1. What student learning outcomes were assessed this year, and why?

Students in our MA TESOL Program can opt to write a thesis or, with additional course work, take a comprehensive written exam. This year, we focused on general graduate outcomes for academic writing and for applying and synthesizing theoretical concepts.

- **General Graduate Outcome 1**: Graduate students will synthesize and apply concepts from multiple theoretical approaches and perspectives.

- **General Graduate Outcome 2**: Graduate students will demonstrate their mastery of academic writing and the discourse of English Studies or TESOL.

- **TESOL Outcome 1**: Students will demonstrate their knowledge of subsentential, sentential, and suprasentential levels of language.

Assessing the general graduate outcomes will help us identify areas where students may need more instruction. TESOL Outcome 1 has previously been measured through course-based assessments, and this assessment measures student knowledge at the end of their programs.

2. How were they assessed?

A rubric previously used for assessing exam writing in our M.A. English Literature program was adapted for TESOL exams. Four criteria were used:

1. Knowledge and understanding of material
2. Ability to draw connections between texts and theoretical approaches
3. Ability to connect theory and application
4. Clarity and focus of writing

The first criterion applies to TESOL Outcome 1, the second and third apply to General Graduate Outcome 1, and the final criterion applies to General Graduate Outcome 2. Graduate exams are traditionally graded on a three-point scale corresponding to Exceeds expectations, Meets expectations, and Does not meet expectations. Three students completed exams this year, and their results were used.

3. What was learned?

Since the sample is small in any given year, it may take data from multiple years to draw valid conclusions since the results may reflect individual abilities more than program outcomes. Here, the most
notable inference may be that all students met expectations for content knowledge, and that two of the three students exceeded expectations for critical thinking and writing skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Honors</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>No Pass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and understanding of material</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to draw connections between texts and theoretical approaches</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to connect theory and application</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity and focus of writing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our graduate TESOL and Literature programs have very little overlap in terms of coursework. In last year’s inventory of courses, we found that students in both programs very rarely took courses from the other program. (One notable exception was a student who has completed both programs.) The courses most likely to be taken by students from both programs are required for teaching assistants, as our teaching assistants come from both programs. They are required to take ENG 510, Teaching First-year Composition, which teaching assistants take every quarter that they teach, and which does not count toward the degree. They are also required to take ENG 513, Composition Theory. Both of these courses train them in teaching critical thinking and writing skills, and it is perhaps not surprising that the two students scoring highest in those categories were teaching assistants.

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

This assessment will be repeated for 2015 to gain a better measure of our learning outcome. The results from this small sample do not yet indicate a need for significant curricular revisions. Since none of the students exceeded expectations for knowledge and understanding of the material, we may want to look more closely at specific areas of knowledge, particularly if next year’s results indicate a trend.

It appears that students in this sample may have benefited academically from their training as teaching assistants, and next year’s results may confirm this.

5. What did the department or program do in response to last year’s assessment information?

In the past, we have not had specific writing or critical thinking outcomes for the TESOL program, though we have always evaluated student writing in coursework, exams, and theses. These outcomes were added this year since past assessments have not given us a full picture of student learning in the program.