	3/7/2016	Lesson 1 Getting Started Quiz	Dimension						831	98%
COM	COM100	3/7/2016	Lesson 1 Short Answer	Analysis	Y	Y		Y		824	71%
COM	COM100	3/7/2016	Lesson 1 Short Answer	Completeness					Y	824	78%
COM	COM100	3/7/2016	Lesson 1 Short Answer	Knowledge/Application		Y		Y		824	79%
COM	COM100	3/7/2016	Lesson 1 Short Answer	Writing Skills					Y	824	84%
COM	COM100	3/7/2016	Lesson 4 Short Answer	Analysis	Y	Y		Y		734	77%
COM	COM100	3/7/2016	Lesson 4 Short Answer	Completeness					Y	734	82%

Showing the web-based Assessment Data Display

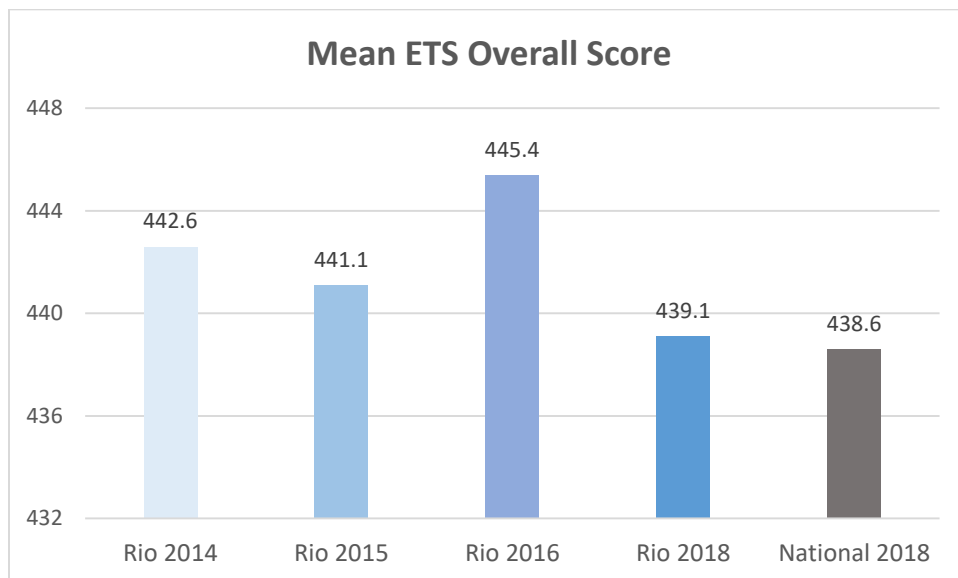| Dimension	Critical Thinking	Info Lit	Oral Comm	Reading	Writing	Std Count	%Stds@CL	Dev Ed Std Count	%Dev Ed Stds@CL	Former Dev Ed Std Count	%Former Dev Ed Stds@CL	Dev Ed Rdg Std Count	%Dev Ed Rdg Stds@CL	Dev Ed Eng Std Count	%Dev Ed Eng Stds@CL	Dev Ed Mat Std Count	%Dev Ed Mat Stds@CL
Dimension						831	98%	62	100%	129	99%	42	100%	63	100%	156	99%
Analysis	Y	Y		Y		824	71%	62	66%	137	70%	46	65%	65	69%	162	69%
Completeness					Y	824	78%	62	73%	137	76%	46	72%	65	77%	162	77%
Knowledge/Application		Y		Y		824	79%	62	74%	137	82%	46	76%	65	83%	162	80%
Writing Skills					Y	824	84%	62	82%	137	84%	46	74%	65	82%	162	83%
Analysis	Y	Y		Y		734	77%	57	70%	115	77%	40	88%	57	75%	140	75%

Showing the disaggregation by developmental need.

The ETS (Educational Testing Service) Proficiency Profile

In assessing institution-level student learning outcomes, Rio utilizes the ETS Proficiency Profile, a nationally-standardized assessment designed to measure academic competence in the domains of Critical Thinking, Reading, Writing and Mathematics. Additionally, the reading and critical thinking domains are aligned with three academic content areas: Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences. Rio has engaged in ETS assessments for the past nine years. The platform provides the college with an externally-validated assessment of outcomes and allows for comparison analyses to peer institutions across the country.

For the 2017-18 academic year, Rio focused on Dual Enrollment (DE) students to complete the ETS Proficiency Profile. Two high schools, Deer Valley and Mountain Pointe, were invited to participate in this testing because of their large dual enrollment programs. At each school, one teacher volunteered to participate and bring an entire class to test during a lunch period. The test was administered in March 2018 using the paper version of the abbreviated test. Overall, 43 students participated in the testing, 17 from Deer Valley and 26 from Mountain Pointe. In place of the financial incentive for participation that has been used in prior administrations, these students were provided with lunch.

The total mean score for the 2017-18 ETS administration was 439.1 (out of 500). This is a decline from the previous year's score of 445.4. However, the 2016-17 administration focused exclusively on students who had completed a degree or certificate. As such, the decline is more expected. Even with the decline, Rio's overall score is still slightly higher than the 2018 ETS comparative cohort average (438.6) from 63 Associate's degree-granting institutions from across the United States.

Mean ETS Overall Score chart showing: Rio 2014: 442.6, Rio 2015: 441.1, Rio 2016: 445.4, Rio 2018: 439.1, National 2018: 438.6

Co-Curricular Assessments of Honors Students

The Honors Program at Rio Salado College provides intellectually-stimulating learning opportunities for academically-outstanding students. The Program includes scholarships, distinguished multidisciplinary classes, Honors Forum Lectures, and cultural opportunities. All scholarship-eligible students in the Honors Program are required to engage in the community by attending co-curricular activities; students report on these activities in a non-credit course, HONORS100.

Since the 2016-17 academic year, the Honors Program has assessed the writing skills of scholarship-eligible Honors students in HONORS100. Students must earn a minimum score of 70% on the written portion of the co-curricular assessment in order to be considered "college-level." The HONORS100 course provides students with a detailed grading rubric for the written co-curricular assessment, which explains the college-level writing requirements (essay length, format, and accurate spelling, grammar, and punctuation).

The baseline data for this work were collected during the 2016-17 and 2017-18 academic years; of the 376 co-curricular assessments submitted by scholarship-eligible Honors students, 98.8% were written at or above college-level. This far exceeds the college's writing skills target of 80% so no intervention is needed at this time. Comparison data will be reviewed at the end of the 2018-19 academic year, using all sections of HONORS100.

Program Review

Rio Salado College has adopted and implemented a formal Program Review model and process that is systematic, comprehensive, and sustainable. Every review contains the same foundational components, including program goals, student learning outcomes, program resources, and co-curricular outcomes, which are addressed by utilizing a template of questions and data sets. The Program Chair highlights best practices, areas for improvement, and recommendations for future actions. Learning Assessment Team members examine the completed review and provide feedback, which is then submitted to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for final action. Once a review has been completed, an Executive Summary Report is posted to the [Rio Salado Assessment public website](#).

During the 2017-18 academic year, reviews were completed for the following programs:

- Dental Assisting
- Detention Services
- Adult Development
- Early Childhood

- Mobile Applications Programming
- Public Administration
- Small Business Start Up

The Program Review for Detention Services, one of the Educational Service Partnership (ESP) Programs, was conducted as a pilot. The standard Program Review template was modified to fit the ESP model. The pilot will be evaluated in fall 2018, and a decision will be made on the scalability of the customized approach. If it is deemed successful, the remaining ESP programs will be integrated into the overall Program Review schedule.

Six additional programs are currently scheduled to undergo comprehensive review in 2018-19.

Significant Accomplishments in Learning Assessment Work, 2017-18

- 82.9% of submitted assignments were assessed as being at or above college level.
- Rio Salado students' mean score was 11.4% greater than the national average on the ETS Proficiency Profile, a nationally-normed assessment of college-level student learning outcomes.
- The 18th Annual Assessment and Learning Experience meetings were held on January 18th and 20th, 2018, with over 460 adjunct faculty members attending.
- Angela Felix authored an article titled "Rio Salado College's Excellence in Assessment Application: Redux," which appeared in the January/February issue of *Assessment Update*, published by Wiley Periodicals, Inc.
- Three Rio faculty members presented "A College Where Adjuncts are Not Just Add-Ons" at the 2017 Continuous Quality Improvement Network Summer Institute in Chicago. Angela Felix, Chair of Languages, John Jensen, Chair of Mathematics, and Jennifer Shantz, Chair of English, discussed the important role of adjunct faculty, including their contributions to assessment and support of college-wide assessment initiatives.
- On January 24, 2018, Kate Smith and Angela Felix accepted the Excellence in Assessment award on behalf of Rio Salado College at the Association of American College and Universities' Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.
- Thirteen Outstanding Adjunct Faculty were recognized for *Contributions to Assessment of Student Learning* at the Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Reception held on October 11, 2017.
- A Rio team attended the Higher Learning Commission Annual Conference in Chicago in April, 2018.
- Seven Program Reviews were completed.
- Guided Evaluation for Assessment Review (GEAR) rubrics for Critical Thinking and Writing were incorporated in all Administration of Justice (AJS) courses in AY2017-18.

- A pilot Program Review was conducted of Detention Services, one of the RSC Educational Service Partnerships.
- Adjunct faculty completed 325 AFD workshops during AY2017-18.
- An ongoing multi-college research study investigated the impact of the Ask a Librarian Service on student performance, conducted collaboratively by Library and Reading Faculty.
- The Learning Assessment Report was compiled and posted to Rio Salado College's public website for access by all internal and external stakeholders.

Learning Assessment Team Members

Kate Smith, Vice President, Academic Affairs

Dr. Angela Felix, Faculty Chair, Assessment Co-Coordinator, Critical Thinking Student Learning Outcome Coordinator

Hazel Davis, Faculty Chair, Program Review Coordinator, Information Literacy Student Learning Outcome Coordinator, HLC Accreditation Faculty Chair

Karen Docherty, Residential Faculty

Dr. Jennifer Shantz, Faculty Chair, Writing Student Learning Outcome Coordinator

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Julie Cober, Faculty Chair, Oral Communication Student Learning Outcome Coordinator

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