

# Assessment Cycle Plan

## Academic Year 2017 – 2018

Program: Adult Learning and Development (545)

College: Education and Human Development

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**Northwestern 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.

**Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development Mission (draft).** The Gallaspy Family College of Education and Human Development is a committed and diverse community of scholars, educators, students, and future leaders working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The College produces graduates with the capabilities and confidence to be productive members of society equipped with the skill sets necessary to promote economic and social development thereby improving the overall quality of life in the region. The College offers a wide variety of exemplary undergraduate and graduate programs that prepare candidates for career success across the spectrum of professional roles and settings. These programs include teacher education, leadership, and counseling; health and human performance; psychology and addiction studies; social work; and military science. Candidates are taught to become adaptive critical thinkers and problem solvers in diverse scenarios capable of leveraging new technologies to enrich lifelong learning. As caring, competent, reflective practitioners, our graduates become positive role models in their communities and leaders in the nation's military.

**Department of Teaching, Leadership, and Counseling Mission.** The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development 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.

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**Program Mission Statement:** The mission of the Adult Learning and Development program at Northwestern State University is to prepare adult educator-leaders for careers in the many different venues where adults learn, including corporate training centers, online education, community colleges, the workforce, and adult education programs. The online program emphasizes practice-based learning and research and provides graduate and undergraduate learning experiences to adult learning practitioners who come from, or wish to pursue, advanced practice and leadership roles in the variety of contexts in which adult learning occurs.

**Methodology:** The assessment process for the program is as follows:

(1) Data from assessments provide results on candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions as appropriate for professional education programs.

(2) Annually, program faculty and stakeholders review data to make data-driven, curricular decisions.

### Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 1:

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge (SPA #1)	Demonstrate an understanding of the formal and informal organizational systems of adult learning.

### Measure 1.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills)

SLO 1 is assessed through a research paper in EDAL 5000. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the benchmark performance is a cumulative mean score of 80%.

### Finding:

FALL 2015 Administration	FALL 2016 Administration
Cumulative Mean: 72.24% StdDv: 13% Above/Equal Benchmark: 20% Below: 80%	Cumulative Mean: 71.5% Standard Deviation: 13% Above/Equal Benchmark: 0% Below: 100%

**Analysis:** Most students scored below benchmark with an average deviation from benchmark of (-7.76%). Item analysis from the rubric for those students below benchmark indicated that writing errors, citation of sources, and APA formatting were the major errors. In the 2016

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administration, the cumulative mean dropped less than 1% between administrations of the assessment, but no student scored at benchmark or above.

**Action - Decision or Recommendation:** In response to these errors, all course content has been augmented with the addition of a library research webinar with the NSU librarian and additional APA guidance in the course. An increased emphasis on improving writing skills in the early weeks of the semester for indicated students has been implemented in this course. A continued emphasis on writing and APA will be included in future course offerings. Future course content will be augmented with additional emphasis on writing skills, APA, and following assignment guidelines closely.

### Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 2:

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Apply discipline-specific content knowledge in professional practice (SPA #2)	Apply principals of development through adulthood to the adult learning process, learning how to learn, and self-directed learning

### Measure: 2.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills)

SLO 2 is assessed through a SDL contract and presentation in EDAL 5010. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the benchmark performance is a cumulative mean score of 80%.

#### Finding:

FALL 2015 Administration	FALL 2016 Administration
EDAL 5010 Self-Directed Learning Presentation Cumulative Mean: 92.86% SdtDv: 14% Above/Equal Benchmark: 79% Below: 21%	EDAL 5010 Self-Directed Learning Presentation Cumulative Mean: 86.79% SdtDv: 13.5% Above/Equal Benchmark: 64% Below: 36%
EDAL 5010 Three Generations Study Research Paper Cumulative Mean: 72.24% SdtDv: 18% Above/Equal Benchmark: 45% Below: 55%	EDAL 5010 Three Generations Study Research Paper Cumulative Mean: 80.09% SdtDv: 17.7% Above/Equal Benchmark: 71% Below: 29%

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**Analysis:**

EDAL 5010 Self-Directed Learning Presentation: Though students exceeded the benchmark score by an average of 13%, 21% of students failed to score benchmark. Item analysis indicates that these students failed to include required components in their presentation. In the second administration of the assessment, students exceeded the benchmark score by an average of 7%, which is drop of 5% from the previous offering of the course, but still well above benchmark.

EDAL 5010 Three Generations Study Research Paper: A slight majority of students scored below benchmark with an average deviation from benchmark of (-2.18%). While 55% students scored below benchmark, the average deviation below benchmark is small and the large standard deviation indicates a wide variance in scores. Item analysis shows that citing of sources and following assignment content guidelines were the major errors. In the second administration, most students exceeded the benchmark score on the final research paper, which is an increase of 8% on the cumulative mean. There was a 26% increase in the number of students exceeding benchmark. The standard deviation between the two administrations was very close and rubric analysis indicated that students addressed assignment guidelines more closely. Student scores on the required elements of the paper, which excludes APA/citations/references, was 82%.

**Action - Decision or Recommendation:** In response to these errors, all course content has been augmented with the addition of a library research webinar with the NSU librarian and a course introductory video that emphasized following assignment guidelines. According to the second administration, the benchmark score has been met. A continued emphasis in all course content on research skills and following assignment guidelines will remain in all courses to continue improvement.

**Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 3:**

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Model professional behaviors and characteristics	Demonstrate/model knowledge of how adults learn in small group settings with emphasis on personal, interpersonal, and leadership skills.

**Measure: 3.1. (Direct – Skills, Dispositions)**

SLO 3 is assessed through a group project, presentation, and reflection in EDAL 5110. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the benchmark performance is a cumulative mean score of 80%.

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**Finding:**

FALL 2015 Administration	FALL 2016 Administration
EDAL 5110 Collaborative Project Presentation Guidelines EDAL 5110 Final Report -Teamwork and Process Cumulative Mean: 84.53% StdDv: 12% Above/Equal Benchmark: 60% Below: 40%	EDAL 5110 Collaborative Project Presentation Guidelines EDAL 5110 Final Report -Teamwork and Process Cumulative Mean: 97.75% Standard Deviation: 5% Above/Equal Benchmark: 100% Below: 0%

**Analysis:** While most students achieved above benchmark in the initial administration, a significant number were below. Item analysis from the rubric for those students below benchmark indicated that writing errors and APA formatting were the major errors. The emphasis on writing skills and correct APA formatting and citations resulted in all students exceeding the benchmark score in the second administration.

**Action - Decision or Recommendation:** In response to the errors evident in the first administration of the assessment, all course content has been augmented with the addition of a library research webinar with the NSU librarian and additional APA guidance in the course. An increased emphasis on improving writing skills in the early weeks of the semester for indicated students has been implemented in this course, and will continue in future offerings of the course.

**Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 4:**

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)	Design, develop, conduct, and assess adult learning experiences applying relevant research-based practice and theory.

**Measure: 4.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills)**

SLO 4 is assessed through a final learning program project in EDAL 5030. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the benchmark performance is a cumulative mean score of 80%.

**Finding:**

SPRING 2017 Administration	SPRING 2017 Administration

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EDAL 5030 – Final Project: Learning Program Instructor/Facilitator Guide Cumulative Mean: 74.17% StdDv: 18% Above/Equal Benchmark: 31% Below: 69%	EDAL 5030 – Final Project: Learning Program Instructor/Facilitator Guide Cumulative Mean: 78.75% StdDv: 13% Above/Equal Benchmark: 60% Below: 40%
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**Analysis:** Large standard deviation indicates a broad score range. Analysis shows a similar level of error/lost points in both the instructional design and the instructional assessment areas. Item analysis of grading indicated that the majority of lost points were due to student omitting various required sections of the final project. In the second administration of the assessment, the mean score increased by almost 5% and the percentage of students exceeding benchmark increased by 29%. The standard deviation decreased by 5%, indicating less variance in scores. However, scores remain slightly below the benchmark.

**Action - Decision or Recommendation:** In response to these errors, all course content has been augmented with a course introductory video that emphasized following assignment guidelines. As the second administration of the assessment did not achieve the benchmark cumulative average, an increased emphasis on following assignment guidelines utilizing both the introductory video and increased emphasis throughout the semester is indicated to bring the cumulative mean to benchmark and above.

### Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 5:

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Make responsible decisions and problem-solve, using data to inform actions when appropriate (SPA #5)	Use research, evidence, and best practices guidelines to critically and creatively use evidence to make educational decisions.

### Measure: 5.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills)

SLO 5 is assessed through a final need-based grant in EDAL 5130, and a final project in EDAL 6000. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the benchmark performance is a cumulative mean score of 80%.

### Finding:

SPRING 2017 Administration	SPRING 2017 Administration
EDAL 5130 Final Grant Project	EDAL 5130 Final Grant Project

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Cumulative Mean: 89% StdDv: 10% Above/Equal Benchmark: 75% Below: 25%	Cumulative Mean: 79% StdDv: 8% Above/Equal Benchmark: 60% Below: 40%
EDAL 6000 Final Project: Action Research Proposal Above/Equal Benchmark: n/a% Below: n/a% Course not offered until Fall Semester 2016.	EDAL 6000 Final Project: Action Research Proposal Cumulative Mean: 57% StdDv: 17% Above/Equal Benchmark: 11% Below: 89%

### Analysis:

EDAL 5130 Final Grant Project: Very low student enrollment in the class (6) makes it difficult to draw valid conclusions from the distribution. Continued low student enrollment in the class (6) in the second year of administration, makes it difficult to draw conclusions. There was a drop of 10% in the cumulative mean, which is below benchmark. Item analysis indicates the areas in greatest need of improvement are writing goals and objectives, and budgeting.

EDAL 6000 Action Research Proposal: Spring 2017 was the first offering of this class and administration of this assessment. Class enrollment was nine students and the cumulative mean was 23% below benchmark. Only one student exceeded benchmark, with other student scores varying widely below benchmark. Rubric analysis indicates that students failed to follow assignment guidelines in all areas of the research proposal, with the literature review section having the lowest average score

### Action - Decision or Recommendation:

EDAL 5130 Final Grant Project: Though low enrollment makes it difficult to draw valid conclusions, over two administrations of the assessment, instructional goals, objectives, and assessments strategies were consistent areas of weakness in student final projects. In response, course content will be augmented with scaffolding activities for these areas.

EDAL 6000 Final Project: Action Research Proposal: An increased emphasis on closely following assignment guidelines and including required components in the proposal will be included in the next offering of the course. Additional scaffolding activities and examples for the research proposal will be provided in the next offering of the course.

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### **Comprehensive Summary of key findings and or decisions:**

Data on the five defined student learning outcomes (SLO) were collected using various assessment methods on student projects that include content and skill-based rubrics, observation data, and content scoring sheets.

A review of the data over two administrations of the assessments indicated that students achieved the benchmark score of 80% cumulative average on two of the five student learning outcomes, SLO #2, and SLO #3. Students were not successful in achieving the benchmark score for the remaining three student learning outcomes. These three SLOs were measured using four different student project assessments. In two of the four assessments, students were below benchmark by less than 1.5%, and in the third, the cumulative mean was 8.5% below benchmark. A continued emphasis on the areas of weakness indicated in the item analysis should bring these scores to benchmark in the next administration of the assessments. The fourth assessment revealed the lowest score for students at 23% below benchmark. This course will be revised before the next offering by incorporating additional scaffolding activities for the indicated areas of weakness.

In order to determine specific areas of weakness where students failed to reach benchmark, an item analysis of the assessment was conducted. In four of the six assessments, item analysis indicated that the majority of the errors were due to student not following assignment content guidelines. Other major sources of errors were in the areas of writing and research. In two assessments, content errors were evident in the areas of writing goals, objectives, budgets, and review of literature.

The student weaknesses will be addressed in each course through a common strategy of increasing emphasis on following assignment guidelines, practicing effective research skills, and writing effectively. In the areas that indicated a content deficiency, coursework will be augmented with additional scaffolding activities to build the students' competency.