Rio Salado College
Assessment of Student Learning
Annual Report
2019-2020

Introduction

The first assessment plan at Rio Salado College (RSC) was implemented in 1991. Since then, ongoing assessment initiatives aimed at increasing student learning have continued to demonstrate evidence of RSC'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 RSC.

Over the years, RSC'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 student learning assessment.

RSC maintains a public [Assessment of Student Learning website](#) so that the institution's assessment data and processes are transparent and available to all stakeholders.

Overview

During AY2019-20, Student Learning Outcomes focused work has continued in the areas of Critical Thinking, Writing, Information Literacy, and Oral Communication.

Program review has proceeded as scheduled, with five programs engaged in the review process during AY2019-20.

Assessment work to improve both online instruction and assessment has been ongoing throughout the year, utilizing results from the Dynamic Assessment Data Display (DADD). Overall, DADD data demonstrate that 80% of RSC students taking online classes are performing at or above college level in the five institutional student learning outcomes.

Correspondence and print-based coursework assessment data were analyzed using a secondary version of the DADD beginning in AY2019-20. Overall, DADD data demonstrate that 69% of RSC correspondence and print-based students are performing at or above college level in Critical Thinking, Writing, and Information Literacy. Oral Communication data was not collected for these modalities during that time period. However, in AY2019-20, a pilot program was initiated in the Incarcerated Re-Entry (IRE) Program to develop and assess Oral Communication skills for this particularly high-risk population. Baseline data from the courses included in the pilot will be available in AY2020-21.

RSC's efforts to promote instructional equity by identifying and addressing gaps among higher-risk student populations were recognized nationally during AY2019-20. RSC was awarded the 2019 WCET Outstanding Work (WOW) Award for developing and implementing the Dynamic Assessment Data Display. The DADD was highlighted at the WCET Annual Meeting on November 6, 2019 and featured in the WCET Frontiers Blog. Additionally, Tyton Partners developed a case study based on RSC's learning analytics and equity work. The study, which was published by Every Learner Everywhere in August of 2020, highlights strategies that RSC has used to address achievement gaps via data analysis.

PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT cycles were completed at the course level in LAT101, LAT102, LAT201, and ACC111.

Details on these initiatives are provided below.

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

Overall Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

During AY2019-20, over 1.5 million online subjective assessment items were assessed by RSC faculty. More than two-thirds of these subjective items (1,063,203) were directly linked to one or more college-wide student learning outcomes. Overall, 80% of these items were assessed as being at or above college level. The table below shows student performance by learning outcome.

Assignments at College Level by Learning Outcome			
Student Learning Outcome	**Assignments Submitted**	**Assignments at College Level**	**Percentage of Assignments at College Level**
Critical Thinking	122,494	93,745	77%
Information Literacy	275,113	219,263	80%
Oral Communication	7,834	6,199	79%
Reading	134,084	103,787	77%
Writing	523,678	426,169	81%
Total	**1,063,203**	**849,163**	**80%**

Assignments submitted during the 2019-20 academic year. Snapshot taken on 7/26/2020.

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 demonstrate that RSC students taking online classes met or exceeded the 80% college-level threshold in the areas of Information Literacy and Writing. Since implementation

of the Oral Communication Grading Rubric three years ago, there has been steady improvement toward the 80% college-level threshold for Oral Communication. Although Critical Thinking fell below the 80% target, an analysis of several courses shows marked growth in this area for students when examined across the duration of the semester. Additional details are provided below.

Critical Thinking

Although the overall percentage of student assignments flagged for Critical Thinking fell just short of the 80% goal, an analysis of several key high-enrollment courses revealed encouraging patterns that reflect increased learning over time:

- In Lesson 2 of ECN211, just 66% of the assessments submitted by 873 students were rated at college level; by Lesson 8, the percentage increased to 80%.
- In Lesson 6 of PSY101, 78% of the assessments submitted by 1156 students were rated at college level; by Lesson 12, the percentage increased to 90%.
- With over 1500 students in AY2019-20, BIO205 was the highest-enrollment course with assessments flagged for Critical Thinking. While only 39% were rated at college level on Essay 1, by Essay 4 the percentage increased to 65%. Though this is a notable improvement, the results still did not meet the college-wide 80% target. New BIO205 lessons and assessments are being rolled out in the spring of 2021. Baseline data will be pulled on these new assessments in AY2021-22.

Information Literacy

During AY2019-20, library faculty began significant preliminary work on a districtwide project that seeks to align information literacy instruction to the district's guided pathways model. The goal of the project is to provide students across all MCCCD Colleges with more consistent information literacy instruction that aligns with their pathway needs as well as to develop common assessment practices where possible for measuring library instruction information literacy outcomes across the district. During AY2019-20, an analysis was conducted of RSC's programs and program learning outcomes to determine where additional information literacy instruction supports might best be integrated. Further work on this project will continue in AY2020-21.

Oral Communication

Work to incorporate additional Oral Communication assessments within RSC academic disciplines continued during AY2019-20. The Oral Communication rubric was originally incorporated into at least one assessment within each academic department during AY2017-18. During AY2018-19, the focus was broadened to encourage faculty chairs to add an additional assessment into another assignment, lesson, or course. In AY2019-20, an emphasis was placed on creating videos and other materials to reinforce and build students' oral communication skills.

Working with the Communication Department adjunct faculty, the Oral Communication Learning Outcome Coordinator began production on a series of oral communication and public speaking "Tips and Tricks" videos. These videos will assist students in completing strong oral communication assessments and will be deployed to all faculty chairs in the fall of 2020. Additional training on what constitutes proper oral communication (for students) and how to evaluate oral communication (for adjunct faculty) will be produced in the coming year.

Since implementation of the Oral Communication Grading Rubric in AY2017-18, there has been steady improvement toward the 80% college-level threshold for Oral Communication. AY 2019-20 saw additional growth in student performance in this area as 79% of assignments were at college level. Further focused work will continue in the coming year to increase the oral communication competence of RSC students above the 80% threshold.

Also in AY2019-20, a pilot program was developed to incorporate oral communication into print-based and correspondence courses. Specific to the Incarcerated Re-Entry population, speech assignments were incorporated into COM 110 (Interpersonal Communication) and COM 263 (Intercultural Communication). To verify the oral communication component, students are required to submit their written speech and three evaluations of their oral delivery. Evaluations are provided from a Rio representative in the facility, from another student, and from an internal facility employee. In COM 110, students complete an evaluation of their presentation and in COM 263, students write a reflection paper on the topic of intercultural competence in business settings. This offers students the opportunity to practice oral presentation skills and to receive constructive feedback.

Initial evaluations of this pilot program by the instructors noted that the students' assessments of their own speeches are supported by the feedback from the evaluations. Students gain insight into the effectiveness of assertive communication, which is a skill that is particularly beneficial for the IRE student population. Student success data from this pilot project will be available in AY2020-21.

Writing

The Writing student learning outcome requires students to demonstrate knowledge and skills in the areas of content, organization, grammar and mechanics, and language on written assignments. During AY2019-20, a video ("What You Need to Know: Academic Writing,") was created to reinforce student writing skills. The video has been embedded across the curriculum in a wide variety of courses, such as ASB100, ECN211, FRE201, GER201, GPH113, POS110, SOC157, and SPA201. Plans to embed the video in additional courses will continue in AY2020-21.

PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT Cycles (PDCA)

In keeping with RSC's ongoing focus on relentless improvement, below are selected PDCA cycles that were completed at the departmental level in 2019-20:

RSC's Online Latin Curriculum: A PDCA Improvement Cycle

PLAN: Data for AY2018-19 indicated that students taking 200-level Latin courses, on average, were not meeting the target of earning at least 70% on the post-test. Results for LAT201 were especially troubling, as they reflect a lack of significant improvement between the pre- and post-test, which is a direct measure of student learning:

LAT201 Pre and Post Test Results AY2018-19	
Pre-test Avg: 45.00%	Post-test Avg: 54.00%

Given this, the 2018-19 Languages Departmental Report included the Latin curriculum as an area of focus for AY2019-20, stating that "Latin is a relatively new offering. Over the last academic year, the developer identified curricular improvements that needed to be made, including increasing the rigor of LAT101 and 102, to better prepare students for the intermediate-level classes. The instructional interventions will roll out in spring, 2020, and will be an area of focus for the next departmental report."

DO: New versions of LAT101, 102, and 201 were offered for the first time in spring of 2020. In the updated curriculum, content was added to 101 that was previously not introduced until 102 and content from 201 was added to 102 that was not previously introduced until 201. The hope was that exposing the students to the new concepts sooner would give more opportunity for practice and review once they reached the 200-level courses.

CHECK: Below are the results for spring 2020 across all four Latin courses.

LAT101 Pre and Post Test Results Spring 2020	
Pre-test Avg: 25.98%	Post-test Avg: 71.27%
LAT201 Pre and Post Test Results Spring 2020	
Pre-test Avg: 56.36%	Post-test Avg: 70.00%

LAT102 Pre and Post Test Results Spring 2020	
Pre-test Avg: 46.43%	Post-test Avg: 80.78%
LAT202 Pre and Post Test Results Spring 2020	
Pre-test Avg: N/A	Post-test Avg: 87.33%

ACT: Pre and post-test data appear to validate the effectiveness of the curricular modifications. In addition to indicating increased student learning at each level, the enhanced rigor of the lesson content and assessment has resulted in out-of-state universities accepting these courses for direct transfer equivalency. RSC's Latin coordinator is working on additional instructional interventions to try and further increase post-test achievement at the 201 level, which will initiate a new PDCA cycle for AY2020-21.

Online ACC111: Two PDCA Improvement Cycles

PLAN: Five assignment dimensions in ACC111 scored below 70% in the areas of Writing, Critical Thinking, and Information Literacy from 7/1/2018 to 6/30/2019. The data indicates that both Writing and Critical Thinking are slightly improving as the course progresses, but that the cumulative results did not meet the 80% target by the time the students reached the end:

Prefix	Course	Effective Date	Lesson	Dimension	% at College Level
ACC	ACC111	1/7/2019	Lesson 07 Merchandising Corporation Evaluation Essay	Critical Thinking	59%
ACC	ACC111	1/7/2019	Lesson 07 Merchandising Corporation Evaluation Essay	Information Lit	59%
ACC	ACC111	1/7/2019	Lesson 07 Merchandising Corporation Evaluation Essay	Writing	53%
ACC	ACC111	1/7/2019	Lesson 11 Final Project	Critical Thinking	65%
ACC	ACC111	1/7/2019	Lesson 11 Final Project	Writing	61%

DO: The following interventions were deployed in summer 2019 to address the areas of concern:

- Adjunct instructors are now required to post six Course Announcements relating to APA citations, Plagiarism, Welcome information, PACE information, How to Find Feedback, and Tips for Completing Written Assignments.
- Library faculty assisted with the creation of a video to increase awareness of APA resources and how they can be found in the RSC Library.
- At the end of each lesson, between summarizing your learning and assessing your learning, three reminders were added:
    o "Ask Librarian" (with the link and phone number to the RSC Library)
    o "Warning" that the student must present their own work
    o A link to Tutoring was also added

CHECK: Below are the post-intervention results:

Prefix	Course	Timeframe	Lesson	Dimension	% at College Level
ACC	ACC111	7/1/19-6/30/20	Lesson 07 Merchandising Corporation Evaluation Essay	Critical Thinking	64%
ACC	ACC111	7/1/19-6/30/20	Lesson 07 Merchandising Corporation Evaluation Essay	Information Lit	64%
ACC	ACC111	7/1/19-6/30/20	Lesson 07 Merchandising Corporation Evaluation Essay	Writing	64%
ACC	ACC111	7/1/19-6/30/20	Lesson 11 Final Project	Critical Thinking	78%
ACC	ACC111	7/1/19-6/30/20	Lesson 11 Final Project	Writing	80%

The interventions correlate with improved performance on both the Lesson 7 preparatory assignment and the Lesson 11 Final Project. Overall, by the end of ACC111, 80% of students performed at a college level in Writing, which meets the target. There was also significant improvement in the area of Critical Thinking, where the average of assessments scored at a college level increased from 65% from the last review period to 78%, which is just shy of the college-wide target.

ACT: The current interventions have been permanently incorporated in ACC111.

PLAN: Though improved, results in the categories of Critical Thinking and Information Literacy are not yet at the desired college-wide target of 80% after the intervention. Therefore, the Accounting Department is initiating another PDCA cycle.
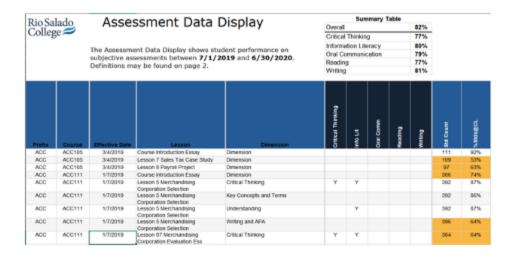
DO: Two additional interventions are being implemented.

- In August 2020, the location of the one of the three reminders that were added in Summer 2019 will be modified. A link to Tutoring will be moved to the 'Assessing your Learning' tab so students can see the Tutoring option right after the directions for their essay.

- At the All Faculty Meeting in September 2020, there will be a breakout session for Accounting adjunct faculty. During this session, participants will work with a mock assessment and rubric to collaborate with other faculty on how to develop and assess the areas of Critical Thinking, Information Literacy, and Writing. The goal is to create consistency as a group when assessing these critically evaluated criteria.

CHECK: September, 2021

Assessment Data Display

RSC's Dynamic Assessment Data Display (DADD) is a web-based dashboard tool used by Faculty Chairs to monitor student performance in online assessment items. Chairs can quickly identify where students are not performing at desired levels and evaluate the effectiveness of curricular changes. Below is a snapshot of data available via the DADD for an Accounting class.

Rio Salado College — Assessment Data Display

The Assessment Data Display shows student performance on subjective assessments between 7/1/2019 and 6/30/2020. Definitions may be found on page 2.

Summary Table

Overall	82%
Critical Thinking	77%
Information Literacy	89%
Oral Communication	79%
Reading	77%
Writing	81%

Prefix	Course	Effective Date	Lesson	Dimension	Critical Thinking	Info Lit	Oral Comm	Reading	Writing	Std Count	%ass@CL
ACC	ACC105	3/4/2019	Course Introduction Essay	Dimension						111	92%
ACC	ACC105	3/4/2019	Lesson 7 Sales Tax Case Study	Dimension						109	53%
ACC	ACC105	3/4/2019	Lesson 8 Payroll Project	Dimension						97	63%
ACC	ACC111	1/7/2019	Course Introduction Essay	Dimension						566	74%
ACC	ACC111	1/7/2019	Lesson 5 Merchandising Corporation Selection	Critical Thinking	Y	Y				392	87%
ACC	ACC111	1/7/2019	Lesson 5 Merchandising Corporation Selection	Key Concepts and Terms						392	85%
ACC	ACC111	1/7/2019	Lesson 5 Merchandising Corporation Selection	Understanding		Y				392	87%
ACC	ACC111	1/7/2019	Lesson 5 Merchandising Corporation Selection	Writing and APA						396	64%
ACC	ACC111	1/7/2019	Lesson 07 Merchandising Corporation Evaluation Ess	Critical Thinking	Y	Y				364	64%

The previous iteration of the DADD only pulled data for online assessments. However, the AY2019-20 Learning Assessment Report includes results from multiple modalities, allowing RSC's Faculty Chairs to have a more complete picture of student performance. Since baseline data for correspondence and print-based coursework did not meet the target of 80% of students performing at a college level, those modalities will be a focus for PDCA work for AY2020-21. Data from the Oral Communication pilot project for the Incarcerated Re-Entry program will also be included in the AY2020-21 report.

WCET's WOW Award

The WICHE (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education) Cooperative for Educational Technologies, better known as WCET, presents the WCET Outstanding Work (WOW) award to colleges, universities, and organizations who "implement exceptionally creative, technology-based solutions to contemporary challenges in higher education."

Rio Salado College was honored as a 2019 WOW recipient for our use of the DADD to identify achievement gaps, inform curricular improvements, and demonstrate transparency and accountability in our assessment practices. The WOW application and accompanying video is available on RSC's Assessment of Student Learning website.

The WOW recognition led to several opportunities to share our assessment work with a national audience. In October of 2019, RSC published a blog post for WCET Frontiers. Titled "Assessing Soft Skills is Hard Work," the blog highlights how RSC uses data from the DADD to help ensure equity in outcomes, especially among vulnerable populations. In addition, President Kate Smith and Dr. Angela Felix presented a session titled "The DADD: Rio Salado College's Dynamic Assessment Data Display" at the WCET Annual Conference in November of 2019, and RSC was featured as a case study on learner analytics for the Every Learner Everywhere network. RSC was also invited to participate in a WCET webcast on Learner Analytics due to air in April of 2020, but it has been postponed due to the pandemic.

Co-curricular Assessment of Honors Students

The Honors Program at RSC 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 are then required to report on these activities in a non-credit course, HONORS100.

Since AY2016-17, the Honors Program has assessed the writing skills of scholarship-eligible 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).

Baseline data were collected during AY2016-17, AY2017-18, and AY2018-19. Of the 358 co-curricular assessments submitted by scholarship-eligible Honors students during AY2019-20, 90.0% were written at or above college level. This far exceeds the college's writing skills target of 80% students scoring at college level and no intervention is needed at this time.

Program Review

Rio Salado College has adopted and implemented a formal academic 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 the evaluation cycle has been completed, the review is posted to the RSC public [Assessment of Student Learning website](#).

The following programs participated in the review process for AY2019-20:
- Community Dental Health: The review was completed, with evaluation scheduled for fall, 2020.
- Accounting: The review was completed, with evaluation scheduled for fall, 2020.
- Nanotechnology: Work is continuing over summer. Evaluation will be scheduled for fall, 2020 or spring, 2021.
- Administration of Justice: Work is continuing over summer. Evaluation will be scheduled for fall, 2020 or spring, 2021.
- Dental Hygiene: A Self Study was completed in preparation of an accreditation site visit in May of 2020, but the visit has been postponed a year due to the pandemic.

Upcoming reviews for AY2020-21 include:
- Insurance Studies
- Paralegal
- Sustainable Food Systems
- Computer Technology
- Furniture and Cabinet Making (IRE)

Significant Accomplishments in Learning Assessment Work, 2019-2020

- Winner of the 2019 WCET Outstanding Work (WOW) Award for developing and implementing the Dynamic Assessment Data Display (DADD).
- Promotional video created to highlight Dynamic Assessment Data Display (https://youtu.be/2lq__xPxIq8)
- President Smith and Dr. Angela Felix presented on the Dynamic Assessment Data Display at the WCET Annual Meeting on November 6, 2019.
- Dynamic Assessment Data Display highlighted on WCET Frontiers blog (https://wcetfrontiers.org/2019/10/30/assessing-soft-skills-is-hard-work/)
- RSC case study published in 'Learning Analytics Strategy Toolkit,' from Every Learner Everywhere (https://www.everylearnereverywhere.org/resources/learning-analytics-strategy-toolkit/)
- In total, 80% of submitted online course assignments were assessed as being at or above college level, which met the target threshold.
- Five programs engaged in the Program Review process.
- The 21st Annual Assessment and Learning Experience meetings were held on September 12 and 14, 2019. 483 adjunct faculty members were awarded professional development certificates for attendance.
- Eleven Outstanding Adjunct Faculty members were recognized for *Contributions to Assessment of Student Learning* at the Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Reception held in October, 2019.
- Adjunct faculty completed 363 Adjunct Faculty Development (AFD) workshops during AY2019-20. RSC currently offers 38 AFD workshops.
- Dr. Angela Felix continues to serve as a reviewer for the NILOA Excellence in Assessment award.
- RSC was invited to present a session on the Quality Initiative at the HLC conference, scheduled for April 2020.
- The 2019-2020 Learning Assessment Report was compiled and posted to the RSC public website for access by all internal and external stakeholders.

Learning Assessment Team Members, AY2019-2020

Dr. Angela Felix, Faculty Chair, Program Review Coordinator, Critical Thinking Student Learning Outcome Coordinator
Hazel Davis, Faculty Chair, Assessment Co-coordinator; Information Literacy Student Learning Outcome Coordinator, HLC Accreditation Faculty Chair
Zach Lewis, Associate Dean, Institutional Research; Assessment Co-coordinator
Julie Cober, Faculty Chair, Oral Communication Student Learning Outcome Coordinator
Rosslyn Knight, Faculty Chair, Reading Student Learning Outcome Coordinator
Dr. Jennifer Shantz, Faculty Chair, Writing Student Learning Outcome Coordinator
Dr. Karol Schmidt, Dean, Institutional Effectiveness & Innovation
Sarah Stohr, Residential Faculty
Omar Williams, Planning Research Analyst Sr.