I. What student learning outcomes were addressed?

**Outcome 12. Students will read and interpret American, British, and World literatures in English.** 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 two CAH goals: “Ensure that students develop disciplinary specific competencies for success in their field” and “Develop students' intellectual and practical skills for lifelong learning.” It is related to Department Goal 10: “Our graduate programs will provide opportunities for students to extend and enrich their exploration of the disciplines of literature and language, specifically to strengthen their preparation for doctoral study, for careers in teaching writing and literature, and for teaching English to speakers of other languages.”

We chose this outcome as a follow-up to last year’s assessment of exams because of the small population in that assessment.

**Outcome 15. Students will demonstrate their commitment to professional development.** This outcome 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 two CAH goals: “Ensure that students develop disciplinary specific competencies for success in their field” and “Develop students' intellectual and practical skills for lifelong learning.” It is related to Department Goal 10: “Our graduate programs will provide opportunities for students to extend and enrich their exploration of the disciplines of literature and language, specifically to strengthen their preparation for doctoral study, for careers in teaching writing and literature, and for teaching English to speakers of other languages.”

**Outcome 16. Teaching Assistants will demonstrate knowledge of a variety of effective teaching strategies and grade responsibly.** This outcome 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 two CAH goals: “Ensure that students develop disciplinary specific competencies for success in their field” and “Develop students' intellectual and practical skills for lifelong learning.” It is related to Department Goal 10: “Our graduate programs will provide opportunities for students to extend and enrich their exploration of the disciplines of literature and language, specifically to strengthen their preparation for doctoral study, for careers in teaching writing and literature, and for teaching English to speakers of other languages.” (Note: since students from both of our graduate programs become teaching assistants, this assessment is included in both the M.A. Literature and the M.A. TESOL assessment reports.)
II. How were they assessed?

**Outcome 12. Students will read and interpret American, British, and World literatures in English.** This outcome is addressed at the course level in that all students are required to pass a minimum of one course each in American, British, and World literatures. Active students were assessed in Fall, Winter, and Spring.

*Direct Assessment:* We continued to look at one specific form of assessment now used by a majority of our M.A. Literature students, the M.A. exam. Committees used a rubric to evaluate exams for three things: understanding of materials, synthesis of texts and contexts, and clarity and focus of writing. The first two are specifically relevant to Outcome 12. Students answer one question in each of three categories: comparison of texts from two or more historical periods, application of a theoretical approach to multiple texts, and comparison of texts with a common theme. All students passed the exam, but since students are given the opportunity to rewrite their answers once, we tracked the number of retakes.

**Outcome 15. Students will demonstrate their commitment to professional development.** We assessed this outcome by measuring student participation in professional development activities such as SOURCE, academic conferences, publications, and awards. Active graduate students for 2009/2010 were assessed in Fall, Winter, and Spring. Our criterion for achievement is that a minimum of 15% of active students will present, publish, or receive awards.

**Outcome 16. Teaching Assistants will demonstrate knowledge of a variety of effective teaching strategies and grade responsibly.**

Teaching assistants are assessed in ENG 510, a practicum which they take each quarter that they teach. In addition to standard teaching evaluations, TAs are also observed by members of our General Education Committee. They are evaluated using a standard form and a written evaluation.

Our group assessment of English 101 papers for Fall 2011 served a dual purpose. In addition to assessing general education writing, it assessed the grading and assessment skills of the teaching assistants. Each paper was scored on a five-point scale using an expanded version of the CWU writing rubric. The papers were a common assignment in all sections taught by TAs, and the TAs practiced group grading in ENG 510 (Teaching First-year Composition). Students developed the five-point scale under the supervision of Dr. Loretta Gray. Two-hundred-ninety-two papers were scored over a three-day period. Each paper was scored by two different readers. If the combined scores differed by more than three points, the paper was sent to a third reader. Consistency was assessed by calculating the correlation coefficient for first and second readers on each of the four criteria and on the combined scores. The correlation coefficient and number of papers sent to a third reader were also calculated for individual readers.

III. What was learned?

**Outcome 12. Students will read and interpret American, British, and World literatures in English.**

Six students took M.A. exams during the period. Each student answered three essay questions over a list of approximately fifty texts. Four of them rewrote one question, one rewrote two questions, and one rewrote three questions. In five of the six cases, the reason for rewriting was to better demonstrate their ability to synthesize multiple texts and to better explain relationships
among texts and contexts. In the sixth case, there were also concerns about the clarity and focus of the writing.

It is troubling that none of the students were able to pass the exam on the first try, which suggests a need to better prepare students for the exam and perhaps change the exam procedure. As with our previous assessment, the primary weakness is in synthesizing texts and in explaining relations among them.

**Outcome 15. Students will demonstrate their commitment to professional development.**

Out of an active population of sixteen students, seven made presentations at SOURCE or at regional conferences such as the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association and the Pacific Northwest American Studies Association during the 2010/11 academic year. Since some students had multiple achievements, this represents a total of ten presentations, three of which were at SOURCE and seven at regional conferences. Our criterion of achievement is that 30% of active students will present, publish, or receive awards, and this clearly exceeds that since 44% of the students were involved.

**Conclusion:** Students have exceeded our expectations each year we have assessed this outcome, and this year we raised the bar from 15% to 30%.

**Outcome 16. Teaching Assistants will demonstrate knowledge of a variety of effective teaching strategies and grade responsibly.**

Seven M.A. Literature and six M.A. TESOL students participated in the assessment. Since the outcome for Teaching Assistants is shared between the programs, the results from all thirteen TAs have been combined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation Coefficients</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Papers sent to a third reader: 34 out of 292 (12%)

**Conclusions:**

The assessment was successful both for our general education program and for the preparation of our teaching assistants. Since this is the first year that we conducted the assessment and since research on writing assessment indicates that correlation varies by the nature of the assignment and the structure of the rubric, we do not yet have a criterion for achievement. However, the numbers appear particularly strong for Content and Reasoning.

**IV. What will the department or program do as a result of that information?**
This assessment report will be presented to the English Graduate Committee and to the department in Winter quarter 2012. It will also be distributed to the CAH Dean and to the Associate Vice-President for Undergraduate Studies. The department graduate committee will be tasked with addressing any concerns, and their recommendations will be presented to the department for a vote. The results of the English 101 assessment will also be presented to students in ENG 510, Teaching First-Year Composition, and ENG 513, Composition Theory.

**Outcome 12. Students will read and interpret American, British, and World literatures in English.**

We have either implemented or will implement the following:

- We have changed the exam procedure so that students have more time to write. Further, we have established guidelines for questions so that students will have to respond to and synthesize a wider range of texts, and so that they understand that their purpose will be to integrate what they have learned, not simply to demonstrate their knowledge of the texts. These changes are also intended to help them write with more clarity and focus.

- We will change the reporting of exam results to establish which kinds of questions are most difficult for students—i.e. theoretical, historical, or thematic.

- This program outcome will be revised to better reflect our expectations for the students, and an outcome on the application of theory will be added.

- Course outcomes for our Critical Studies courses on American, British, and World have been changed to emphasize connections among texts and the application of theoretical approaches. This is based not only on assessment of exams, but also on exit surveys and on an alumni survey conducted for program review, both of which indicated a need for stronger grounding in theory.

- Graduate courses are now uniformly five credits. As with our undergraduate curriculum, we are focusing less on coverage and more on developing our students’ analytical and interpretive skills. They will take fewer courses overall, but those courses will focus in greater depth on thematically or historically related texts.

**Outcome 15. Students will demonstrate their commitment to professional development.** We will continue to encourage students to present, submit articles for publication, and apply for awards. We may also change the way we track student achievements in this area. Ideally, we want a high percentage of our graduate students to engage in these activities at some point in their graduate career. Rather than tracking the number of student achievements in any given year, it may be more useful to track the percentage of students who present, publish, or win awards over their full course of study.

**Outcome 16.**

We had originally seen this as a one-time project, but given the valuable feedback for the program and the enthusiasm of the teaching assistants, we plan to continue using this assessment. The teaching assistants suggested a change to the rubric since the Conventions score includes both grammar and documentation, and they recommended separating the two, which may lead to
a higher correlation for those categories. Since the correlation coefficient for Organization was lower than for the other criteria, it suggests additional training or clarification of the standards.

V. How did the department or program make use of the feedback from last year’s assessment?

Last year’s feedback indicated that the assessments and assessment report were effective.