

**Rio Salado College**  
**The 2006- 2007 Student Learning Outcomes 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 16th year since our first assessment plan was implemented. College level learning outcomes and program and department level outcomes provide the foundation for assessment and increasing student learning. This ongoing work is a collaborative effort including faculty, Student Services, Instructional Design and administration. The Student Learning Outcomes Team reaffirmed the college assessment and student learning philosophy: *Rio Salado College focuses on assessment-directed improvement for increasing student learning and improving the teaching and learning process. We believe that 1) learning is the primary purpose of assessment; 2) assessment should lead to improvement and not be an end unto itself; and 3) that faculty and students who understand the value of assessment and participate in assessment activities benefit most from this work. Therefore, the college expects every individual to participate fully in this effort.*

**Summary of Findings for 2006-07**

***Rio Salado Students continue to perform well on college student learning outcome assessments and General Education Program learning outcome assessments, given to students in Spring 2007:***

- In general, Rio Salado students demonstrated college-level skills on the core competency student learning outcome assessments.<sup>1</sup>
- Overall, 73.9%<sup>2</sup> of students scored within the acceptable range of college-level performance on the competency assessments. Nearly all students (96.67 %) who completed the Information Literacy assessment scored at or above college level.
- In general, scores on the Critical Thinking, Writing, and Information Literacy assessments were positively correlated with the ages of the students. Overall, assessment scores increased as students matured.
- In general, total scores increased relative to the number of credit hours earned.<sup>3</sup>

***Rio Salado student learning outcomes results support the previous assessment results from the Academic Profile Exam (AP), given to students in Spring 2006:***

- Rio Salado students had a higher average score on all sections of the AP than the comparison group of community college freshmen.
- Students in the distance cohort performed better on the AP in 2006 than in both 2003 and 2004.
- A majority of the students scored at or above college level on the local writing section of the AP.<sup>4</sup>
- Rio Salado will replace the AP with the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP) in 2008.

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<sup>1</sup> Relative to the national average, Rio Salado students scored better than nearly 50% of students who took this Critical Thinking exam nationally.

<sup>2</sup> This number may change when the remainder of the Writing scores are included in the analysis.

<sup>3</sup> Writing scores are not included in this analysis.

<sup>4</sup> College level performance is operationalized as a score of 2.75 or above.

<b>Rio Salado College Student Learning Outcomes Summary Data 2006-07</b>			
	<b>Distance Learning</b>	<b>Dual Enrollment</b>	<b>45+ Credits Cohort<sup>5</sup></b>
Writing Competency	3.17	3.01	3.48
Reading Competency	3.08	3.14	3.10
Critical Thinking Competency	2.73	2.34	2.74
Information Literacy Competency	3.37	3.26	3.25
Academic Profile Exam	455.89	455.49	456.32
Academic Profile Local Writing	3.11	2.94	3.09

Competency and Local Writing Scale: 1 - 4

Academic Profile Scale: 400 - 500

<b>Rio Salado College Student Learning Outcomes Longitudinal Data 2006-07</b>						
	<b>Spring 2003</b>		<b>Spring 2004</b>		<b>Spring 2007</b>	
	<b>Average</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>N</b>
Writing Competency <sup>6</sup>	3.27	279	3.17	449	3.09	353
Reading Competency	3.11	443	3.12	492	3.11	372
Critical Thinking Competency	2.78	441	2.65	442	2.60	537
Information Literacy Competency	3.37	463	3.37	581	3.32	420
Academic Profile Exam <sup>7</sup>	453.75	224	454.18	262	455.79	209
Academic Profile Local Writing	3.35	559	3.3	766	3.03	209

Competency and Local Writing Scale: 1 - 4

Academic Profile Scale: 400 - 500

### **Highlights of 2006-07 Work on Teaching, Assessment and Learning**

- The college application to be members of the HLC Assessment Academy was accepted and work was started on a four year project to develop and implement a multi-level, sustainable, formal, comprehensive program review model. Six members of the college

<sup>5</sup> Students in the 45+ Credit Cohort are also in the analysis for the Distance and Dual Enrollment Cohorts. Their scores were analyzed both with the larger cohorts and with the 45+ Credit Cohort.

<sup>6</sup> Only 353 Writing Competency Assessments have been scored as of August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Additional assessments are in the process of being scored.

<sup>7</sup> The Academic Profile Exam was administered in 2006.

Student Learning Outcomes Team are members of the Assessment Academy team from Rio Salado and participated in the first Academy Roundtable event in February 2007.

- The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Learning Experience On Assessment and Learning for Adjunct Faculty was held in August 2006, with approximately 380 adjunct faculty attending.
- Five Outstanding Adjunct Faculty were recognized for Contributions to Assessment for 2005-06.
- Faculty Chairs focused on the indirect variable of retention as their strategic plan goal in order to help students stay in their courses and as a result increase their learning.
- The college Student Learning Outcomes Team met regularly to review data, discuss learnings from the district assessment forums and other assessment workshops, discuss the work of program review for the assessment academy and increase our understanding of our critical thinking learning outcome.
- 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, the Dean for Institutional Effectiveness, and the academic faculty co-coordinator for assessment participated in the national HLC Annual Meeting in Chicago.
- 65% of the full time faculty participated in the District fall and spring assessment forums.
- The second year of funding for Rio assessment grants was successfully completed. These are RioLogs (Rio Learning Outcomes Grants) for department or program level teaching, learning and assessment research and improvement projects. Four grants were piloted and updates were shared at the full time faculty beginning-of-the-year retreat in August 2007 which included a focus on retention and assessment. Full time faculty and adjunct faculty worked on these grants.
- The Rio Salado College 2006-07 Student Learning Outcomes Report was written and distributed to all full time faculty and to the Student Learning Outcomes Team.
- The Student Learning Outcomes Matrix was drafted and approved for data collection by all Faculty Chairs.
- The Inclusiveness Student Learning Outcome was drafted and approved for pilot implementation: *The student will demonstrate broader knowledge of the subject matter through increased interest in different points of view and by seeing the course content from different cultural perspectives. Additionally, the student will demonstrate increased multicultural awareness, sensitivity, and competence, through expressed appreciation of self and others, and increased comfort levels while relating to diverse populations.*

### **2006-07 RioLogs Summaries:**

1) Identification and Re-Design of At-Risk Lesson for BIO 156, Human Biology  
In order to obtain valid and reliable indicators of “At-Risk” Lessons, multiple forms of measurements were evaluated. A survey of Adjunct Faculty perceptions was collected to determine areas students struggle with. Analysis of students' grades along with scores on midterm and final exams were collected. Those questions missed frequently were evaluated and reviewed for alignments with specific course objective. Two lessons were identified as At-Risk Lessons, Lesson 7 and 9. Supplemental instructional videos, animations, studying tools and revision of the online lesson outline were designed. A pilot of the lessons is now



being implemented. Students are beginning the 7<sup>th</sup> week or 7<sup>th</sup> Lesson in the course. A survey of student perception of learning will be emailed and posted for student completion. After the survey is completed and the students' results from the exams are compiled, a report will be developed to discuss findings.

#### **2) Assessing and Improving Student Learning in Macroeconomics**

Quizzes in Rio Salado College's online course ECN211 were edited for clarity and critical thinking enhancement between the Spring 2006 and Spring 2007 semesters. This Riolog assessment focused on changes in student performance on quiz and exams between these two semesters, as a measurement of student understanding, given the same instructor and student start dates of the course. Results show that mean student scores did not change substantially between quizzes, however there was an increase in average points earned on exams, particular the subjective portion. The results suggest that student learning increased as a function of the edited quiz questions, as shown in the improved exam scores. The authors recommend implementation of the edited quiz questions, with further assessment in the coming semesters for the clarity of the effect.

#### **3) Library Services for Adjunct Faculty: a CD Guide**

This project was designed to increase information literacy skills across the ranks of adjunct faculty and students. A student version of the library orientation/instruction CD was created first. After adjunct faculty input, the student CD would be refined and a targeted version would also be created specifically for adjunct faculty. It was projected that the new CD would increase awareness of the library's offerings and, resultantly, increase use of library resources and services by adjunct faculty.

An ongoing sample of the effectiveness of the project for students has been achieved by implementing the viewing and evaluation of the CD as an assignment in LBS 101. Students are required to view certain sections and have the option to view others. The assignment requires them to detail the sections that they viewed, what they learned, and whether or not this information was useful to them. Finally, they need to provide reasons as to why, or why not, this learning was of value to them. Student responses to this assignment are generally thoughtful, informative, and specific, and they indicate having learned of resources available to them online and methods of searching for these materials that they were not previously aware of.

#### **4) Integrating Critical Thinking Skills into Assessments for MGT 229**

There are several differences in the way that students in the "RioLog" version of MGT229 participate in the class: 1. The syllabus quiz/acknowledgement is much more detailed; 2. The first lesson contains a detailed introductory portion with an explanation of the terms used such as Critical Thinking, Deductive Reasoning, and Application along with examples of the terms. Lessons provide links back to the terms when necessary to help ensure that students use those concepts when answering questions; 3. The questions for the case studies in the text were rewritten. The original questions tended to focus on only one concept or one aspect of the lesson being taught. The rewritten questions included concepts from prior lessons and demonstrated that the concepts being presented should not be considered in isolation or in a vacuum; 4. The final exam was replaced with a take-home project. We felt that this better demonstrated their grasp of the concepts and also mimicked a business situation rather than being able to repeat memorized facts. Outside resources are required.