Graduate Certificate: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages 2018-19

College: Arts and Sciences

Prepared by: Jim Mischler, Program Coordinator   Date: June 25, 2019

Approved by: Greg Handel, Dean   Date: July 10, 2019

Northwestern State Mission: Northwestern State University is a responsive, Student-oriented institution that is committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The University maintains as its highest priority excellence in teaching in graduate and undergraduate programs. Northwestern State University prepares its Students to become productive members of society and promotes economic development and improvements in the quality of life of the citizens in its region.

College of Arts and Sciences Mission: The College of Arts & Sciences, the largest college at Northwestern State University, is a diverse community of scholars, teachers, and students, working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The College strives to produce graduates who are productive members of society equipped with the capability to promote economic and social development and improve the overall quality of life in the region. The College provides an unequaled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the College houses the Louisiana Scholars' College (the State's designated Honors College), the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies Mission: The Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies has an active, diverse, and vital academic program, offering the Bachelor of Arts in English, the Minor in English, the Minor in Spanish, the Master of Arts in English, and two Graduate Certificates: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and Writing for Business, Industry, and Technology (WBIT). The Department teaches the required English core courses for undergraduates as well as large number of courses required for students in various majors. The Department serves over 6,000 NSU students per academic year, and this total does not include our English dual-enrollment program. Graduates are prepared to work in a wide variety of industries, in jobs that require skills in communication, data analysis, and creative, innovative thinking.

Graduate English Major Mission: The Graduate Program of the Department of English, Foreign Languages and Cultural Studies is a dynamic, student-oriented program focused on rigorously preparing students to achieve in diverse fields. The

graduate program focuses on developing, providing, and supporting innovative, responsive, and accessible graduate education of the highest level. The program encourages a mastery of disciplinary literature, thoughtful research, professional development, and cross-curricular innovation as members of an engaged scholarly community. Through encompassing a diverse suite of related fields of study, the Graduate Program offers its students access to creative, critical, and compositional skills, providing them invaluable versatility in a rapidly changing market.

Purpose of the Graduate Certificate in TESOL: The purpose of the Graduate Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) is to equip students with the knowledge and abilities necessary to work in professional careers as *Adult Literacy Teachers*. This type of teacher helps students to speak, listen, read, and write in English, often in the context of everyday living, including work situations. Students learn writing and conversational skills or may focus on learning more academic or job-related communication skills depending on their skill level. Adult literacy teachers work with students from a wide range of backgrounds. Because the teacher and students often do not share a common native language, intercultural sensitivity and creativity are important skills to foster communication in the classroom and achieving learning goals. These workers teach students from a variety of cultural backgrounds and, therefore, they must be sensitive to cultural differences.

Current Program:
1. Required courses

Course Level/Number	Course Name	Credit Hours
ENGL 5240	Principles of Second Language Learning, Instruction and Methodology	3.0
ENGL 6610	Fundamentals of Linguistics	3.0
ENGL 6640	Syntactic Theories and Applications	3.0

2. Approved Elective courses*

Course Level/Number	Course Name	Credit Hours
ENGL 5000	Introduction to College-level Teaching	3.0
ENGL 5040	Introduction to Phonology	3.0
ENGL 5060	Intercultural Communication	3.0
ENGL 5280	General Composition Theory	3.0
ENGL 5540	Second Language Testing and Assessment	3.0
ENGL 5920	English Internship	3.0

ENGL 6540	Computers and Composition	3.0
ENGL 6620	History and Development of the English Language	3.0
ENGL 6650	Advanced Studies in Language and Gender	3.0
ENGL 6980	Grant Writing	3.0

*Two courses are selected from the Approved Electives list to complete requirements for the 15-hour Certificate program.

Methodology:

1. The assessor(s) will electronically collect from instructors one written assignment/project from each student enrolled in *selected* courses in the TESOL program.*

2. The assessor(s) will assess the student writing using the rubric (see Appendix).

3. The assessor(s) will analyze the data from the rubrics to determine whether or not students have met measurable outcomes.

4. Based on the results of the assessment, changes in curricula and/or the assessment itself for 2019-20 are discussed in the Plan of Action Moving Forward section of this Report.

* Courses: ENGL 5240 (offered every fall) and ENGL 6640 (offered every spring). These courses were chosen because they are required for the Certificate and also contain the content that best exemplifies the primary content areas and goals of the TESOL program.

NOTE: AY 2018-19 is the first year for the formal assessment of the TESOL Certificate program. We do not have data from previous years that can be compared to the new assessment rubric and the procedures created for 2018-19. All conclusions and future actions are based on the current year's assessment results.
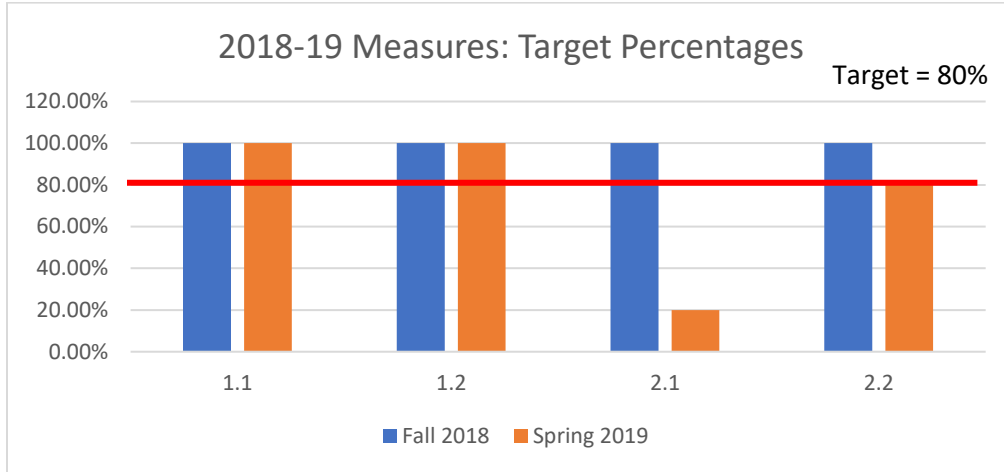
Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)
Student Learning Outcome 1. Understanding of Theory (see below for details)
Student Learning Outcome 2. Development of Applications (see below for details)
Measures. Combines the assessment of a Methodology and a Target. There are four Measures, (two for each SLO), and each is assessed for each course and student: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, and 2.2. The Target: 80% of the students will achieve at least a score of 3 (competency) on the assessment rubric.

Course Name	# Students	Methodology	Target	Term
ENGL 5240	3	Research Paper	80%	Fall 2018
ENGL 6640	5	Research Paper	80%	Spring 2019

Results:

2018-19 Measures: Target Percentages

Target = 80%

Fall 2018 ■ Spring 2019 ■

(Chart: Measures 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2 — Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 percentages; Y-axis 0.00% to 120.00%; red target line at 80%)

SLO 1. Understanding of Theory. Like any academic field, TESOL has developed a large body of theoretical concepts and ideas that serve to provide perspective on the issues of teaching and learning English as a second language. Students in the Certificate program will, within the TESOL courses and at the end of the program, demonstrate a knowledge of current theory and be able to identify and explain key concepts in the field. This knowledge serves as the foundation for all of the roles and activities that TESOL educators perform in their work.

Measure 1.1 (Direct - Knowledge): Can identify and explain key theoretical concepts and ideas.
At the end of each semester, the final project paper from ENGL 5240 (fall semester) and ENGL 6640 (spring semester) will be evaluated, using the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Sheet (see Appendix). The assessment will determine how well students demonstrate competency to identify and explain key theoretical concepts and ideas. At least 80% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Course Name	# Students	Methodology	Target: Result	Term
ENGL 5240	3	Research Paper	100%	Fall 2018
ENGL 6640	5	Research Paper	80%	Spring 2019

Findings: Target met.

Analysis: In 2018-19, seven of the eight students (87.5%) in ENGL 5240 and 6640 achieved at least a 3 (Competency) on Measure 1.1. More specifically, the seven students achieved at least a score of 4 (Competent to Strong) on the assessment rubric's five-point scale, and four of the seven achieved a score of 5 (the average score on the rubric was 4.25 out of 5.0). Therefore, 50% of the students received the highest possible score and almost 90% scored at least Competency on Measure 1.1, indicating

that the group has an excellent understanding and can explain key theoretical concepts in great detail. This result also serves as indirect evidence of the students' graduate-level reading skills.

Decision: To drive improvement in 2019-2020, the following changes will be made. First, the Target will be increased to 85% for 2019-20. In addition, faculty will review and revise the materials to make clear the types of information and analysis required to complete the assignment. Also, in the courses, feedback will be provided on all assignments, including online Forums, to help students to refine and increase their understanding of key concepts.

Measure 1.2 (Direct - Knowledge): Can demonstrate knowledge and understanding of current research trends.
At the end of each semester, the final project paper from ENGL 5240 (fall semester) and ENGL 6640 (spring semester) will be evaluated, using the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Sheet (see Appendix). The assessment will determine how well students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of current research trends. At least 80% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Course Name	# Students	Methodology	Target: Result	Term
ENGL 5240	3	Research Paper	100%	Fall 2018
ENGL 6640	5	Research Paper	100%	Spring 2019

Findings: Target met.

Analysis: In 2018-19, eight of the eight students (100%) in ENGL 5240 and 6640 achieved at least a 3 (Competency) on Measure 1.2. As with 1.1, seven students achieved at least a score of 4 (Competent to Strong) on the assessment rubric's five-point scale. A total of five of the seven achieved a score of 5, representing 62% of the students assessed on Measure 1.2, the highest percentage for any of the four Measures in this cycle (the average score on the rubric was 4.50). The students have studied carefully the research presented in the class textbooks, in supplementary readings, and in their own research for the final Project paper and can demonstrate clearly their knowledge.

Decision: To drive improvement in 2019-20, the following changes will be made. First, in the courses, feedback will be provided on all assignments, including online Forums, to help students to refine and increase their understanding of current research trends, results, and the implications for future research. In addition, the Target will be increased to 85%.

SLO 2. Development of Applications. For any profession, knowledge of theory is not enough to be successful; the ability to apply theory to solve real-world problems and to communicate effectively to the public on new solutions are also highly important skills.

Students in the Certificate program will, within the TESOL courses and at the end of the program, be able to find useful ways to apply theory and research results to resolve current issues and problems in the field. Devising realistic, workable solutions and sharing the results for the benefit of the profession and society are vital to the advancement of the field and meeting the needs of the people served by the profession.

Measure 2.1 (Direct - Skill): Can apply theories and research trends appropriately to devise real-world solutions.
At the end of each semester, the final project paper from ENGL 5240 (fall semester) and ENGL 6640 (spring semester) will be evaluated, using the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Sheet (see Appendix). The assessment will determine how well students demonstrate the ability to apply theory and research trends appropriately to devise real-world solutions. At least 80% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Course Name	# Students	Methodology	Target: Result	Term
ENGL 5240	3	Research Paper	100%	Fall 2018
ENGL 6640	5	Research Paper	20%	Spring 2019

Findings:
Fall 2018: 3 of 3 assignments (100%) scored 3 or higher. <u>Target met</u>.
Spring 2019: 1 of 5 assignments (20%) scored 3 or higher. <u>Target not met.</u>

Analysis: In 2018-19, four of the eight students (50%) in ENGL 5240 and 6640 achieved at least a 3 (Competency) on Measure 2.1 (the average score on the rubric for these four students was 4.5). However, the scores of the other four students—all of whom were in ENGL 6640—could not be determined because the required information was missing from the Project paper. After analysis of the papers and the Project materials, it was found that the instructions for the ENGL 6640 Project assignment did not <u>require</u> that the student provide a real-world solution. One student in ENGL 6640 did propose a solution, but the other four students did not. The lack of the requirement likely led to this result.

Decision: The four students who did fulfill Measure 2.1 scored well, as noted above. For that reason, the faculty do not believe it is the Measure itself that led to the poor result; the results were skewed by the wording of the Project assignment instructions in ENGL 6640. For 2019-20, the instructions will be revised to require that the student provide a solution for the topic discussed in the paper. In addition, in both courses, faculty will provide information and hands-on practice for devising solutions based on the theory and practices taught. Finally, the Target will remain at 80% for the next assessment cycle because the 2018-19 results could not provide information on the whether the Target is a realistic one. With these changes, it will likely become more straightforward to determine the validity of the current Target.

Measure 2.2 (Direct - Skill): Can demonstrate effective practices in graduate-level research and writing.
At the end of each semester, the final project paper from ENGL 5240 (fall semester) and ENGL 6640 (spring semester) will be evaluated, using the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Sheet (see Appendix). The assessment will determine how well students demonstrate effective practices in graduate-level research and writing. At least 80% of the students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Course Name	# Students	Methodology	Target: Result	Term
ENGL 5240	3	Research Paper	100%	Fall 2018
ENGL 6640	5	Research Paper	80%	Spring 2019

Findings: Target met.

Analysis: In 2018-19, seven of the eight students (87.5%) in ENGL 5240 and 6640 achieved at least a 3 (competency) on Measure 2.2. However, the average score on the rubric for all eight students was 3.5, the lowest average for any of the four Measures assessed. More specifically, the range of scores on the rubric were low: three students scored 4 or higher, four scored 3, and one scored 2. By comparison, on Measures 1.1,1.2, and 2.1, a minimum of four of the eight students (50%) scored 4 or higher. The group, while overall competent in graduate level research writing, has some significant room for improvement, and this result was most clearly shown in the use of standard research writing style. The number and types of errors in page formatting, in-text citation style, and bibliography page citation style indicate some significant misunderstanding and misuse of the standards for graduate-level research and writing practices.

Decision: To drive improvement in 2019-20, the following changes will be made. First, more information, practice, and guidance will be provided to students on effective practices in graduate-level research and writing skills. In addition, in the courses, more feedback will be provided on all writing assignments, including online Forums, to help students to refine their writing skills before working on the Project assignment. Finally, the Target will remain at 80% for the next assessment cycle because the assessment results could not definitively determine whether the Target is a realistic one. With the changes, it will be more straightforward to determine the validity of the current Target.

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvements Based on Analysis of Results

1. Overall, students in the foundational TESOL courses—ENGL 5240 and 6640— were successful in achieving and even exceeding the educational standards for the 2018-19 assessment cycle, indicating that the program meets the academic needs of the students. Though reading skills were not assessed, the results serve as indirect evidence of that skill.

2. Specifically, the students demonstrated high knowledge of theory taught in the

classes, superior knowledge of current research trends, high ability to propose appropriate solutions to real-world problems (i.e., for those students who provided a solution), and basic competency in graduate-level research and writing practices.

3. For Measure 2.1, the low Target score (50%) was the result of factors beyond the students' control; namely, the ENGL 6640 Project instructions did not require them to provide the information to fulfill the Measure, which skewed the assessment results.

4. Based on the results, all of the Target scores were deemed to be achievable for the students who were assessed, including Measure 2.1.

5. The analysis of Measure 2.2 indicates that Certificate students need additional instruction and support in graduate-level research and writing skills.

6. In addition, analysis showed that the materials provided to the students, particularly the assignment instructions, should be reviewed to clarify both content requirements and graduate-level writing standards for the Project assignment.

7. Student feedback on the courses was not solicited but would have been useful to help the assessors understand what students understood about the content being assessed in the Measures and the reasons that the students performed as they did. The survey would also provide *indirect* evidence of student learning.

Plan of Action Moving Forward for 2019-20

-   Review and revise the materials provided to students for the class assignments that form the basis of the assessment. Specifically, the assignment instructions must make clear the types of information, analysis, and writing standards required to complete the assignment.

-   In the courses, provide additional materials, instruction, and hands-on experience in graduate-level research and writing practice, including page and citation style.

-   In the courses, provide feedback on all writing assignments, including online Forums, to help students to refine their knowledge of key concepts, research trends, and writing standards before working on the Project assignment.

-   Increase to 85% the Targets for Measure 1.1 and 1.2. and maintain at 80% the Targets for Measure 2.1 and 2.2. After the 2019-20 assessment cycle is completed, review all four Targets and revise as needed.

-   Institute a post-course survey procedure, like the system currently in use for the annual assessment of the Graduate Certificate in Writing for Business, Industry, and Technology (WBIT) program, to gather feedback on the courses and *indirect* evidence of student learning.

Appendix

Graduate Certificate in TESOL
2018-19 Assessment Cycle

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)
Assessment Sheet

Assessor: _____   Course: _____

Paper Number: _____   Semester/Year: _____

		Evaluation — Check the applicable box to indicate the level of achievement for each Measure.				
SLOs & Measures:		Weak (1)	Weak to Competent (2)	Competent (3)	Competent to Strong (4)	Strong (5)
1.	*Understanding of Theory*					
1.1	Can identify and explain key theoretical concepts and ideas.					
1.2	Can demonstrate knowledge and understanding of current research trends.					
2.	*Development of Applications*					
2.1	Can apply theories and research trends appropriately to devise real-world solutions.					
2.2	Can demonstrate effective practices in graduate-level research and writing.					