2011 – 2012 APSU Teacher Unit
Annual Program Review (APR) Report
7-12 English

I.   Name of Program: English 7-12

II.   List of Reviewers:

Dr. Linda Kay Davis, Academic Advisor for APSU English majors with a minor in Professional   Education prepared this report and sent it to the following reviewers for input and comment:
Dr. David Guest, Chair, Department of Languages and Literature at APSU
Dr. Lynn Sims, Assistant Professor, Department of Languages and Literature at APSU (Dr. Sims teaches English majors seeking licensure as well as 6-8 education majors in linguistics classes required for both majors).
Shirley Ross, Consulting Language Arts teacher for Clarksville Montgomery County School System
Traci Cannon, graduate of APSU during 2011-2012 and teacher in Clarksville-Montgomery County School System

III.   Program Description:

The Department of Languages and Literature offers an English major with a minor in Professional Education leading to licensure to teach English/Language Arts in grades 7-12. During 2011-2012, the number of English majors with a minor in professional education fluctuated between 89 and 98, plus eight MAT students seeking licensure. Our department has experienced an increase in the number of post-baccalaureate students returning to the university to seek licensure to teach English. Some of these students are also in the MAT program in the College of Education and are advised by the director of the MAT program and by Dr. Davis, who also advises all undergraduate English majors seeking licensure and serves as the second or third person on MAT committees for eight graduate candidates seeking English licensure.

During their clinical teaching experience in 20111-2012, English majors with a minor in Professional Education and MAT candidates participated in the Tennessee Board of Regents pilot study of the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA). As part of this pilot, candidates used demographic information and data about their students to plan appropriate instruction. Candidates videoed themselves as they taught and then wrote extensive reflections on their teaching, gathered data on their students' progress and achievement, and used that data to reflect on the effect of their teaching on student success. During that teaching event, candidates had to scaffold the instruction so that their students learned the academic language necessary to succeed in learning the topic of the lesson. Finally, candidates made recommendations for future lessons for the whole class and for targeted struggling students.

IV.   Changes in Program

What changes have you made to the program during the past year? What data drove the decision to change the program?

 Changes in Program during 2011-2012:

During 2011-2012, English majors seeking licensure were required to sign a form indicating that they understand the Praxis I exam requirement if they did not present composite scores of 22 on the ACT or 1020 on the SAT. Then, they were asked to write a three-point plan of action for passing the Praxis I exam. In a conference, I informed students about opportunities to participate in Praxis I review sessions in the Academic Support Center and to check out review books located in the APSU library. I added a statement to the four-year plan for English licensure to indicate the semester by which candidates must pass the Praxis I before applying for Milestone II status.

Data Driving Decision to Change Program
This change was based on the data obtained from passing rate for fall 2011 Milestone II assessment when only 50 % of English majors (4/8) passed and for spring 2012 Milestone II when 62 % (5/8) of English majors passed. At least two of these candidates from each semester did not pass Milestone II because they had not passed the math portion of the Praxis I and had to be reminded that College of Education guidelines specify students must attempt to pass any failed part of the Praxis I at least twice before filing an appeal to have the Praxis I requirement waived.

Based on data the College of Education provided academic advisors during 2011-2012, I also met with my advisees who failed a milestone review because they had not met the minimum GPA requirement. Together we wrote plans to raise their GPAs. A written plan served as a tangible reminder to the student to take the GPA requirement seriously.

V.   Program Strengths

From the data presented during the data retreat and other reports available to you, what are the identified strengths of this program?

The English major leading to licensure to teach in grades 7-12 produces teacher candidates who know their content and communicate correctly and appropriately to all stakeholders. The program encourages mutual respect between student and teacher and produces teacher candidates who appear and behave as professionals who know how to collaborate with others and how to follow school policies. The program also produces candidates who can plan lessons with aligned objectives, strategies, and assessments and who can use assessments to plan instruction. Because candidates were engaged in the TPA pilot project in Tennessee, their program began to prepare them for the TEAM evaluation system now used to assess teacher performance in Tennessee. These conclusions about strengths of the English 7-12 program are based on data derived from

candidates' exit surveys, classroom mentors' and university supervisors' evaluations, TPA scores during 2011-2012.

Strengths Revealed Through Exit Surveys 2011- 2012

On a scale of 1-4 with 4 being very prepared and 3 being adequately prepared, data derived from exit surveys that candidates completed at the end of the spring semester of 2011 clinical teaching experiences indicated candidates perceived they were well prepared to understood their content (3.9/4), to design communication appropriate to the audience while using correct grammar and organizing information (3.8/4), and to collaborate with colleagues and administration (3.6/4). All scores in the 25 areas surveyed were 3 or above; that is, candidates perceived that the program in which they were enrolled at APSU more than adequately prepared them to teach.

During the spring semester of 2012, the same survey was administered to teacher candidates at the end of their clinical teaching experience. Candidates indicated perceptions of having been better prepared to teach in more areas than candidates had indicated in the previous semester. Scores of 4/4 in three areas indicated candidates felt very prepared to collaborate with colleagues and administrators, to organize and maintain useful records, and to communicate student status and progress to students, parents, and appropriate professional personnel. Other perceived areas of preparation receiving scores of 3.8/4 included designing appropriate instruction that matched goals, objectives, learning strategies, assessments, and student needs; using appropriate multiple teaching and learning strategies to assist students in developing the ability to think critically and to be responsible for locating and using learning resources; using technology to enhance student learning; and designing communication appropriate to the audience while using correct grammar and organization. Finally, these candidates indicated strong preparation to understand school policies and procedures (3.8/4). Four of the other areas were scored 3.67/4; eight were scored 3.5/4; and two were scored 3.3/4.

Strengths Revealed Through Clinical Teaching Evaluations 2011-2012

At the end of fall semester of 2011 and spring semester of 2012, mentor teachers and university supervisors completed clinical teaching evaluations of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they had observed in teacher candidates. Each related item was scored on a scale from 1-3 with 3 being outstanding, 2 being acceptable, and 1 being developing. Candidates for licensure in English, grades 7-12 were ranked somewhere between acceptable and outstanding in all areas scored. An examination of the combined data from both evaluations indicated the greatest strengths were the candidates' abilities to work with cooperating teachers to establish a safe and orderly learning environment (2.89/3) and to participate in collaborative planning (2.86/3). These candidates presented professional appearances (2.86/3) and showed respect for their students who respected them (2.83/4). The candidates planned lessons with activities and materials to support lesson objectives. Again content knowledge and professional behavior were ranked as strengths (2.78/3 for both).

Strengths Revealed Through TPA Scores 2011-2012

During 2011-2012, 14 APSU undergraduate candidates for licensure in English were assessed with the TPA rather than the Milestone IV Portfolio Reviews, which were used in other secondary programs. In the fall of 2011, TPAs for candidates at APSU were scored by professors who had been calibrated through training at Vanderbilt University. However, during the spring of 2012 TPAs were assessed by scorers trained and calibrated through Pearson. The TPA changed from Levels 1-4 during fall of 2011 to Levels 1-5 in spring of 2012. This change provides a mid-point score that is simpler to interpret. The goal for candidates is to score 2 or better in all areas. During 2011, the four areas assessed were academic language, assessment, instruction, planning, and reflection, and each area was further subdivided. During 2012, the category of reflection was absorbed into the other four areas.

Data from the fall 2011 TPA indicate candidates for English licensure showed strengths in several areas, and these strengths represent strengths in the English 7-12 program. In the category of academic language, understanding demands and providing language resources, 49 % of candidates were ranked at Levels 3 and 4 and 50 % at Level 2. These scores positively reflect the program that requires candidates to take two linguistics courses. Candidates also exhibited strengths in assessment with 62 % of candidates ranked at Level 3. Perhaps, the requirement that candidates participate in data chats while completing field experiences related to their methods course and a focused effort in EDUC 4270 to improve candidates' knowledge of assessment influenced this score. In instruction, 57 % of candidates achieved Level 3 for their ability to deepen student learning during instruction. Two areas--planning focused and sequenced instruction and using knowledge of students to inform teaching--were strong with 75 % of candidates at Level 3. In the reflection category, 57 % of candidates were ranked at Level 3 for their skills in monitoring student progress and adjusting instruction.

In Spring of 2012, TPA scores for candidates for licensure in English showed strengths in planning with Level 3 scores in these areas: planning for understanding (71%); using knowledge of students to inform teaching (57%); justification for plans (100%); and planning assessments to monitor and support (57% at Level 3; 14% at Level 4). In assessment, 57% of students were ranked at Level 3 for their abilities to analyze student work. These scores could reflect recent emphasis on requiring students to provide the theory or research behind choices in instructional strategies and a greater emphasis on assessment in methods and teaching strategies courses within the program because cumulative data had previously indicated candidates' problems with assessing students' progress.

VI.   Program Weaknesses

From the data presented during the data retreat and other reports available to you, what are the identified weaknesses of this program?

Weaknesses Revealed Through Exit Surveys 2011-2012

In the exit survey of candidates at the end of fall semester of 2011, three areas were scored 3/4. Although not defined weaknesses, these areas constitute need for focused improvement. Candidates did not perceive being very prepared in their abilities to interpret assessment data appropriately and to use information for instruction and evaluating student academic achievement and attitudes to determine the academic amount of positive change toward learning. Although candidates assigned a score of 3 to their preparation to create and develop a professional plan to be better able to provide for student achievement, professional development is an area to improve and should improve with experience and opportunities to participate in professional development activities. Another area ranked at the "adequately prepared" level was the candidates' preparation to establish appropriate instructional goals and objectives.

The candidates' exit surveys at the end of spring semester of 2012 indicated only two areas of preparation to strengthen (3.17/4). These areas were preparation to establish appropriate goals and objectives and to develop goals and objectives to foster thinking processes appropriate to grade level.

Weaknesses Revealed Through Clinical Teaching Evaluations Spring 2012

Classroom mentors and university supervisors also noted that candidates need to improve their skills in fostering critical thinking, drawing conclusions, and engaging students in activities that result in comparing and contrasting and thinking analytically (2.37/3). Students need to use varied and high quality questions and to call on volunteers and non-volunteers (2.34/3;2.46/3). Candidates' skills to appropriately pace lessons and to transition from one activity to another were not as strong as some other skills (2.39/3 for both). According to mentors and supervisors, candidates need to improve their skill in utilizing achievement data to address strengths and weaknesses of students and to use this data to guide instructional decisions (2.43/3).

Thus, although still in the acceptable range, candidates, mentor teachers, and university supervisors recognize the need for English majors seeking licensure to improve their abilities to use assessment data to understand student achievement, to determine student progress, and to plan for instruction. Another area all stakeholders perceived as needing improvement is using strategies to foster students' critical and analytical thinking skills.

Weaknesses Revealed Through TPA Assessments for 2011-2012

Because the categories and subcategories of the TPA changed after the initial pilot project of fall 2011, comments regarding weaknesses will concentrate on those areas of need indicated by TPA

scores earned in spring 2012. Candidates for licensure in English definitely need to improve skills in categories in which some candidates earned Level 1 scores. The program must change to assist candidates in improving skills in the following areas of teaching.

    Instruction:

        Engaging students in learning (28% at Level 1)

        Deepening student learning during instruction (29% Level 1)

    Assessment:

        Using feedback to guide further learning (28% Level 1)

    Academic Language:

        Developing students' academic language and content learning (28% Level 1)

These skill deficits do not necessarily reflect lack of training as much as they do reflect a lack of skill in actively engaging students and scaffolding learning. More practice in using differentiated strategies in classrooms with mentor teachers should help candidates to develop skills in these specific areas of instruction, assessment, and academic language.

I did not include as weaknesses in areas in which scores included any percentages at Levels 3 and 4.

VII.   Assessment of Candidates

What do the summarized reports (portfolio review, milestone review, student teacher information, PRAXIS scores, program completion rates, exit surveys, employer survey, and graduate follow-up survey) data sets show about the performance of your candidates.

What specific short-term actions will be taken during the 2012 – 2013 academic year in order to improve candidate performance? What are the long-term action implications? Please specify tasks and timelines for planned actions.

Milestone II Reviews

Milestone II reviews from fall 2011 indicate an adequate pass rate. Although candidates in English had the highest pass rate of all programs with 75 % passing Milestone II (9/12), 3 candidates did not pass. Of these, two were males, and one was a female. One male had not passed the Praxis I exam required because he had not entered the university with a 22 composite score on the ACT. One male had not passed the interview because he was quite nervous although he knew the answers. He and I practiced the interview to ease his apprehension, and he passed the interview the second time. Data from Milestone II assessments indicated a need for continued reminders, such as the ones instituted last fall, that the Praxis I is important and that candidates who do not enter the university with a composite score of 22 must accept responsibility for taking and passing the Praxis I exam in a timely manner.

Praxis II English Language and Literature Content and Pedagogy

Scores and other data about the Praxis II English Content Knowledge and Pedagogy exams show 100 % passing rate for English 7-12 candidates entering clinical teaching during 2011-2012. The required passing scores for content and pedagogy were 157 and 145 respectively. During the fall of 2011, eight candidates for licensure in English passed the content exam in 10 attempts with two candidates taking the exam twice before earning a passing score. The average score of candidates in the fall was 166 or 9 points above the required score. All eight candidates passed the pedagogy exam on the first attempt with an average score of 154 or 9 points above the required score. Also, all candidates passed both Praxis II English exams in the spring of 2012. Only one person had to retake the content knowledge exam. The average score for this exam was 169 or 12 points above the required score. Nine candidates passed the pedagogy exam with 12 attempts. The average score was 153 or 8 points above the required score. The data indicated that candidates competent in content knowledge and persistent in their efforts to pass the Praxis II exams.

TPA Secondary English Fall 2011-2012

As indicated in the analysis of strengths and "weaknesses" discussed in previous sections of this document, English majors seeking licensure to teach in grades 7-12 are competent candidates who need only slight improvement in a few areas. For the past two semesters English majors seeking licensure have been part of a Ready2Teach pilot program for the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA. For this reason, these candidates did not complete portfolios during their clinical teaching experiences but did complete the rigorous TPA, which indicated candidates for English licensure are generally competent in planning as they should be because many of the key assessments in their program relate to planning. Candidates have some issues with using feedback to guide further learning and with developing students' academic language and content learning that are two areas the program has only begun to focus on as we have moved into Ready2Teach and assessment using the TPA. However 2011-2012 candidates for licensure in English were competent in some areas of assessment including analyzing student work and scaffolding students' academic language.

IX.   Assessment of Program Operations

What do enrollment, exit survey, and graduate follow-up survey data sets show about the operations and quality of your program?

The number of English majors with a minor in professional education has decreased slightly over the last year from about 100-115 during the fall of 2011 to about 89-98 during spring of 2012.

This attrition may be attributed to seventeen candidates who were graduated and earned their licenses during 2011-2012 and to students who transferred to other universities or changed their majors. Two students changed their minors so that they could earn their degrees sooner than they would have been able to do with a professional education minor. Others may have changed majors to avoid taking and passing Praxis I. On a positive note, the English 7-12 program is gradually increasing and retaining the number of males and minority students enrolled in the English 7-12 program.

Another positive aspect of this program is that students at Nashville State Community College (NSCC) who plan to transfer to APSU after earning their associate degrees have begun to request advice about which courses they should take at NSCC. Although this comment is not based on data, it does show that input from our program is respected and desired.

 Exit Surveys from Clinical Teaching for English for 2011-2012 indicate candidates have ranked their preparation consistently similar to the rankings of their mentors and university supervisors, so this indicates an ability to be introspective regarding their preparation. However, a discrepancy exited in the spring 2012 candidates' ranking of their preparation in the area of assessment and their performance on the TPA. Although candidates perceived adequate preparation to assess students as shown by their ranking this area 3.5/4 on the exit survey, TPA scores for spring of 2012 indicated some candidates had problems in applying that knowledge. Another area of inconsistency in how candidates self-reported their preparation occurred in the area of using knowledge of students to inform teaching. This is a skill involved in planning. In the exit surveys, candidates ranked their preparation for establishing appropriate instructional goals and objectives as 3.17/4; yet in spring 2012 TPA, these same candidates scored well above 50% and even 100% in one area at Level 3 in planning.

Thus, the data indicate that English 7-12 candidates are enrolled in a quality program and are well prepared and knowledgeable in content, pedagogy, and strategies, but they need more experience in applying knowledge. The English 7-12 has tried to provide this opportunity by insisting that students be placed in classrooms where they will be doing student teaching as they complete clinical experiences in ENGL 4400. More opportunities for authentic learning in classroom settings should help students polish their skills in applying knowledge as the program moves into the pilot of Residency 1 during the spring semester of 2013. Because the English 7-12 program has ventured into the Ready2Teach pilot, it has taken steps to assist its candidates in becoming skilled teachers who not only know content but also can teach and assess it effectively.

X.   Summary of Proposed Changes

Based on the data provided, what changes are proposed for your program?

During spring semester of 2013, candidates for licensure to teach English/Language Arts in grades 7-12 will participate in a pilot of Residency 1, during which they will spend 8 weeks on campus in 15 hours of common classes. Following this time on campus, candidates will have 8 weeks of clinical experience in mentors' classrooms where they will be completing their TPA during Residency 2. This additional time in classrooms while co-teaching with mentors should result in increased ability to apply concepts and theories learned in the university.

In ENGL 3420 and ENGL 4400/5400, candidates will be required to write lesson and unit plans that better reflect their knowledge of student demographics. They will also be required to gather data on students whom they teach even when teaching peers and practice collating this data to make decisions about further instruction. (I began this requirement during the spring of 2012; however, some students had already taken these classes, so they had not been required to work with data).

Also, Michelle Rogers and I, who are the Ready2Teach Coordinators for the Colleges of Math and Sciences and College of Arts and Letters respectively, will arrange an all-day session for secondary candidates to meet with assessment specialists in the local school system for an assessment workshop. We also plan to schedule some TPA workshops for secondary majors while they are participating in Residency 1.

XI.   Assessment System

What data do you need to better evaluate your candidates and/or program?

Based on the data provided, how can the Teacher Education Unit Assessment System be changed to provide more meaningful and useful evidence regarding candidate performance and program operations?

I request a column to be added to the chart titled "Licenses Awarded" to show how many of these licenses were awarded to undergraduate versus to graduate candidates (see p. 31 in 2011-2012 data book) so that we have this information by program. The chart "Graduation Totals, Including Fall, spring, and Summer" for graduate programs in the College of Education does not give this information. I can only assume that the 3 licenses in addition to the fourteen undergraduate English majors earned are for graduate students as no alternative licenses were awarded in English. However, I would like this type of information delineated.

Also, I request the TPA information to be broken into graduate and undergraduate categories as well so that we are more accurately able to apply data to our undergraduate programs.