AC 2021 – 2022 Assessment

M.Ed. Early Childhood Education (547)

Division or Department: School of Education

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Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development Mission. The Gallaspy Family College of Education and Human Development is committed to working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge to Northwestern students through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. Through the School of Education and Departments of Health and Human Performance, Military Science, Psychology, and Social Work, the College produces knowledgeable, inspired, and innovative graduates ready for lifelong learning who contribute to the communities in which they reside and professions they serve. Additionally, the GCEHD is dedicated to the communities served by the Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, NSU Elementary Laboratory School, NSU Middle Laboratory School, and the NSU Child and Family Network to assist children and their families related to learning and development.

School of Education Mission. The School of Education offers exemplary programs that prepare candidates for career success in a variety of professional roles and settings. As caring, competent, reflective practitioners, our graduates become positive models in their communities and organizations. This mission is fulfilled through academic programs based on theory, research, and best practice. Further, all graduates learn to value and work with diverse populations and to incorporate technologies that enrich learning and professional endeavors.

Program Mission Statement: The mission of the Northwestern State University graduate Early Childhood Education Program is to help certified educators increase their repertoire of research-based teaching strategies while strengthening their knowledge, skills, and dispositions relating to Early Childhood Education. The advanced program builds on practicing educators' abilities to meet young children's diverse needs in a variety of settings while documenting and assessing their growth over time in relation to state standards. Upon completion of the program, which meets the National Association for the Education of Young Children's accreditation standards, candidates are equipped to meet the many demands of the teaching profession and to act as school leaders.

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Methodology: The assessment process for the M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education is as follows:

- Data from assessment tools are collected and returned to the program coordinator.

- The program coordinator analyzes the data to determine student learning and whether students have met measurable outcomes.

- Results are shared with program faculty; and

- The program coordinator works with program faculty analyze results; based on this analysis, faculty collaborate to make any necessary changes to course instruction and/or assessments for program improvement purposes.

Student Learning Outcomes.

SLO 1
Course Map: EDUC 5850 *Action Research for School Improvement.*

Candidates complete a portfolio defense in their last year of coursework while enrolled in EDUC 5850 *Action Research for School Improvement.* They must successfully defend their portfolios in order to graduate.

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge (SPA #1)	Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of Developmentally Appropriate Practices relating to early childhood curriculum and assessment.

Measure 1.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions)

SLO 1 is assessed through a portfolio defense. Candidates complete this defense in their last year of coursework while enrolled in EDUC 5850 *Action Research for School Improvement.* Program faculty collaborated to design the assessment along with a rubric to evaluate candidates' work. Candidates' knowledge and skills in relation to state standards and SPA standards are made visible through the compilation of course artifacts they create along with written and oral reflections. Through multiple iterations of the assessment and evaluation process, program faculty have collaborated to edit and refine the assessment and rubric to ensure that the portfolio defense assesses what faculty intend for it to assess and that the rubric continues to be a valid, reliable instrument. The target goal for this assessment is for at least 80% of candidates to score at least "Meets Expectations" on the rubric.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In AC 2020-2021 the target was met.

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In AC 2021-2022, 100% of candidates met the target and scored "Target" (n = 3). Candidates' artifacts, written reflections, and oral reflections demonstrated student learning via mastery of NAEYC and content standards.

Based on the analysis of AC 2020-2021 results, faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2021-2022, faculty had candidates relate assignments to the *Early Learning and Development Standards* to prepare for the Portfolio Defense in EDUC 5850.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2021-22, the target was met.

In AC 2021-2022, 100% of candidates met the target and scored "Target" (n = 2). Candidates' artifacts, written reflections, and oral reflections demonstrated student learning via mastery of NAEYC and content standards. In accordance with the plan of action from 2020-2021, in 2021-2022, program faculty examined the evidence to determine student learning in each area, faculty had candidates relate assignments to the *Early Learning and Development Standards* to prepare for the Portfolio Defense in EDUC 5850. These changes had a direct impact on the students' ability to demonstrate knowledge of Developmentally Appropriate Practices relating to Early Childhood curriculum and assessment.

Decision.

In AC 2021-2022, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of AC 2021-2022 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2022-2023, faculty will have the students relate assignments to the revised *Early Learning and Development Standards*.

These changes will improve the students' ability to demonstrate knowledge of Developmentally Appropriate Practices relating to early childhood curriculum and assessment, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 2
Course Map: ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation*

SLO 2 is assessed through a Practicum Observation Form in ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation,* which is the practicum course. Benchmark for SLO 2 is at least 80% of candidates will score "Meets Expectations" or higher on the rubric.

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Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Apply discipline-specific content knowledge in professional practice (SPA #4, Teacher Candidate Observation Form)	Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of Developmentally Appropriate Practices relating to Early Childhood development, curriculum, and assessment.

Measure: 2.1. **(Direct – Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions)**

SLO 2 is assessed through a Practicum Observation Form in ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation,* which is the practicum course.

The candidates' mentors assess candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions relating to social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and/or language/literacy skills in relation to early childhood curriculum and research-based assessments. Candidates are provided with a rubric which is used to evaluate their work. The assessment was developed in a collaborative fashion by program faculty, and it provides evidence of student learning and mastery of state standards because the assessment was specifically designed to align with both NAEYC and state standards. The assessment and rubric have been tweaked as necessary with each iteration based on results of student learning and changes in state standards. Program faculty have also reviewed the rubric for validity and reliability, ensuring that the assessment measures what it is intended to measure and that it is reliable over time. The goal is for at least 80% of candidates to score at least "Meets Expectations" on the rubric.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In AC 2020-21, the target was met.
In AC 2020-2021, 100% of candidates met target and scored "Target" on the rubric. Candidates' mean score was 99% (n = 5). Because the assessment and rubric are tied to NAEYC standards and state standards, candidates' artifacts demonstrated student learning via mastery of NAEYC and content standards. These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to demonstrate knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices relating to early childhood development, curriculum, and assessment.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. In 2021-2022, faculty added resources to ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation* to provide learner support in *Engaging in informed advocacy for young children and the early childhood profession* and *Knowing about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues to build effective learning environments.*

As a result of these changes, in AC 2021-22, the target was met.

In AC 2021-2022, 100% of candidates met target and scored "Target" on the rubric. Candidates' mean score was 96% (n = 5). In accordance with the plan of action from 2020-2021, in 2021-2022, program faculty examined the evidence to determine student learning in each area, and resources were added to the course to provide learner support in *Engaging in informed advocacy for young children and the early childhood profession* and *knowing about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues to build effective learning environments.* Because the assessment and rubric are tied to NAEYC standards and state standards, candidates' artifacts demonstrated student learning via mastery of NAEYC and content standards. These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to demonstrate knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices relating to early childhood development, curriculum, and assessment.

Decision.

In AC 2021-2022, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of AC 2021-2022 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2022-2023, faculty will add instructional resources to help candidates *Engage in informed advocacy for young children and the early childhood profession* and Engage *in Creative/Critical Thinking.*

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate knowledge of Developmentally Appropriate Practices relating to Early Childhood development, curriculum, and assessment, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 3
Course Map: ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation*

SLO 3 is assessed through a dispositions form in ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation*, which is candidates' practicum course.

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Model professional behaviors and Characteristics. (Dispositional Evaluation)	Candidates will model behaviors and characteristics that are professional and ethical.

Measure 3.1. (Direct – Dispositions)

SLO 3 is assessed through a dispositions form in ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation*, which is candidates' practicum course. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the target performance is that 80% of candidates will score at least "Sufficient." Faculty created

the dispositional evaluation based on agreed-upon best practices and constructs outlined in InTASC standards. The assessment provides evidence for meeting the state identified standards because it is aligned with InTASC standards, and face validity was established for the instrument. Steps were taken to assure Quality of the assessment/evidence. Face validity was established by 1) aligning items to constructs, 2) avoiding bias and ambiguous language, and 3) stating items in actionable terms. Analysis was conducted using the CAEP Evaluation Framework for EPP-Created Assessments, resulting in "below sufficient," "sufficient," or "above sufficient" ratings. The goal is for at least 80% of candidates to score "Sufficient".

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In AC 2020-21, the target was met.
In AC 2020-2021, 100% of candidates met target and scored "Above Sufficient." Student achievement was lowest in Attendance/Punctuality. Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. In 2021-2022, faculty added resources relating to Attendance/Punctuality and Time Management.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2021-2022, the target was met.

In AC 2021-2022, 100% of candidates met target and scored "Above Sufficient." Candidates' mean score was 99% (n = 5). In accordance with the plan of action from 2020-2021, in 2021-2022, program faculty examined the evidence to determine student learning in each area, and resources were added to the course to provide learner support in *Attendance/Punctuality* and *Time Management.* As this assessment is used in the Practicum Course, which is one of the last courses candidates take before *Residency I: Teaching in the Early Childhood Classroom (EDUC 4951)*, faculty expect scores to be strong.

Because the assessment is tied to national standards, including InTASC and NAEYC standards, and content validity has been established, candidates' artifacts demonstrated student learning via mastery of those standards. These changes had a direct impact on the students' knowledge and skills relating to Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Early Childhood.

Decision.

In AC 2021-2022, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of AC 2021-2022 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2022-2023, faculty will add time management resources relating to Attendance/Punctuality.

These changes will improve the students' ability to model behaviors and characteristics that are professional and ethical, thereby continuing to push the

cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 4
Course Map: ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation*

SLO 4 is assessed through a lesson plan assignment in ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation*, which is candidates' practicum course.

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Exhibit creative thinking that yields engaging ideas, processes, materials, and experiences appropriate for the discipline (SPA #3, Lesson Plan)	Candidates will design and implement developmentally appropriate lesson plans that reflect research on best practices in Early Childhood Education.

Measure 4.1. (Direct – Knowledge and Skills)

SLO 4 is assessed through a lesson plan assignment in ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation*, which is candidates' practicum course. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the target performance is that 80% of candidates will score at least a "3" on the rubric, which is aligned with the state teacher assessment. A group of faculty and cooperating teachers collaborated to create the lesson planning template to align with (at the time) new Louisiana Compass and Common Core State Standards' expectations. The template requires candidates to plan for and explain elements of lessons on which in-service teacher evaluations were based. The assessment provides evidence for meeting the state identified standards because it is aligned with InTASC standards, and content validity was established for the instrument. Steps were taken to assure Quality of the assessment/evidence. A panel of 8 EPP faculty each conducted four independent rubric-based evaluations of anonymous lesson plan work samples submitted by candidates in four different initial teacher preparation programs. Analyses were conducted using the Lawshe Content Validity Ration (CVR) statistic (validity) and the Fisher Intra-class Correlation Coefficient (ICC) for reliability. To determine criteria for success,

- CVR mean = -.58 with CVR (Critical, 8) = .75 and 13 items (62%) meeting critical value of .75

- ICC = .573. ICC of .4 - .59 reflects "fair" inter-rater agreement, and .6 is considered "good."

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In AC 2020-2021 the target was met.

In AC 2020-2021, 100% of candidates met target and scored at least a "3" on the rubric. Candidates' mean score was 4 (n = 5).

Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty added video modeling relating to Differentiation in Early Childhood Courses to provide learner support.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2021-22, the target was met.

In AC 2021-2022, candidates' mean score was 3.92 (n = 5). While candidates taught a minimum of 10 lesson plans, data gathered from the last lesson plan they taught was used for this assessment. Analysis of the data revealed Utilizing Technology as an area of weakness for student performance. This assessment instrument is used in the Practicum Course, which is one of the last courses candidates take before graduating, and since the candidates taught at least nine lesson plans before teaching this one, faculty expect scores to be strong. Because the assessment and rubric are tied to NAEYC standards and state standards, candidates' artifacts demonstrated student learning via mastery of NAEYC and content standards. These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to design and implement developmentally appropriate lesson plans that reflect research on best practices in early childhood education.

Decision.

In AC 2021-2022, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of AC 2021-2022 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will emphasize Utilizing Technology in ECED courses.

This change will improve the students' ability to design and implement developmentally appropriate lesson plans that reflect research on best practices in Early Childhood Education, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 5
Course Map: EDUC 5850 *Action Research for School Improvement*

SLO 5 is assessed through a paper in EDUC 5850 *Action Research for School Improvement,* which is the candidates' last course.

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Make responsible decisions and problem-solve, using data to inform actions when appropriate (SPA #5, Student Learning Impact)	Candidates will conduct investigations relevant to the field of Early Childhood and discuss implications for further research.

Measure 5.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions)

SLO 5 is assessed through a paper in EDUC 5850 *Action Research for School Improvement,* which is the candidates' last course. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the target performance is that at least 80% will score "Meets Expectations" or higher. To complete this assessment, candidates implement an action research project in their own classrooms to improve student outcomes. The rubric was developed in a collaborative fashion by program faculty, and it provides evidence of student learning and mastery of state and national standards because the assessment was specifically designed to align with NAEYC and state expectations. Program faculty have also reviewed the rubric for validity and reliability, ensuring that the assessment measures what it is intended to measure and that it is reliable over time.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In AC 2020-21, the target was met.
In AC 2020-2021, 100% of candidates scored Target on the rubric, with a mean score of "3" (n = 3). Faculty expect all candidates to score at least "Meets Expectations" simply because candidates must continue revising drafts until they are error-free. Papers were not submitted to the Graduate School until they were free of errors. Thus, candidates may not exit this course until their papers reach standards of acceptance. Because the assessment and rubric are tied to NAEYC standards and state standards, candidates' artifacts demonstrated student learning via mastery of NAEYC and content standards.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. In 2021-2022, faculty added a Professional Development component to EDUC 5850, requiring candidates to share their findings with their schools and get feedback.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2021-2022, the target was met.

In AC 2021-2022, 100% of candidates scored Target on the rubric, with a mean score of "3" (n = 2).

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to conduct investigations relevant to the field of Early Childhood and discuss implications for further research.

Decision.

In AC 2021-2022, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will encourage candidates to publish their results. These changes will improve the students' ability to conduct investigations relevant to the field of Early Childhood and discuss implications for further research, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

AC 2021 – 2022 Assessment

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

Program faculty made several decisions after examining results of data analysis from AC 2020-2021 which resulted in improved student learning and program improvement in AC 2021-2022:

- SLO 1: Faculty modified instructional design by having candidates relate assignments to the *Early Learning and Development Standards* to prepare for the Portfolio Defense in EDUC 5850.

- SLO 2: Faculty modified instructional design by adding resources to ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation* to provide learner support in *Engaging in informed advocacy for young children and the early childhood profession* and *Knowing about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues to build effective learning environments.*

- SLO 3: Faculty modified instructional design by adding videos and resources relating to attendance, punctuality, and time management to Early Childhood courses to facilitate candidates' professional dispositions.

- SLO 4: Faculty modified instructional design by adding videos and resources relating to Differentiation in Early Childhood Courses to provide learner support.

- SLO 5: Faculty modified instructional design by adding a Professional Development component to EDUC 5850, requiring candidates to share their findings with their schools.

- Faculty strengthened service-learning components in all ECED courses.

- Faculty invited candidates to publish peer-reviewed articles with the major professor to build candidates' content, pedagogical, and leadership skills.

- Faculty invited candidates to present at professional conferences with the major professor to build their content, pedagogical, and leadership skills.

Plan of Action for Moving Forward:

Program faculty examined the evidence and results of data analysis from AC 2021-2022 and will take steps to continue to improve student learning in AC 2022-2023:

- SLO 1: Faculty will have candidates tie assignments to the newly revised *Early Learning and Development Standards* to prepare for the Portfolio Defense in EDUC 5850.

- SLO 2: Faculty will modify instructional design by adding instructional resources to ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation* to help candidates *Engage in informed advocacy for young children and the early childhood profession* and Engage *in Creative/Critical Thinking.*

- SLO 3: Faculty will modify instructional design by adding time management resources to ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation* to help candidates with Attendance/Punctuality.

- SLO 4: Faculty will modify instructional design by adding resources relating to Utilizing Technology in Early Childhood Courses to provide learner support.

- SLO 5: Faculty will encourage candidates to publish their results.

- Faculty will strengthen service-learning components in all ECED courses.

- Faculty will invite candidates to publish peer-reviewed articles with the major professor to build candidates' content, pedagogical, and leadership skills.

- Faculty will invite candidates to present at professional conferences with the major professor to build their content, pedagogical, and leadership skills.