# Riverside Assessment Committee

## General Education Learning Outcome Assessment Findings

Fall 2018 - Fall 2020

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# GE SLOS SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

## GE SLOs

- CRITICAL THINKING
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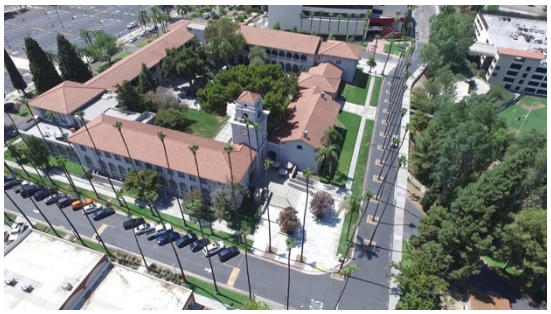


## PROCESS

- Direct assessments of all four GE SLOs were done by the RAC between fall of 2018 and fall of 2020.
- Assessments were comprised of student work, including such varied artifacts as welds, a video of a speech, exercises from a Math 1A textbook, a Psychology 50 lab assignment, and an English 1B essay.
- The assessment process involved a norming process, scoring, and a debrief at the end, all of which generated excellent insight and questions ranging from “What does mastery of an SLO mean?” to “What is the difference between

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Faculty should announce to students and/or embed in assignments/paper prompts the course SLO, GE SLO, and PLO so students know what they are supposed to be learning, and to give students agency in the learning process.
- The RAC should conduct FLEX training, in collaboration with Faculty Development, on how to craft assignments that do the above.
- Each discipline should review, and revise if necessary, the GE SLO mapping for their courses.
- Upon completion of each course SLO assessment, faculty should upload both their assignment and several examples of student work to facilitate GE SLO and PLO assessments.

GE Critical Thinking SLO
Fall 2018 Assessment Narrative
By the Riverside Assessment Committee

## Introduction

According to the Riverside City College catalog, the awarding of an associate degree is intended to represent more than just an accumulation of units. The associate degree says that recipients have taken coursework in broad areas of study including the sciences, mathematics, and humanities which have allowed them to develop certain capabilities including the ability to communicate clearly and to think critically. Moreover, recipients of the associate degree will be able to demonstrate those capabilities in courses that allow for the introduction, development, and, in some cases, mastery of said skills.

To this end, the College has four general education student learning outcomes (GE SLOs) that are assessed to measure to what extent (1) the courses identified as GE courses encourage the development of these capabilities, and (2) the students passing these courses have, indeed, developed the capabilities.

Critical thinking is a primary skill that those earning an associate degree from RCC should possess. The GE critical thinking outcome is as follows:

> Students will be able to demonstrate higher order thinking skills about issues, problems, and explanations for which multiple solutions are possible. Students will be able to explore problems and, where possible, solve them. Students will be able to develop, test, and evaluate rival hypotheses. Students will be able to construct sound arguments and evaluate the arguments of others.

## Assessment Project and Instrument

In Fall 2018, the Riverside Assessment Committee (RAC) did a direct assessment of student work in four content areas using the attached rubric, which divided the GE SLO into four parts. The courses were chosen to include student work from different divisions across the college.

The four content areas and assignments were as follows:

1. An essay comparing two pieces of literature completed in an English 1B (Critical Thinking) course.
2. A peer review of an essay about an episode of *The Walking Dead* completed in a Philosophy 12 (Applied Ethics) course.
3. A series of welds completed in a Welding 55A (Introduction to Gas Tungsten Arc Welding) course
4. A performance by the jazz band for a Music 44 (Jazz Ensemble) course.

Those who participated in the assessment and rubric scoring—including members of RAC, other full- and part-time faculty, administrators, and college support staff—were provided with the assignment for

reference only but were instructed not to grade the student work. The members were told instead to evaluate the student work for the assignments' ability to allow the students to demonstrate critical thinking in conjunction with the assignment. In other words, the participants were advised to look at the assignment and see what the students were being asked to do and then to determine to what degree the student demonstrated critical thinking as described in the GE SLO.

As part of the important conversation about expectations and the purpose of assessment, the groups also spent time norming the critical thinking rubric before beginning the analysis of the student artifacts. Each group developed common vocabulary of words and phrases to help members talk about critical thinking and what critical thinking might look like in an English essay, a philosophy peer review, a weld, and a music performance.

We were hoping to learn primarily to what degree our students were able to demonstrate critical thinking upon completion of courses mapped to the GE critical thinking SLO. Secondarily, we knew that we would also be evaluating the assignments, and whether the assignment in courses mapped to the GE critical thinking SLO were allowing students to be introduced to, to develop, or to master the GE critical thinking SLO.

## Results

Results of each group's assessment of the artifacts are shown below:

| English 1B | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GE 1.1 Students will be able to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills about issues, problems, and explanations for which multiple solutions are possible. | Mastered | Developing<br><br>X | Emerging | Not met | N/A or unable to determine |
| GE 1.2 Students will be able to explore problems and, where possible, solve them. | | | | | X |
| GE 1.3 Students will be able to develop, test, and evaluate rival hypotheses. | | | | X | |
| GE 1.4 Students will be able to construct sound arguments and evaluate the arguments of others. | | | X | | |

| Philosophy 12 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GE 1.1 Students will be able to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills about issues, problems, and explanations for which multiple solutions are possible. | Mastered | Developing<br><br>X | Emerging | Not met | N/A or unable to determine |
| GE 1.2 Students will be able to explore problems and, where possible, solve them. | | X | | | |
| GE 1.3 Students will be able to develop, test, and evaluate rival hypotheses. | X | | | | |
| GE 1.4 Students will be able to construct sound arguments and evaluate the arguments of others. | | X | | | |

| Wel 55A | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GE 1.1 Students will be able to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills about issues, problems, and explanations for which multiple solutions are possible. | Mastered<br><br>X | Developing | Emerging | Not met | N/A or unable to determine |
| GE 1.2 Students will be able to explore problems and, where possible, solve them. | | | | | X |
| GE 1.3 Students will be able to develop, test, and evaluate rival hypotheses. | | | | | X |
| GE 1.4 Students will be able to construct sound arguments and evaluate the arguments of others. | | | | | X |

| Mus 44 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GE 1.1 Students will be able to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills about issues, problems, and explanations for which multiple solutions are possible. | Mastered | Developing | Emerging | Not met | N/A or unable to determine X |
| GE 1.2 Students will be able to explore problems and, where possible, solve them. | | | | | X |
| GE 1.3 Students will be able to develop, test, and evaluate rival hypotheses. | | | | | X |
| GE 1.4 Students will be able to construct sound arguments and evaluate the arguments of others. | | | | | X |

## Analysis

More so than the groups' conclusions about students' ability to demonstrate critical thinking, which seem to be inconclusive, the most important result really seemed to be the conversations we had in our individual groups and as one large group about three main topics:

1. The quality of assignments in courses mapped to the GE critical thinking SLO
2. The ability of non-subject-matter experts to evaluate critical thinking in an artifact
3. Whether a student earning an associate degree would ever master a skill or capability

Below is a brief extension of from each finding listed above that emerged from the group's discussion after all the artifacts were reviewed and coded.

*The quality of assignments in courses mapped to the GE critical thinking SLO*

When the groups evaluated each artifact, the discussion that ensued surrounded the type of artifacts selected. While groups that looked at unique artifacts appreciated the out-of-the-norm artifact (e.g., the welds and the music performance), this uniqueness also impacted the group's ability to assess the artifact presented. The groups did not struggle with the norming process. The struggle came instead when then it came time to apply that norm to the selected artifact. This led to discussion for some groups *if* the artifact evaluated the outcome at all. Further analysis of this finding is discussed below. What was discovered here was assignments that had clearly defined objectives for the students were easier to delineate first that the students could exhibit critical thinking and secondly, that for many they did. This was clear in both the English and Philosophy assignments and student work.

*The ability of non-subject-matter experts to evaluate critical thinking in an artifact*

Within each of the groups evaluating the various artifacts, the subject-matter-expert was present. This was strategically done so the individual could explain the assignment, artifacts, and field any questions that may have come up. Whether the group was the music group or the English group, one of the biggest challenges for some non-subject-matter-experts was to wrap their minds around evaluating the artifact for the presence of evidence of critical thinking rather than evaluating the artifact according to the guidelines presented by the assignment. Others struggled with the fact they were not subject-matter experts and felt inadequate to determine whether an artifact achieved the objective or not. For instance, the members of the group evaluating the musical performance labeled all four portions of the GE standard as "not applicable" because they said they lacked "understanding of basic elements of music" and felt they "needed more details of the assignment to evaluate." This led to a discussion of whether the course was, indeed, a GE course.

Before this exercise in assessing the critical thinking GE outcome, the assessment committee discussed non-subject-matter experts evaluating artifacts and outcomes. The committee ultimately opted to assess the outcomes this way because after a student leaves RCC with an associate's degree, in any subject matter, they should have acquired skills in critical thinking as part of their program. Then when this former student is interacting with the world around them, they would be able to apply these skills regardless of the context or subject matter

The discussion that occurred did yield some suggestions to help the ability of non-subject matter experts evaluate various GE outcomes when looking at an artifact, along with students' ability to better understand, learn from, and acquire the multiple skills embedded within each of the objectives. These findings are discussed below in the future implications section.

*Whether students earning an associate degree would ever master a skill or capability*

The final discovery from the large group discussion surrounded if a student could have the opportunity to master a skill given the objectives in any associate degree general education program at the college. This came from various individuals pointing out often community college students are introduced to a topic or skill and then begin to develop an understanding in that area. The student may then in other courses within their program or across the college to continue to build on that skill, but seldom does a student have the opportunity during their two years at the college to master the skill. This mastery of this sequence of learning generally tends to occur at the student's transferring institution or in the workforce. Many were in agreement of this and moving forward the assessment committee may look to review the scoring rubric to reflect the outcome of this discussion to exclude a category for mastery of an objective.

Another nugget of knowledge that emerged from the group's discussion came from the support staff present and was further supported by the faculty in attendance. This had to do with consistent and inescapable support for our students from both faculty and the service areas, while also reinforcing the GE outcomes. One example that was provided is when a student goes to tutorial services regarding difficulty in a course to encourage them to also seek help from the faculty member. Another example

presented was when a student is meeting with a counselor on their education plan, and it becomes apparent a course needs to be repeated getting the student to apply critical thinking and asking them to explain why they believe they failed a course. Ultimately, this embedded support requires relationships. Relationships with students and relationships between faculty and various service areas to see how we can best aid students in achieving all their educational goals. This demonstrates how critical thinking, like the other general education outcomes, can be taught nearly everywhere on campus, not just in the classroom, but also by staff, faculty, and administrators all working together.

## Future Implications and Recommendations

Moving forward the group ended the GE SLO assessment day by discussing how we as an institution are giving our students the opportunity to learn critical thinking and demonstrate what they have learned. One implication as to how to ensure we are providing students with opportunities to learn any GE outcome and express what they have learned is to articulate to them openly and regularly what objective they are working on in any given day. For example, listing the learning outcome (both SLO and GE) on an assignment and incorporating this into the review of the assignment. Another example was to at the start of a class session include the learning objectives in some way so the students are acutely aware of what they should be learning during that time in the classroom. In doing so, the group asserted this would create explicit metacognition surrounding the outcomes, so the students then know what they are learning from a given assignment, lesson, course, or program. Similarly, at the end of class, instructors might do a five-minute check-in, an activity in which instructors check in with the students by asking pointed questions about the day's activity and their understanding of the material. For example, questions like "what was the most interesting thing you heard about today?" or "what additional questions do you still have at the end of class today?" could help the instructor close the loop by informally assessing student learning in a low-stakes way. For classes in which this activity might be logistically challenging, posting such questions on an online discussion board could be done.

Closely related to the first suggestion from the group's debrief is the suggestion to faculty to embed GE learning objective language into the prompt for an assignment. This then not only aids the student and faculty members when working with a given assignment, but this also will assist the assessment committee if that assignment and artifact is selected for review. Finally, in incorporating this suggestion, it could help to circumvent the second topic discussed in the analysis regarding subject-matter-experts because the language within the prompt would then most likely become reflected within the students work.

One recommendation to help facilitate the above two suggestions is for the RAC to partner with the Faculty Development Committee to host flex training sessions that would help faculty better construct assignments to make them clearer and to more explicitly connect said assignment to course SLOs and GE SLOs.

One unique idea that came out of this assessment activity was the possibility of assessing a focus group of students, who would be brought in during their final semester at RCC and given a critical thinking task or assignment to complete. This task or assignment would be scored to reveal the level of critical thinking the students were able to demonstrate in their final weeks as students here at the College.

While the CCSSE asks students to evaluate their own abilities in critical thinking, a focus group with a tangible assignment would help correct the potential for bias that is always present in self-evaluations.

## Conclusion

In closing, a lot of valuable insight was gleaned from this GE SLO assessment process for critical thinking. Not only will this aid the college moving forward in teaching and assessing this outcome, but it will also aid the college and RAC with the college's other GE SLOs.

# GE Information Competency and Technology Literacy SLO

Spring 2019 Assessment Narrative
By the Riverside Assessment Committee

## Introduction

According to the Riverside City College catalog, the awarding of an associate degree is intended to represent more than just an accumulation of units. The associate degree says that recipients have taken coursework in broad areas of study including the sciences, mathematics, and humanities which have allowed them to develop certain capabilities including the ability to communicate clearly and to think critically. Moreover, recipients of the associate degree will be able to demonstrate those capabilities in courses that allow for the introduction, development, and, in some cases, mastery of said skills.

To this end, the College has four general education student learning outcomes (GE SLOs) that are assessed to measure to what extent (1) the courses identified as GE courses encourage the development of these capabilities, and (2) the students passing these courses have, indeed, developed the capabilities.

Information competency and technology literacy are primary skills that those earning an associate degree from RCC should possess. The GE outcome in information competency and technology literacy reads as follows:

> Students will be able to use technology to locate, organize, and evaluate information. They will be able to locate relevant information, judge the reliability of sources, and evaluate the evidence contained in those sources as they construct arguments, make decisions, and solve problems.

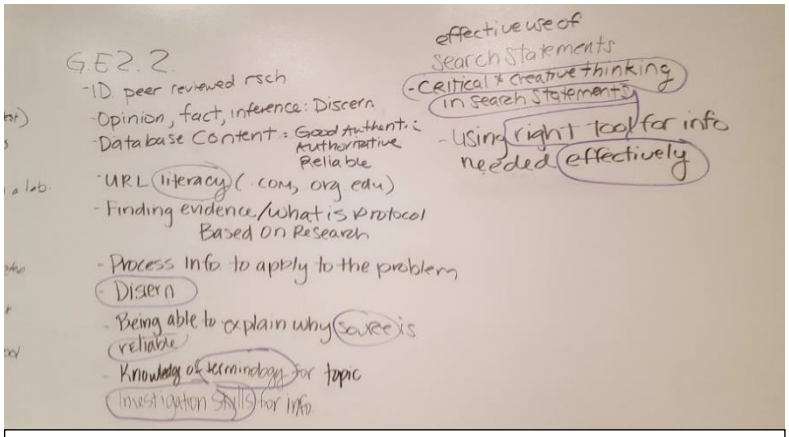
## Assessment Project and Instrument

In Spring 2019, the Riverside Assessment Committee (RAC) did a direct assessment of student work in four content areas using the attached rubric, which divided the GE SLO into two parts. The courses were chosen to include student work from different divisions across the college.

The four content areas and assignments were as follows:

1. A quiz on internet research from CIS-1A (Introduction to Computer Information Systems).
2. An outline and video recording of an informative cultural speech from Comm-1 (Public Speaking).
3. A lab assignment on statistical tests from PSY-50 (Research Methods in Psychology).
4. Common final from two sections of LIB-1 (Introduction to Information Literacy).

Those who participated in the assessment and rubric scoring were provided with the assignment for reference only but were instructed not to grade the student work. The members were told instead to evaluate the student work for the assignments' ability to allow the students to demonstrate information competency and technology literacy in conjunction with the assignment. In other words, the

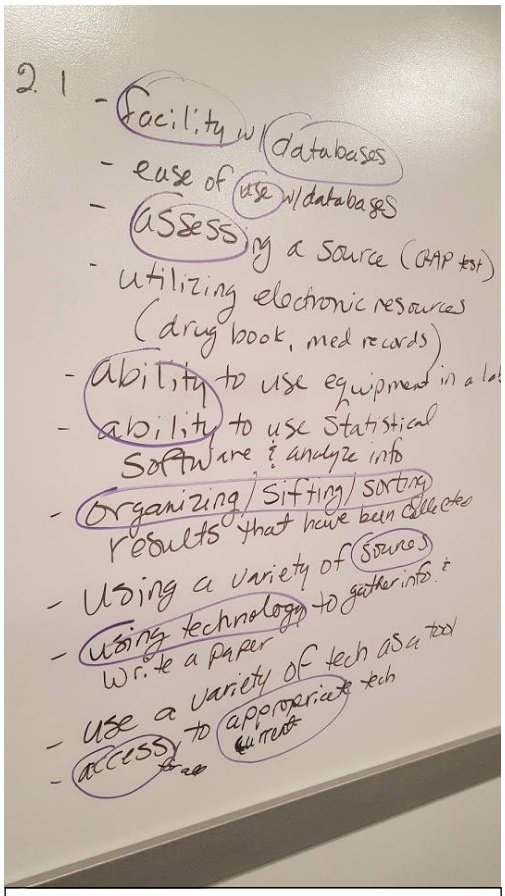



Group norming of GE SLO 2.2

participants were advised to look at the assignment and see what the students were being asked to do and then to determine to what degree the student demonstrated information competency and technology literacy as described in the GE SLO.

As part of the important conversation about expectations and the purpose of assessment, those who participated in the scoring spent time norming the two subsections of the rubric before beginning the analysis of the student artifacts. As a whole group, we developed a common vocabulary of words and phrases to discuss information competency and technology literacy, specifically what these broad terms mean, what the component parts of information competency and technology literacy are, and what this might look like in various assignments and student work.

We were hoping to learn primarily to what degree our students were able to demonstrate information competency and technology literacy upon completion of courses mapped to this GE SLO. Secondarily, we knew that we would also be evaluating the assignments, and whether the assignment in courses mapped to this GE SLO were allowing students approach, meet, or exceed the standards set forth in the rubric.




Group norming of GE SLO 2.1

Results

Results of each group's assessment of the artifacts are shown below:

| CIS-1A* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GE 2.1 Students will be able to use technology to locate, organize, and evaluate information. | Exceeds | Meets<br><br>X | Approaches | Does Not Meet | N/A |
| GE 2.2 Students will be able to locate relevant information, judge the reliability of sources, and evaluate the evidence contained in those sources as they construct arguments, make decisions, and solve problems. | | | | | |

*The group did not finish scoring both subsections in the time allotted.

| Comm-1 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GE 2.1 Students will be able to use technology to locate, organize, and evaluate information. | Exceeds | Meets<br><br>X | Approaches | Does Not Meet | N/A |
| GE 2.2 Students will be able to locate relevant information, judge the reliability of sources, and evaluate the evidence contained in those sources as they construct arguments, make decisions, and solve problems. | | | X | | |

| PSY-50 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GE 2.1 Students will be able to use technology to locate, organize, and evaluate information. | Exceeds | Meets<br><br>X | Approaches | Does Not Meet | N/A |
| GE 2.2 Students will be able to locate relevant information, judge the reliability of sources, and evaluate the evidence contained in those sources as they construct arguments, make decisions, and solve problems. | | X | | | |

| LIB-1 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GE 2.1 Students will be able to use technology to locate, organize, and evaluate information. | Exceeds | Meets<br><br>X | Approaches | Does Not Meet | N/A |
| GE 2.2 Students will be able to locate relevant information, judge the reliability of sources, and evaluate the evidence contained in those sources as they construct arguments, make decisions, and solve problems. | | | X | | |

Analysis

Overall, the scoring of this GE SLO went much more smoothly than the scoring of the critical thinking GE SLO, which was completed in Fall 2018. This seems to have been the case for two reasons. First, many of the participants this time also participated in the scoring in the fall, so they were more experienced in the language of the SLOs, the process of GE assessment, and the expectations of the activity. Second, and more important, was the fact that we spent time norming as a whole group before breaking up into smaller groups to work with individual artifacts. This part of the activity seemed to be especially helpful for all involved, not just for this particular activity, but as a model for the kinds of norming that everyone can do when they go back to their respective disciplines. The photos above show the work that was done defining the subsections of the SLO and then choosing key terms (circled in purple in the photos) to help those doing the scoring.

The conclusions of the groups seemed to center around the assignments. Ultimately, if the assignments do not encourage the students to do the kinds of activities called for in the SLO, then the students are not likely to meet or exceed the standards. This seemed to be the reason for the CIS group being unable to score subsection 2.2 and for the "approaches" rating on the Comm-1 artifacts.

For example, the group scoring the CIS artifacts commented that, in at least one of the quiz questions, the correct and incorrect answer choices were worded so similarly as to be interchangeable in meaning, which would have prevented the students from properly evaluating information to make decisions.

Faculty members working alongside a student to assess GE SLO

The group scoring the Comm-1 artifacts similarly found issues with the assignment. They wrote that, while the "assignment nicely lays out organizational patterns," it was "not clear that assignment fosters constructing arguments." Ultimately, this group determined that the

assignment seemed to encourage the student to be biased and NOT use appropriate sources, almost the opposite of what this GE SLO requires. The group came to this conclusion that it was assignment design that encouraged this result. The assignment was asking the students to select a misconception about their own culture and then inform the audience about this misconception. As a result, the students were finding sources that potentially reinforced their own perspective rather than locating sources that provided an alternative perspective.

Even the group reviewing the PSY-50 artifacts spent a fair amount of time discussing the assignment with regards to subsection 2.2. They wrote that, though the assignment required the students to evaluate the information, the students were not required to locate or judge the reliability of the information; they were provided the information by the instructor.

In the end, the consensus seemed to be that we as instructors need to go one step further in our questioning of students. We may tell them what sources to use, or which ones are good ones, but we should be asking them WHY: WHY did we choose one source over another or WHY is source X preferred. In other words, we need to spend more time discussing and helping students to think critically about sources while teaching them to use said sources so that, when they leave RCC, they can both choose appropriate sources and use those sources to get just the right information. To use the terminology developed by the groups during our norming session earlier, the groups discussed the need to teach students the appropriate investigative, creative, and critical thinking skills so that they can use technology to organize, sift, and sort sources and ultimately get to the answers they are seeking.

It should be noted that teaching and assessing the ability to choose and use appropriate sources may be occurring within the classroom; however, the artifacts we looked at may not have demonstrated this overall since these artifacts are just one snapshot of a whole semester's worth of assignments and instruction.

## Future Implications and Recommendations

Based on this assessment and its focus on the quality of assignments, the RAC recommends workshops put on with help from Faculty Development to assist instructors with developing more successful assignments. One idea is to do this by division with instructors from several disciplines in a division on hand to share assignments or to collaborate with colleagues to create effective assignments. Having the GE SLOs on hand for these collaborative sessions along with the SLOs for the courses could help faculty be sure that they are crafting assignments that speak to both.

Another recommendation the RAC has is, when assessing future GE SLOs, to try to capture more of the pedagogical process from those who provide artifacts by asking instructors to provide information about what instructional strategies have been used to get students to the assignment. This way the reviewers of artifacts will have not just the assignment language and the student work but also a clearer

understanding of the instruction that lead up to the assignment. Ultimately, the hope is that this will lead to a fuller picture of how the GE SLO is incorporated into the learning process and the outcome of that process.

## Conclusion

It is interesting to see how, so far, both the critical thinking SLO and the information competency and technology literacy SLO are connected. The groups in their work discovered that students can't have information competency and technology literacy without a dose of critical thinking, and that being a critical and creative thinker will help a student be more competent and literate with technology. As instructors, we need to see this connection and design our instruction and assignments so that students have the opportunity to practice both at the same time, knowing that the two SLOs enhance each other.

GE SLO Communication
Fall 2019 Assessment Narrative
By the Riverside Assessment Committee

## Introduction

According to the Riverside City College catalog, the awarding of an associate degree is intended to represent more than just an accumulation of units. The associate degree says that recipients have taken coursework in broad areas of study, including the sciences, mathematics, and humanities, which have allowed them to develop certain capabilities including the ability to communicate clearly and to think critically. Moreover, recipients of the associate degree will be able to demonstrate those capabilities in courses that allow for the introduction, development, and, in some cases, mastery of said skills.

To this end, the College has four general education student learning outcomes (GE SLOs) that are assessed to measure to what extent (1) the courses mapped to GE outcomes encourage the development of these capabilities, and (2) the students passing these courses have, indeed, developed the capabilities.

Communication is a primary skill that those earning an associate degree from RCC should possess. The GE outcome for communication reads as follows:

> Students will be able to communicate effectively in diverse situations. They will be able to create, express, and interpret meaning in oral, visual, and written forms. They will also be able to demonstrate quantitative literacy and the ability to use graphical, symbolic, and numerical methods to analyze, organize, and interpret data.

## Assessment Project and Instrument

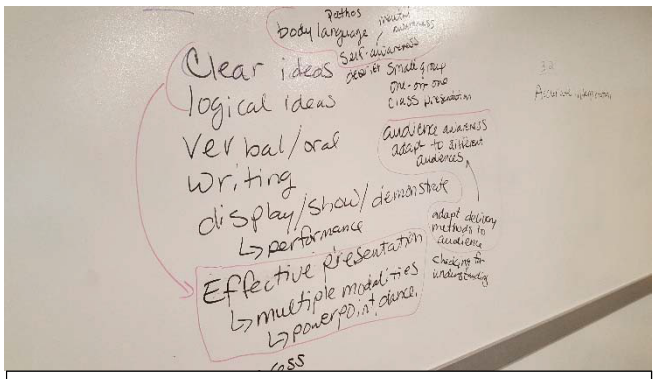
In Fall 2019, the Riverside Assessment Committee (RAC) did a direct assessment of student work in four content areas using the attached rubric, which divided the GE SLO into two parts. The courses were chosen to include student work from different divisions across the college.

The four content areas and artifacts were as follows:

1. Chapter 4 entitled “Applications of Differentiation” from a Math 1A textbook (Calculus I).
2. A prompt and the instructor’s evaluation/narrative of a group project for FTV 41 (Introduction to Telecommunications).
3. A prompt and peer review of a script for English 38 (Introduction to Screenwriting).

4. A prompt and a display of the student's progression through the stages of an assignment from Com 1H (Public Speaking-Honors).

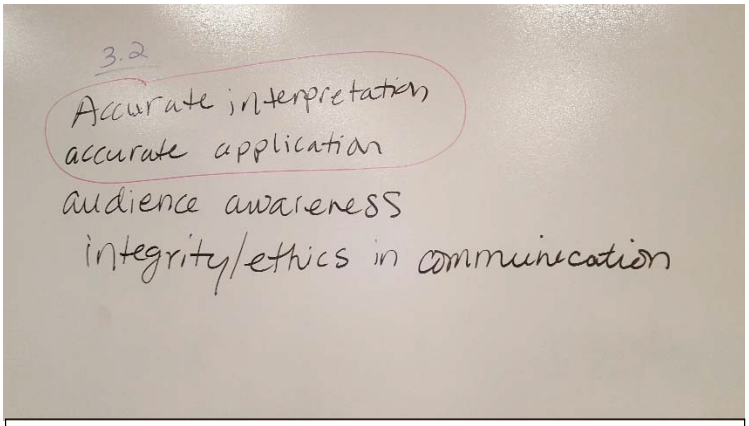
Those who participated in the assessment and rubric scoring were provided with the assignment, where available, for reference only and were instructed not to grade the student work. Instead, the members were told to evaluate the student work for the artifacts' ability to allow the students to demonstrate communication competency in conjunction with the artifact. In other words, the participants were advised to look at the artifacts and see what the students were being asked to do and then determine to what degree the student demonstrated communication competency as described in the GE SLO.




Group norming of GE SLO

As part of the important conversation about expectations and the purpose of assessment, those who participated in the scoring spent time norming the two subsections of the SLO before beginning the analysis of the artifacts (see photos on this page). The group developed a common vocabulary of words and phrases to discuss communication skills and competencies, specifically what these broad terms mean, what the component parts of communication competencies are, and what this might look like in various assignments and student work.

We were hoping to learn primarily to what degree our students were able to demonstrate communication competence upon completion of courses mapped to this GE SLO. Secondarily, we knew that we would also be evaluating the artifacts, and whether the artifacts in courses mapped to this GE SLO were allowing students to approach, meet, or exceed the standards set forth in the rubric.




Group norming of GE SLO

Results

Results of each group's assessment of the artifacts are shown below:

| Math 1A | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GE 3.1 Students will be able to communicate effectively in diverse situations. They will be able to create, express, and interpret meaning in oral, visual, and written forms. | Exceeds | Meets<br><br>X | Approaches | Does Not Meet | N/A |
| GE 3.2 They will also be able to demonstrate quantitative literacy and the ability to use graphical, symbolic, and numerical methods to analyze, organize, and interpret data. | | X | | | |

| FTV 41 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GE 3.1 Students will be able to communicate effectively in diverse situations. They will be able to create, express, and interpret meaning in oral, visual, and written forms. | Exceeds | Meets | Approaches<br>X | Does Not Meet | N/A |
| GE 3.2 They will also be able to demonstrate quantitative literacy and the ability to use graphical, symbolic, and numerical methods to analyze, organize, and interpret data | | | | X | |

| Eng 38 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GE 3.1 Students will be able to communicate effectively in diverse situations. They will be able to create, express, and interpret meaning in oral, visual, and written forms. | Exceeds | Meets<br><br>X | Approaches | Does Not Meet | N/A |
| GE 3.2 They will also be able to demonstrate quantitative literacy and the ability to use graphical, symbolic, and numerical methods to analyze, organize, and interpret data | | | | | X |

| Com 1H | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GE 3.1 Students will be able to communicate effectively in diverse situations. They will be able to create, express, and interpret meaning in oral, visual, and written forms. | Exceeds X | Meets | Approaches | Does Not Meet | N/A |
| GE 3.2 They will also be able to demonstrate quantitative literacy and the ability to use graphical, symbolic, and numerical methods to analyze, organize, and interpret data | X | | | | |

Analysis

Overall, the scoring of this GE SLO went smoothly because many in the room had previously participated in reviewing artifacts and evaluating them in light of GE SLOs. The fact that the whole process went so smoothly can also be attributed to the group norming process at the beginning of the session before breaking up into smaller groups to work with individual artifacts. In fact, as the RAC has evolved the scoring process, we have realized that the group norming is integral to the assessment process and can serve as a proven model for the kinds of norming that everyone can do when they go back to their respective disciplines. The photos above show the work that was done defining the subsections of the SLO and then choosing key terms (circled in the photos) to help those doing the evaluation.

The groups' conversations seemed to focus on two areas in particular: what effective communication looked like and whether quantitative literacy could or would be met by non-mathematical assignments.

Group scoring the FTV 41 artifacts

For example, the group scoring the FTV 41 artifacts discussed the potential audience for the finished student films and wondered not just who the audience was for the finished student films but also whether the assignment required consideration of the audience. Audience awareness was one of the elements of effective communication described in GE 3.1 as determined by the group during the norming process.

The group scoring the Com 1 artifacts determined the artifacts provided exceeded the expectations of both GE SLO 3.1 and 3.2. For part 3.1, the group believed the students were required by the assignment to follow a process. This process then enabled students to begin developing the skill to communicate effectively in diverse situations. The assignment started with students creating an annotated bibliography from a variety of sources and then moving through the process by creating an outline and finally creating speaking notes for when the students presented their speeches. The students had to create, express, and interpret information and meaning in multiple forms throughout their process. The group felt that the artifact presented also exceeded the standard normed by the group for part 3.2 again because of the process the students had to follow. The students had to develop an audience survey early on in the preparation of their speech, which then provided data they needed to analyze and interpret to understand their audience. From the data they collected, the students then needed to develop their speeches with evidence and information to persuade their audience. Additionally, the group felt the fact the students were required to have sources, incorporate them into their speech, and then provide them on a reference page also helped students develop this skill. Finally, for both GE 3.1 and 3.2, the group did note that it was not this one course or assignment that would produce this skill in students; instead, enrollment in multiple classes will meet and/or exceed this requirement across the college.

Group scoring the Eng 38 artifacts

The group that discussed and analyzed the English 38 artifacts found the assignment did meet the standard for GE SLO 3.1. Students were required to critique the work of a peer in the course and then write them a letter explaining their rationale. The group spent time discussing the self-monitoring process that would occur during the critique process. During the large group norming process, the group spent time on self-awareness and self-monitoring as the requisite qualities needed for this objective. The group scoring the English 38 artifacts believed the assignment not only provided students with opportunities to present effective and clear communication but also reflected an awareness of the audience with whom they were communicating within the letter. From this process, the students learned mindfulness of language and empathy towards another in how they expressed themselves, and it is for this reason the group felt these artifacts did provide students with opportunities to develop effective communication in diverse situations in written form.

The most interesting conversation had to have been the group that worked with the Math 1A artifacts. This group had chapter four of the most commonly used calculus book, including the lesson and the practice problems. While it seems clear that math problems would require students to "demonstrate quantitative literacy and the ability to use graphical, symbolic, and numerical methods to analyze, organize, and interpret data," this group said that students would master this only if they succeeded at the assignment. In fact, they wrote "In terms of presenting and effectively communicating, the assignment seems unrelated to interpersonal communication." In other words, what appeared to be a foregone conclusion about a particular assignment was not after a closer look using specific criteria.

Group scoring the Math 1A artifact

This group also struggled to determine whether students in Math 1A would meet SLO 3.1. They chose "approaches," then scratched it out. Then, they chose "Does not meet" and added a note with an asterisk to their scoring sheet. Finally, they chose "Meets" not because the student would practice or master interpersonal skills but because the "assignment is relevant to creating [and] interpreting meaning" (emphasis in original). In other words, even the artifact that seemed like it would be easy to assess was not as the group members really dug into what the SLO meant and what it would look like in student work.

During the whole-group debrief at the end of the norming and evaluation session, four main points were discussed. First, the whole group discussed how RCC as an institution is doing in relation to the Communication GE SLO. It was generally agreed that the assignments for Communication Studies, Film, and English were clear and succinct and offered the students the opportunity to meet the requirement of the SLO. The math artifact, on the other hand, did not meet the requirement for oral communication. It fit the guidelines of visual and written forms by requiring work to be shown, but students do not usually get in front of the class and explain how they solved math problems. However, math and nursing have begun "flipping" the teaching method by requiring students to read the lecture as homework and using class time to work in groups on problems and examples to reinforce the lecture information.

Next, the whole group discussed what they had learned about the Communication GE SLO. The consensus seemed to be that assignments need to be created so that they not only meet the course SLO but also that the instructor has in mind the GE SLOs. Said differently, the instructors need to think about an assignment at different levels including class level and GE level. Another point on which the group agreed was that not all courses are going to map to GE SLOs. A technique course like Dance is not going to connect to many, or maybe any, GE SLOs.

Third, the group discussed whether it seemed assignments at RCC are assessing what is being taught in the classroom. The consensus was yes, they are, but creating assignments is definitely a trial-and-error process, though one that is necessary if faculty hope students understand their assignments and can see the assignment's structure.

Final group discussion, analysis & debrief

Finally, the group discussed the ways in which RCC courses give students the opportunity to learn and demonstrate communication skills. The group members were able to provide many examples including

- Clinic floor in Cosmetology – students don't just learn by lecture and demonstration, but they practice their skills by working on actual clients. Students are assessed after every application, and the clients give feedback to the students, too. Students are required to communicate with their clients throughout the process.
- Dance – Rita Chenoweth described the *Dance is All Around You* show being performed December 14-15, 2019 at the college. That is an opportunity to communicate with the dancers, cast, community, audience.
- Co-curricular – TRIO and Cal Works see students year after year and see them grow over time and how it effects their presentation of self. They coach the students to develop communication skills by speaking with instructors, other students, and staff and encourage them to be their own advocates. Many are first-generation college students and they don't have anyone else in the family to help guide them. Some students are accepted to 4 year institutions, but don't go on because they are not confident enough to navigate the process. TRIO and Cal Works try to keep contact with them to help them in their next steps before they officially begin at the four-year school. They see them through the whole life cycle from the time they arrive at RCC to transfer.
- Philosophy – students are required to present and be vocal. Most classes use a discussion element in large and small groups during the class. Students typically do better in small groups, but over the semester most people have broken out of their shell and develop that acumen.

## Future Implications and Recommendations

Based on the analysis and the conversations reported above, the RAC recommends the following:

- Following up with math and nursing to see how their "flipped" classrooms are going and looking at assessments to see if this teaching method improves student learning.

- Offering workshops or brown bag lunches through Faculty Development thatwould introduce faculty to the GE SLOs and allow faculty to discuss and revise their assignments to include GE SLOs in addition to course SLOs.
- Offering workshops on the AVID strategies of WICOR to help faculty learn how to incorporate writing and oral communication, inquiry, collaboration,organization, and reading into their courses.
- For courses taught by part-time faculty, being explicit about how SLOs relate to GE SLOs. Full-time faculty can help part-time faculty with this by reminding them to pay special attention to the SLOs and GE SLOs.
- Continuing to share the results of GE and other assessments with constituent groups on campus such as GEM-Q, Curriculum Committee, leadership councils, PLT, and others.

Conclusion

This GE SLO assessment seemed to generate much deep thought about the importance of assignments to both improved student learning and enhanced assessment results. Instructors need to frequently revisit their assignments, checking for clarity and ensuring that the assignment looks in multiple directions: toward the students' level of understanding, toward the course SLOs, and toward the GE SLOs if applicable for the class. Workshops for faculty can provide this kind of guidance.

Though the group danced around the issue, the idea that not every course needs to be connected to a GE SLO was also on the minds of those in the room, as evidenced by some of the comments. Another recommendation is that disciplines should review their course mapping in Nuventive Improve to make sure that all courses that need to be mapped to a GE SLO are and to decide as a discipline whether a course that is mapped to a GE SLO really should be.

Finally, AVID for Higher Education (AHE) has recently come to RCC, and after assessing the Communication GE SLO, it seems appropriate to mention WICOR, the collection of strategies that all instructors in all disciplines are encouraged to use. WICOR stands for writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading, and the idea behind these strategies is that all teachers should teach and incorporate writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading into their classes. It could be recommended that oral communication—not just writing—should be incorporated into all classes. Math and nursing are starting to do this with their introduction of flipped lessons; other disciplines should be encouraged to learn about WICOR and find appropriate ways to use WICOR in their classes.

GE SLO Self-development and Global Awareness
Fall 2020 Assessment Narrative
By the Riverside Assessment Committee

## Introduction

According to the Riverside City College catalog, the awarding of an associate degree is intended to represent more than just an accumulation of units. The associate degree says that recipients have taken coursework in broad areas of study, including the sciences, mathematics, and humanities, which have allowed them to develop certain capabilities including the ability to communicate clearly and to think critically. Moreover, recipients of the associate degree will be able to demonstrate those capabilities in courses that allow for the introduction, development, and, in some cases, mastery of said skills.

To this end, the College has four general education student learning outcomes (GE SLOs) that are assessed to measure to what extent (1) the courses mapped to GE outcomes encourage the development of these capabilities, and (2) the students passing these courses have, indeed, developed the capabilities.

Self-development and global awareness are primary skills that those earning an associate degree from RCC should possess. The GE outcome for self-development and global awareness reads as follows:

> Students will be able to develop goals and devise strategies for personal development and well-being. They will be able to demonstrate an understanding of what it means to be an ethical human being and effective citizen in their awareness of diversity and various cultural viewpoints.

## Assessment Project and Instrument

In Fall 2020, the Riverside Assessment Committee (RAC) did a direct assessment of student artifacts in four content areas using the attached rubric, which divided the GE SLO into two parts. The courses were chosen to include assignments and student work from different divisions across the college.

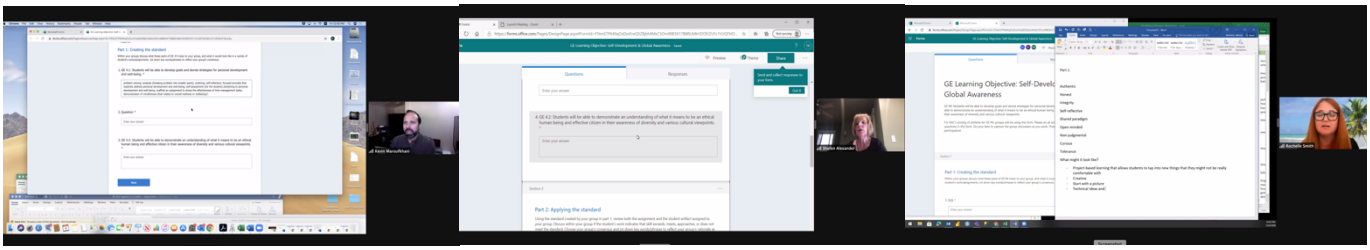
The four content areas and artifacts were as follows:

1. Kinesiology 4—Nutrition: A writing prompt and the assessment results from that prompt
2. Hum 10—World religions: A "C" and an "A" paper that employed argumentation for an assignment called, "Whose Yoga?" which addressed the status of Yoga as a spiritual/religious exercise that sparks controversy in American schools.

3. TRiO (service area)—SSS Wellness Program student survey results
4. HES 1—Health science: A pre- and post-test

Those who participated in the assessment and rubric scoring were provided with the assignment, where available, for reference only and were instructed not to grade the student work. Instead, the members were told to evaluate to what extent the assignment facilitates the students' practice, competency development, and/or mastery of the SLO. In other words, the participants were advised to look at the artifacts and see what the students were being asked to do and then determine to what degree the student demonstrated competency as described in the GE SLO.

As part of the important conversation about expectations and the purpose of assessment, those who participated in the scoring spent time norming the two subsections of the SLO before beginning the analysis of the artifacts. Because of COVID-19, we used Zoom breakout rooms and included a subject-matter expert in each of the four breakout groups. Each group normed separately rather than as a whole committee because of the limitations presented by the online format.

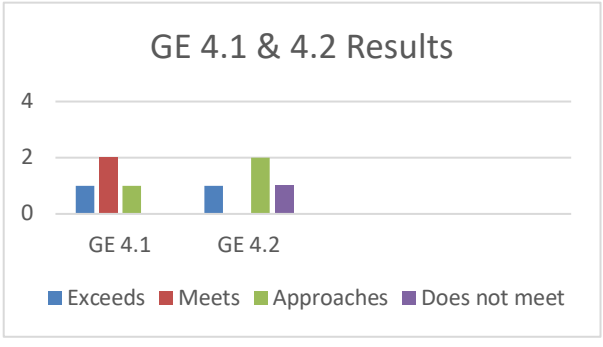


Each group developed a common vocabulary of words and phrases to discuss the skills and competencies associated with self-development and global awareness, specifically what these broad terms mean, what the component parts of self-development and global awareness competencies are, and what this might look like in various assignments and student work.

We were hoping to learn primarily to what degree our students were able to demonstrate competence in self-development and global awareness upon completion of courses mapped to this GE SLO. Secondarily, we knew that we would also be evaluating the artifacts, and whether the artifacts in courses mapped to this GE SLO were allowing students to approach, meet, or exceed the standards set forth in the rubric.

## Results

Results of each group's assessment of the artifacts are shown below:



| KIN 4 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GE 4.1 Students will be able to develop goals and devise strategies for personal development and well-being. | Exceeds | Meets<br><br>X | Approaches | Does Not Meet | N/A |
| GE 4.2 They will be able to demonstrate an understanding of what it means to be an ethical human being and effective citizen in their awareness of diversity and various cultural viewpoints. | | | X | | |

| HUM 10 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GE 4.1 Students will be able to develop goals and devise strategies for personal development and well-being. | Exceeds | Meets<br><br>X | Approaches | Does Not Meet | N/A |
| GE 4.2 They will be able to demonstrate an understanding of what it means to be an ethical human being and effective citizen in their awareness of diversity and various cultural viewpoints. | X | | | | |

| TRiO Survey | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GE 4.1 Students will be able to develop goals and devise strategies for personal development and well-being. | Exceeds<br><br>X | Meets | Approaches | Does Not Meet | N/A |
| GE 4.2 They will be able to demonstrate an understanding of what it means to be an ethical human being and effective citizen in their awareness of diversity and various cultural viewpoints. | | | | X | |

| HES 1 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GE 4.1 Students will be able to develop goals and devise strategies for personal development and well-being. | Exceeds | Meets | Approaches<br><br>X | Does Not Meet | N/A |
| GE 4.2 They will be able to demonstrate an understanding of what it means to be an ethical human being and effective citizen in their awareness of diversity and various cultural viewpoints. | | | X | | |

Analysis

One of the most interesting parts of this process was the individual norming. With the previous three GE SLO assessments, we conducted the norming session as one large group, and then broke into smaller groups to score and discuss the individual artifacts. This time, because we were working virtually, the norming and the scoring were both done in small groups. Interestingly, though the groups worked separately, they came up with many of the same words and phrases to define each of the two parts of GE SLO #4. Here is a graphic representation of the norming that was done:


It is clear that the groups separately came to see personal development, reflection, awareness, and self as important to defining self-development and global awareness.

After the groups determined the specific criteria by which they would evaluate the artifacts, then, it seemed, much of all groups' conversations focused on GE SLO 4.2. The group working with the Kinesiology artifact commented that a student's development or mastery of GE SLO 4.2 may not show in a test and that it might be easier to see students' awareness of diversity and various cultural viewpoints in a paper. One interesting point made by a kinesiology instructor was that GE SLO 4.2 seems to be reinforced in students' interactions with each other. He described the students in kinesiology classes as being representative of RCC's diverse student body, with students of varying races, ages, genders, and religions sitting and working and collaborating side by side in kinesiology classes.

The group working with the SSS Wellness Survey came to a similar conclusion about GE SLO 4.2 in that they said the "survey is meant to provide feedback for further development" rather than circling back and verifying whether that development actually happened. Their recommendation for the future was to create a post-survey "which better captures student experiences and learning as a result of participating in the activities" discussed on the survey.

The group looking at the Hum 10 artifacts had a very interesting discussion about grades versus SLO mastery. This group noted that students could earn a C on the assignment and still demonstrate that they gained demonstrable skills in the area of self-development and global awareness. In other words, students' grades in the class may or may not indicate mastery of the course SLOs of the GE SLOs. There was discussion in this group about the importance of intentionality in assignment design.

During the whole-group debrief at the end of the norming and evaluation session, one main idea that was raised was that GE SLO 4.2 seemed more problematic than 4.1. The groups said that many of the artifacts easily met GE SLO 4.1, but GE SLO 4.2 would require follow-up conversations and assignments specifically about diversity. Discussion then occurred regarding best practices in hopes that future assessment of this GE SLO may yield more meaningful discussions and insight into GE SLO 4.2. These best practices are discussed further in the next section.

## Future Implications and Recommendations

One recommendation stemming from this process centers on the group norming process. Since we had to conduct the norming not as one large group but in smaller groups due to the online nature of the meeting, we noted that, in some groups, those who were not subject-matter experts tended to be silent or offered only minimal comments. We recommend that, during the norming process, group leaders should work hard to encourage all members of the group are heard. This can be done in Zoom through the use of gallery view, in which all group members can see the other members and note who has and has not contributed to the conversation.

A second recommendation stems from the discussion about GE SLO 4.2 specifically. One member of the group reviewing the kinesiology artifact asked pointedly "How many course SLOs actually map or point to 4.2 specifically?" This question suggests that a review and

perhaps re-mapping for all courses might be necessary. Over the last couple of years, many disciplines have reviewed their course SLOs and revised or removed them; some disciplines turned some course SLOs into course objectives to represent more clearly the specific tasks students would need to complete to meet the over-arching course outcomes. With the course SLOs revised, now would be a good time to review and rethink the mapping to ensure that the courses mapped to GE SLO 4.2 truly require reflection and demonstrable understanding of self-development and global awareness. Reviewing all GE SLO mapping may be a good project for Spring 2021 semester; it would allow us to "close the loop" before assessing the GE SLOs again.

A third recommendation, and one of the best practices referenced in the previous section of this report, is explicitly linking assignments to not only course SLOs but also GE SLOs. Additionally, where applicable, programs could explicitly link their assignments to specific PLOs. Explicitly linking to the learning objectives would not only ensure awareness and deliberate intention by the instructor when creating the assignment, it would also aid the students in understanding the learning objectives and would help when it comes time to report assessment outcomes. Furthermore, when the time comes for the assessment committee to engage in the collegewide discussion of learning objectives, it would allow for more fruitful conversations and conclusions. Finally, linking the assignments to the PLOs could aid the programs when it comes time to do program learning outcome assessments.

The final recommendation and best practice discussed is linked to the previous recommendation. The final recommendation is that once the assessment of an assignment is completed and ready to be entered into Nuventive the instructor and/or assessment representative includes the assignment and student samples into the related documents. We know, from the discussion the members had during this process and in our regular meetings, faculty are doing creative and innovative assignments to assess their students' learning! Unfortunately, this is not always captured when assessment outcome is entered into Nuventive. At times only narratives are entered, while the assignment and student samples are not included. If we could create the norm that assignments are linked to learning objectives explicitly, followed up by including the assignments and student's work the assessment committee the committee concluded this could aid our future work in assessing GE outcomes. Additionally, we would be able easily acquire diverse samples from across the college without having to contact departments and instructors long after a semester is over.

## Conclusion

Assessing this particular GE SLO seemed more challenging than assessing previous GE SLOs, perhaps because of the amorphous nature of the concepts of self-development, well-being, and awareness of cultural viewpoints. To echo the group working with the kinesiology artifacts, our students are surrounded by diversity each day; students of different races, ages, gender expressions, and beliefs work together, talk to each other, and mingle in classes and during extra-curricular activities. In other words, RCC students indirectly are exposed to diversity and various cultural viewpoints. But are the lessons in ethics, effective citizenship, and awareness of diversity being taught directly and reinforced in the classroom? Perhaps in some classes, but

this assessment project did not examine enough artifacts to determine if this GE SLO is being reinforced widely across campus disciplines.

The good news is that, perhaps because this GE SLO involved broad interpretation, the conversations generated in the groups was particularly beneficial, especially if these conversations lead to a review of GE SLO mapping by all disciplines and to a focus on the importance of directly teaching and discussing equity and diversity in every discipline.

# GE SLO Assessment Recommendations

The following are the recommendations made by the RAC for each of the GE SLO assessments done between 2018 and 2020:

1. **Critical thinking assessment recommendations:**

(A) Announce to students and/or embed on assignment sheets/paper prompts the SLO, GE SLO, and PLO so students know what they are supposed to be learning with each assignment and how the assignment/paper/project connects to the larger picture.

(B) Conduct flex training, in collaboration with Faculty Development, top help faculty craft better assignments.

2. **Information competency and technology literacy recommendations:**

(A) Same as A and B above.

(B) Get faculty together to share successful assignments and to collaborate on writing stronger assignments that include SLOs, GE SLOs, and PLOs.

(C) Asking instructors to include in their assessment results the pedagogical processes/instructional strategies that they used to get the students to the assignment.

3. **Communication recommendation:**

(A) Follow up with math and nursing to see how their flipped classrooms are going and whether this method of teaching improves student learning.

(B) Same as 1B.

(C) Workshops on AVID strategies, specifically WICOR.

(D) Helping part-time faculty understand the importance of making explicit SLOs, GE SLOs, and PLOs; encouraging them to embed SLO and PLO language into their assignments.

4. **Self-development and global awareness recommendations:**

(A) During the norming process, all participants should be encouraged to speak and share.

(B) Review of mapping to GE SLOs and possible re-mapping done by disciplines.

(C) Same as 1A above.

(D) Getting faculty to relate specific artifacts when submitting assessment results in Nuventive.

**RAC recommendations based on collective findings**

- 1A and 1B seem to be the recommendations that recur, so we can discuss how we as a committee might make these recommendations come to fruition with RAC.
    - Regarding 1A, we think we want to encourage the committee to make this our new norm when collecting assessment items for the spring. Within the podcast link, the idea is brought up by Zaretta Hammond that teachers help students become independent learners over-dependent learners. To continue to have students be dependent on us perpetuates deficit-based learning. Additionally, the case study from NIOLA SDSU supports the idea we are suggesting in 1A as well.
    - This spring, with 1B, we will send out the survey to the college we created on assessment. Once we receive the results, we will be able to put together a workshop about assignments and include other needs that may be revealed from our survey.
- For 4A, we RAC chairs might want to use the AVID strategy of think-pair-share when organizing the norming. This would ensure that everyone has prepared something to say and isn't put on the spot to speak without notes.

**Action taken**

- Within Nuventive two new required sections have been added based on the committee's findings. Now when entering in results found regarding a SLO there is one section for faculty to enter in pedagogical process or instructional strategies. In this new section, faculty will briefly report what strategies were used to teach the SLO and note if they worked. The other section added is requiring faculty entering in the results with examples of the assignment used. Faculty would add via the documents repository an example of the assignment and student work if possible. The goal of these two new sections is to aid in future discussions, assessment, and reporting of both GE SLOs and PLOs. A secondary outcome of these two new sections is they also provide disciplines and departments with a repository of instructional strategies and assignments.