English Department Assessment Report 2010

At the conclusion of the 2009-2010 year, the English department’s assessment committee has little new to report. We administered the English department assessment exam on 19 April 2010 to our graduating seniors, giving us data from (now) two graduating classes. As we indicated in our assessment report submitted by 1 October 2009, the assessment committee will refrain from reviewing and analyzing this data until we have a more substantive data set. So once the 2011 senior English majors have completed the exam, we will take a look at the cumulative data, paying particular attention to the questions we flagged last fall (that subset of questions that either over 89% or under 33% of the students answered incorrectly) and attempting to discern and interpret any relevant patterns. As was the case last year, all but one of our graduating seniors took the exam, a success rate that is, at least in part, a product of the ongoing development of a culture of assessment within the department. The department is also continuing to assess 151, 253, 255, 257, 258, and 261 for the textual analysis mode and is planning to make use of that data for the purposes of departmental assessment as well.

Spring 2010 saw the beginning of building an assessment program for the English major with an emphasis in creative writing. Not only did seniors with an emphasis in creative writing take the department exam for the first time, Helena Mesa and Danit Brown developed and piloted an assessment tool in English 205, the entry-level creative writing course. In the coming months, the committee will review and revise this tool in light of their experience using it this past semester. We will then devising tools that will enable us to assess the students progress in the upper level creative writing courses.

In the fall 2010, the committee will set about the task of developing an assessment tool for 300-level English literature courses, with the goal of piloting that tool in spring 2011. We will also be discussing the development of a grammar tool to be used in English 101 and 203. In addition, we will discuss an appropriate assessment model for the minor in English.