Central Washington University
Assessment of Student Learning
Department and Program Report

Academic Year of Report: 2010-2011
College: Arts and Humanities
Department: English
Program: English/Language Arts Teaching Major

I. What student learning outcomes were addressed?

Note: As most of the courses in this major are shared with the English Language and Literature Major, there are also shared outcomes addressed in the English Language and Literature report. This report assesses program outcomes specific to the teaching major.

Last year, we made major curriculum changes to all of our programs. The curriculum changes grew out of program review, previous assessments, and several years of department conversations. As the changes did not take effect until fall 2011, we cannot yet assess those changes, and consequently, our assessments are somewhat narrower this year since 2010-2011 was a transitional year.

1. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the relationship between English studies and educational principals and practices by designing and presenting age-appropriate and pedagogically sound applications of language and literature. This goal is related to CWU Goal 1, which is to “maintain and strengthen an outstanding academic and student life on the Ellensburg campus.” It is related to the CAH goal to “[e]nsure that students develop disciplinary specific competencies for success in their field” and to the department goal that “[o]ur teaching programs will provide training and practice in research-supported pedagogies and insure that all English Teaching majors meet the expectations for the preparation and endorsement of English/Language Arts teachers established by NCTE/NCATE and the competencies identified in the Washington State Administrative Codes.

II. How were they assessed?

English/Language Arts Teaching is perhaps our most assessed program. Nonetheless, it has been difficult to coordinate the reporting done for NCATE and through CTL with this assessment report. Consequently, we will look at two assessments conducted primarily for the department.

Direct Assessment: Beginning with Winter 2011, students in our English/Language Arts Teaching Senior Colloquium, ENG 488, have been assessed by practicing K-12 teachers using the new Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA). Students are assessed on a portfolio of teaching artifacts and on their own reflective commentary.

Indirect Assessment: Each quarter that it is offered, students ENG 488 meet with the department chair to discuss their experience of the program. ENG 488 is offered Fall and
Winter quarters.

III. What was learned?

TPA Assessment: We do not have compiled results for Winter 2011 and can only report the overall pass/fail rate. Sixteen students were enrolled in ENG 488 that quarter, and all received passing scores on the assessment.

Exit Interview: Students were on the whole satisfied with the English Education courses and language and literature courses. Some believed that fewer literature courses should be required for the major, and some would like to see changes to the English Education courses. When asked about proposed changes to the major, they were more positive and believed that the changes would address most of their concerns. Students also discussed the Professional Education Sequence. They were very satisfied with some of the courses, but were frustrated with others since they focused on elementary education, and English/Language Arts Teaching is a secondary program. They also discussed ENG 492, the required practicum, and had both positive and negative feedback. Students in the practicum act as coaches for students in 100T sections. They found this helpful, but they would like to see more opportunities for classroom teaching. They also believed that the course should be three credits instead of two.

Conclusions: The TPA pass rate was slightly higher than it has been for previous assessments. This may simply reflect the makeup of this particular section; when we have data on more sections, it will be easier to evaluate. Students in this year’s exit interviews were somewhat more negative about the program than in past sections. This may be in part because they were comparing it to the new curriculum approved for 2011-2012.

IV. What will the department or program do as a result of that information?

This assessment report will be distributed to department faculty and discussed at a department meeting during Winter quarter 2012. It will also be sent to the dean of Arts and Humanities and to Undergraduate Studies. Members of the department’s English Education committee have already discussed some of the results.

More detailed data from the TPA Assessment will help us to evaluate the program. Since the detailed data was not available for this report, we will include it in next year’s report.

As noted above, we have made substantial changes to the English/Language Arts Teaching curriculum. We have changed three of the English Education courses from four credits to five credits, and we have added a credit to the practicum as well. Overall, this will give students more training in English pedagogy. We have also changed course outcomes to align them with new state competencies. Changes to state competencies as well as feedback from students and from outside evaluators have also led to some changes in the required literature and language courses. Students will spend somewhat more time on methods, grammar, and linguistics. Because the state competencies no longer require broad knowledge of different literary traditions, they will take fewer literature survey courses. Our 2011-2012 assessments will begin to show us the effects of these changes.

V. How did the department or program make use of the feedback from last year’s assessment?
Last year’s feedback recommended that we include an attitudinal assessment. We have not yet included that simply because we do not have the data. Student dispositions are a part of the TPA assessment and ENG 488 assessments. We believe we have a solution for the reporting problem for next year’s assessment report.