Assessment for Student Learning: Institutional-level Assessment
2017-2018 Results

BACKGROUND

Assessment for Student Learning is a key performance indicator aligned to the College category of *Educational Quality*. As a measure of *Educational Quality*, this category is aligned to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Public Agenda Goal to raise the number of people with quality postsecondary credentials and to improve transitions along the educational pipeline.

Assessment for Student Learning
Assessment for student learning is a continual and dynamic process of collecting, synthesizing, and interpreting information to aid in continuous improvement efforts and decision making. In higher education, assessment involves identifying clear, valid and appropriate learning outcomes; collecting evidence of student learning from various assessment measures; engaging in dialogue to interpret the data; and using data to validate or enhance student learning and to make improvements in curriculum and instruction.

> **NOTE:**
> Details about the assessment process and RVC Institutional Student Learning Outcomes can be found on the College website through the featured link, *Assessment for Student Learning.*

At RVC, assessment of student learning is conducted at the institutional, program or discipline, and course level. These efforts are guided, in part, by Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB).

Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLO)
ISLOs describe what a student should know or be able to do upon completion of their college experience. As such, learning outcomes at the institutional level are general enough to apply to all students regardless of credential earned and program or discipline studied. The RVC ISLOs are representative of the national expectations of associate's degree completers described within the Lumina Foundation's *Degree Qualifications Profile*. Figure 1 displays the ISLO expected of each student completing a degree or certificate program at Rock Valley College.

Figure 1: Rock Valley College Institutional Student Learning Outcomes

Analytic Reasoning	Students will form logical inferences, judgments, or conclusions from facts or premises related to topics encountered in the classroom, workplace, and daily life.
Communication	Students will exchange ideas effectively in a variety of settings.
Global Awareness and Responsibility	Students will develop the knowledge and skills required to responsibly interact with social and natural communities, both locally and globally.
Personal Responsibility	Students will accept responsibility for their personal and professional wellness and development, positioning themselves for life-long learning.

For several years, faculty from a variety of programs and disciplines have volunteered to evaluate student work samples with respect to the ISLOs. Student work samples are collected from courses that span levels (e.g., 100- and 200-level courses) and content areas (e.g., English and Psychology). These work samples come from assignments embedded into students' regular coursework to provide an authentic measure of student learning. Samples are randomized and organized into electronic forms for scoring based on their alignment with the ISLO.

Composite scores are calculated for each ISLO component by comparing checklist ratings to learning expectations based on credit hours earned. This method of scoring allows for students who have completed their program to be held to a higher standard than those with 30 or more credits and students with 30 or more credits to be held to a higher standard than those with fewer than 30 credits.

Each student's composite score is represented as the percentage of points earned relative to the number of ISLO subcomponents scored. These percentages are then averaged to create an institutional score for each student learning outcome component. If the average score is 80% or higher, then the outcome is generally considered to be achieved at the institutional level. If the average score is at least 60% but less than 80%,

● Achieving	80% or more
● Approaching	at least 60% but less than 80%
● Needs Improvement	less than 60%

students are generally approaching achievement. Learning outcomes with an average score lower than 60% have been identified as areas in need of improvement.

Analytic Reasoning

In 2018, forty-three (43) student artifacts were evaluated for achievement in Analytic Reasoning. These artifacts were randomly sampled from selected sections of ENG 101 Composition I, ENG 103 Composition II, MET 162 Applied Physics, MGT 274 Leadership, PSY 170 General Psychology, RSP 122 Respiratory Care Practices & Procedures II, NRS 226 Family & Reproductive Health Nursing, NRS 228 Child & Family Health Nursing, and RDG 099 Reading for Academic Purposes. Table 1 summarizes student achievement with respect to Analytic Reasoning. Results are reported in terms of institutional status (i.e., achieving, approaching, or needs improvement) rather than the average composite scores, because the small sample size could create large fluctuations in scores that are difficult to interpret. Consistency in institutional status, however, provides meaningful information for decision making.

Table 1: Achievement of Institutional Student Learning Outcomes: Analytic Reasoning (AR)

Student Learning Outcome Components	Institutional Status		
	2016	2017	2018
AR1: Students will identify the ideas, theories, or methods relevant to various topics, tasks, or problems.	●	●	●
AR2: Students will select appropriate relevant information, resources, or technologies necessary to address various topics, tasks, or problems.	●	●	●
AR3: Students will apply an appropriate method, strategy, or plan of action to perform a task, resolve a problem, or draw a logical conclusion.	●	●	●
AR4: Students will analyze information, resources, technologies, or data.	●	●	●

Data presented in Table 1 indicate:
- Students are generally achieving with respect to their ability to identify the ideas, theories, or methods relevant to various topics, tasks, or problems (AR1).
- Students are generally achieving with respect to their ability to select appropriate relevant information, resources, or technologies necessary to address various topics, tasks, or problems (AR2).
- Students are generally achieving with respect to their ability to apply an appropriate method, strategy, or plan of action to perform a task, resolve a problem, or draw a logical conclusion (AR3).
- Students are generally achieving with respect to their ability to analyze information, resources, technologies, or data (AR4).

Communication

In 2018, twenty (48) student artifacts were evaluated for achievement in Communication. These artifacts were randomly sampled from selected sections of ENG 101 Composition 1, ENG 103 Composition II, ART 252 History of Art II, DNT 118 Dental Pharmacology, FRE 101 Intro to Fire Protection, SOC 190 Introduction to Sociology, and PSY 275 Social Psychology. Table 2 summarizes student achievement with respect to Communication. Results are reported in terms of institutional status rather than the average composite score, because the small sample size could create large fluctuations in scores that are difficult to interpret. Consistency in institutional status, however, provides meaningful information for decision making.

Table 2: Achievement of Institutional Student Learning Outcomes: Communication (C)

Student Learning Outcome Components	Institutional Status		
	2016	2017	2018
C1: Students will create texts[1] that are clear (e.g., coherent and concise).	●	●	●
C2: Students will create texts that are substantially error-free.	●	●	●
C3: Students will identify the perspective (e.g., purpose or audience) of texts.	●	●	●
C4: Students will use appropriate formats and technologies to exchange ideas.	●	●	●
C5: Students will comprehend a variety of texts.	●	NA	●
C6: Students will present texts to a group.	Alternate Method*		

*NA = Not available as more than half of the checklist items were not applicable for the assignment(s) or were rated inconsistently by readers; *learning outcome was not assessed and requires an alternate assessment method*

Data presented in Table 2 indicate:
- Students are achieving with respect to clarity of communication (C1)
- Students are generally approaching achievement with respect to reducing errors (grammatical and mechanical) in their texts.
- Students are generally achieving with respect to the ability to identify perspective (e.g., purpose or audience) (C3).
- Students are generally achieving with respect to using appropriate formats and technologies to exchange ideas (C4).
- Students are generally achieving with respect to comprehending a variety of texts (C5)
- The ability to present texts to a group was not assessed.

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[1] Texts include written, oral, aural, non-verbal, and visual communication.

Global Awareness and Responsibility

In 2018, twenty (48) student artifacts were evaluated for achievement in Global Awareness and Responsibility (GAR). These artifacts were randomly sampled from selected sections of CHM 105, SPN 101, ART 141, and PHL 155. Table 3 summarizes student achievement with respect to Global Awareness and Responsibility. Results are reported in terms of institutional status rather than the average composite score, because the small sample size could create large fluctuations in scores that are difficult to interpret. Consistency in institutional status, however, provides meaningful information for decision making.

Table 3: Achievement of Institutional Student Learning Outcomes: Global Awareness and Responsibility (GAR)

Student Learning Outcome Components	Status 2018
GAR1: Students will recognize their own cultural rules and biases.	NA
GAR2: Students will describe diverse values and perspectives.	●
GAR3: Students will distinguish between what is and what ought to be in social and natural contexts.	NA
GAR4: Students will analyze social and environmental issues in a variety of contexts.	●
GAR5: Students will analyze the reciprocal impact of individual and group behavior on the local, national, and global communities.	NA
GAR6: Students will identify behaviors related to civic engagement.	NA
GAR7: Students will work effectively in groups.	*

*NA = Not available as more than half of the checklist items were not applicable for the assignment(s) or were rated inconsistently by readers; *learning outcome was not assessed and requires an alternate assessment method*

- Students are generally achieving with respect to describing diverse values and perspectives (GAR 2) and analyzing social and environmental issues in a variety of contexts (GAR 4).

- There were insufficient numbers of artifacts for GAR 1, 3, 5, and 6. There was no assessment of GAR 7. To address these gaps in assessment, the College used data from CCSSE to provide measures of outcome attainment.

RVC student data from the 2018 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) was used to provide more information as to students' progress on Global awareness and Responsibility. Survey results demonstrated:

- When asked whether students Participated in a community-based project (service-learning activity) as part of a regular course, 21% responded that they had.
- When asked if they had serious conversations with students who differ from you, 93.6% had
- When asked how much the College emphasizes, Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds, 84% answered affirmatively

Personal Responsibility

Personal Responsibility was not assessed in 2017/2018, but planning is underway to incorporate self-report items (e.g., *I made use of this instructor's office hours*; *I participated actively and contributed thoughtfully to class discussions and group projects*; and *I met my instructor's expectations for completing course work as outlined in the syllabus*) into end-of-semester student evaluations of courses to inform the degree to which this ISLO is being addressed.

RVC student data from the 2018 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) was used was used to provide more information as to students' progress on Personal Responsibility. Survey results demonstrated:

- When asked how much the College has helped them in learning to work effectively with others, 92% answered affirmatively
- When asked how much the College has helped them in learning effectively on their own, 94% answered affirmatively
- When asked how much the College has helped them in encouraging them to spend significant amounts of time studying, 97% answered affirmatively
- When asked how often they come to class without completing assignments, 5.2% responded "very often," 8.7% responded "often," 56.5% responded "sometimes," and 29.7% responded "never."
- When asked how much time they spend preparing for class, 3.3 % indicated more than 30 hours, 5.8% indicated 21-30 hours, 17.8% indicated 11-20 hours, 30.3% indicated 6-10 hours, 41.6% indicated 1-5 hours, and 1.3% reported spending no time preparing for class.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

As a measure of *Educational Quality*, institutional assessment for student learning ensures that the credentials awarded by the College represent a quality postsecondary education and facilitate transitions along the educational pipeline. Findings from ISLO assessment suggest some areas of success and others in need of improvement. For example, students are achieving or approaching most expectations related to Analytic Reasoning and Communication. However, students need some additional support to meet the College's expectations for creating texts that are substantially error-free.

As assessment is a continuous improvement process, the results in this summary report will be shared with faculty and staff for the purpose of developing strategies that strengthen student learning. The ISLO components for which students demonstrate the most success could be used as models for strengthening learning in other areas. For example, instructional practices and support services that contribute to student learning of Analytic Reasoning component two (AR2) could be replicated or extended to facilitate learning of Communication component two (C2). While the College may choose to focus on those areas in need of improvement, areas in which students are approaching achievement also need attention so that the institutional status moves toward achievement and does not slip into needs improvement. Moreover, those components that have a record of achieved need to be monitored to ensure continuous achievement.

Assessment of Global Awareness and Responsibility and Personal Responsibility requires more intentional alignment between student assignments and checklists and/or development of alternative assessment methods. Addressing these process improvements will be among the priorities of the Assessment Committee in academic year 2017-2018. Other priorities include using multiple assessment methods to triangulate data and evaluating a larger sample of student artifacts so that assessment results are more generalizable.

Community College Survey of Student Engagement
According to the CCSSE 2018 results, RVC students are scoring below the national average on Active and Collaborative Learning, Student Effort, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Support for Learners. The areas of most concern are Active and Collaborative Learning and Student-Faculty Interaction. Improvements in these institutional practices and student behaviors could lead to improvements in student learning and retention.