

Rio Salado College 2003-04 Student Learning Outcomes Report

Executive Summary

Methodology

The Rio Salado College Plan for Assessment and Improvement of Student Learning is faculty driven. It is coordinated by faculty who serve as College Competency Coordinators and who work directly with their peers, the Institutional Research department, and the college deans, as they deploy this plan.

During the 2003–2004 academic year at Rio Salado College, college level competency assessments were administered to 2,730 students in order to measure student skill levels in writing, reading, critical thinking, information literacy, and problem solving across the curriculum. Additionally, a nationally norm-referenced exam, the Academic Profile (AP), was administered as a multiple measure of student skill. The AP was completed by 262 students during 2004. The AP has seven sections: humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, college level reading, college level writing, critical thinking and mathematics. Rio Salado students scored higher, on average, on all sections of the AP than the national comparison sample (454.18, 438.00 respectively).

In particular, the Writing Competency Assessment was administered by collecting specified assignments from six general education classes: ECN111, EDU222, ENG102, HIS103, PHI101, and PSY101. While this method differed from previous years, the scores were comparable across time due to the scoring mechanism, the Rio Salado Writing Competency Rubric.

2003-04 Assessment Results: Summary of Findings

1. Rio Salado Students continue to perform well on the Academic Profile Exam (AP).
 - 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 2004 than in the previous two years.
 - A majority of the students scored at or above college level on the local writing section of the AP.

2. Rio Salado Students continue to perform well on core college competency assessments.
 - In general, Rio Salado students demonstrated college-level skills on the college core competency assessments. Overall, 84.69% of students scored within the acceptable range of college-level performance on the competency assessments.
 - In general, scores on the competency assessments were positively correlated with the ages of the students. Overall, assessment scores were higher for more mature students.
 - Average scores remained relatively unchanged during the past three years on four of the five assessments (Writing, Critical Thinking, Information Literacy, and Problem Solving). The average score on the Reading Assessment has increased slightly during each of the past three years.

**Rio Salado College
Student Learning Outcomes
Summary Data
2003 - 2004**

	Distance Learning	Dual Enrollment	45+ Credits Cohort¹
Writing Competency	3.19	3.13	2.80 ²
Reading Competency	3.12	3.11	3.18
Critical Thinking Competency	2.79	2.55	3.11
Information Literacy Competency	3.40	3.35	3.55
Problem Solving Competency	3.39	3.19	3.55
Academic Profile Exam	454.99	454.94	447.04
Academic Profile Local Writing	3.16	3.11	3.17

Competency and Local Writing Scale: 1 – 4 (4 = exemplary, 3 = college level)

Academic Profile Scale: 400 - 500

**Rio Salado College
Student Learning Outcomes
Longitudinal Data
2003 - 2004**

	Spring 2002		Spring 2003		Spring 2004	
	Average	N	Average	N	Average	N
Writing Competency	3.02	362	3.27	279	3.17	449
Reading Competency	3.08	483	3.11	443	3.12	492
Critical Thinking Competency	2.66	466	2.78	441	2.65	442
Information Literacy Competency	3.32	541	3.37	463	3.37	581
Problem Solving Competency	3.30	614	3.35	559	3.30	766
Academic Profile Exam	456.06	214	453.75	224	454.18	262
Academic Profile Local Writing	3.22	208	3.20	224	3.14	262

Competency and Local Writing Scale: 1 – 4 (4 = exemplary, 3 = college level)

Academic Profile Scale: 400 - 500

2003-04 Highlights of Assessment Efforts

- Held 6th Annual Learning Experience On Assessment and Learning
- Recognized six Outstanding Adjunct Faculty for Contributions to Assessment
- Conducted all full time faculty meetings with Student Achievement as a standing agenda item
- Published the Rio Salado College 2003-04 Student Learning Outcomes Report and distributed to all full time faculty
- Published a Rio Salado College 2003-04 Student Learning Outcomes Highlights Report and distributed to all adjunct faculty
- Conducted monthly meetings of the College Competency Coordinators Committee
- Offered online faculty development workshops on Critical Thinking, eCheating/plagiarism, and Information Literacy
- Participated in district Assessment Forum activities
- Continued inserting the college assessment philosophy statement in college schedules, catalog and course syllabi:

Rio Salado College Assessment 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) 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.

Learnings and Improvements at the Program Level for 2003-04

General Education Program

- There was increased communication between Competency Coordinators and Faculty Chairs for integrating competency information, expectations, and rubrics into the curriculum.
- There were an increased number of improvements made in the design of assignments (e.g., creating more reflective assignments utilizing critical thinking components, reading skills, writing skills). Course developers and faculty chairs were provided with information and given support and assistance as they work on this.
- There was an increased number of curriculum content revisions where college competency work was integrated into grading criteria across academic disciplines (e.g., clear expectations provided for critical evaluation of course material, specific amount of points awarded for demonstration of critical evaluation).
- Starting in the Spring of 2004, Rio Salado's English Faculty Chair met with representatives of the office for institutional research to select assignments from various disciplines that were all designed to have students write assignment responses from two-to five-paragraphs or more in length. Over the semester, student work was pulled until a statistically valid sampling of one hundred or more submissions had been accumulated for the holistic grading team to score. The courses from which these assessments were

taken were: ECN111: Macroeconomic Principles; EDU222: Introduction to the Exceptional Learner; ENG102: First-Year Composition; HIS103: United States History to 1870; PHI101: Introduction to Philosophy; and PSY101: Introduction to Psychology. This process was a departure from the previous practice of administering a common, randomly assigned assessment, and scoring student performance. Prior to this change, students were being assessed in a situation in which they had a grade/learning at stake. While the overarching goal continued to be whether or not students could write at a college-level in response to coursework/assignments, it was a beginning step in looking at what variables might have an impact on their performance in this coursework.

Applied Programs

- **Nursing Program**

The Nursing program at Rio Salado College has a national pass rate with National Council of Licensing Examination (NCLEX) of 81% and uses a variety of assessment forms to assess student progress: NET-Nurse Entrance Test – before students are admitted into the RN program; HESI - Health Education Systems Incorporated - students who complete Block II take an evaluation exam which predicts NCLEX-PN (Practical Nurse) success, and other summative/formative evaluations.

- **Dental Hygiene Program**

National Board Dental Hygiene Examination taken in April had a 100% pass rate. Their actual scores ranked Rio Salado College as #19 out of 243 schools with students taking the test. Scores for the Western Regional Examining Board were as follows: Anesthesia had a 100% pass rate; Dental Hygiene Clinical had 32/34 student pass, a 94% pass rate. The State Board test is a jurisprudence test and all students passed it. Students submit their results from these three tests to get their license in the state.

- **Law Enforcement Technology**

100% of students earning certificates were employed by police organizations in Arizona. The certification body for sworn law enforcement officers in the State, is AZ POST. The Academy starts compared to graduations for the past fiscal year included ALEA: 463/333; Mesa PD: 50/50; MCSO Deputy: 57/46; and COTA: 1728/1061.