

AC 2023 – 2024 Assessment

M.A.T. Early Childhood Education (548A)

Division: Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development

Department: School of Education

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Date: May 6, 2024

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Date: July 2, 2024

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 Mission 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.

MAT Early Childhood Education Mission Statement: The mission of the Northwestern State University alternative certification (MAT) Early Childhood Education Program is to prepare educators with the knowledge, skills, and

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dispositions necessary to be effective in the Early Childhood classroom. The program prepares educators 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.

Methodology: The assessment process for the MAT 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: second year of coursework

- Candidates take the PRAXIS PLT in their second year of coursework, prior to their residency (EDUC 5450 *Early Childhood Internship in Teaching I*).

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

Measure 1.1. (Direct – Knowledge)

SLO 1 is assessed with the PRAXIS PLT Early Childhood exam, which is nationally normed. To meet State mandates, candidates must achieve a score of at least 157.

Quality of the assessment/evidence is assured because (1) the State of

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Louisiana requires this test, and (2) the test is nationally normed. For candidates to be successful, they must achieve a score that is at least as high as the State required score of 157.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In AC 2022-2023, the target was not met, as no candidates took the test.

In AC 2022-2023, the target was not met, as no candidates took the test.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2023-2024, faculty offered PRAXIS workshops and encouraged students to take practice tests. Further, to engage in program improvement, faculty partnered with the Natchitoches Parish Library to offer Learning Express, a source for PRAXIS test preparation, and resources from Longsdale Publishing to support candidate learning and their ability to meet SLO 1.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met.

In AC 2023-2024, 100% of candidates met the target, as candidates must pass the PRAXIS PLT exam to enter Early Childhood *Internship in Teaching I* (EDUC 5950). Candidates' scores ranged from 162 to 170 with a mean score of 166 (n = 2). The cutoff score for the PLT is 157. Although the mean score dropped, so did the sample size.

Decision.

In AC 2023-2024, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2024-2025, faculty will encourage students to take praxis tests while enrolled in ECED courses, offer workshops, partner with the Natchitoches Parish Library to offer Learning Express and resources from Longsdale Publishing, and partner with 240 Tutoring to offer PRAXIS resources.

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

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SLO 2

Course Map: EDUC 5451 *Early Childhood Internship in Teaching II*.

- Candidates are assessed via a Teacher Candidate Observation Form in EDUC 5451 *Early Childhood Internship in Teaching II*, which candidates take in their last semester of coursework.

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 via a Teacher Candidate Observation Form in EDUC 5451 *Internship in Early Childhood Education II*, which candidates take in their last semester of coursework.

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

NSU Evaluation Instrument (NIET/TAP)

The NIET/TAP instrument is widely known throughout the state and aligns closely with the foundational Danielson model. These domains are based on effective teaching behaviors listed on the Danielson Framework for Teaching instrument and aligned to the InTASC standards.

University field supervisors and cooperating principals evaluate each criterion using a five-point rating scale with the following options: Unsatisfactory = 1, Approaching Proficiency = 2, Proficient = 3, Mastery = 4, and Exemplary = 5. Items on the instrument are evaluated multiple times during the two residency semesters.

The target for this assessment is for 80% of candidates to attain a minimum 3.0 (proficiency) score on the evaluation instrument.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In AC 2022-2023, the target was met.

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In AC 2022-2023, 100% of candidates (n = 1) met target and scored “Meets Expectations” or “Target” on the rubric. Areas where candidates missed points included:

- *Instructional Plans*
- *Standards and Observations*
- *Presenting Instructional Content*
- *Academic Feedback*
- *Managing Student Behavior*

Based on the analysis of AC 2022-2023 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2023-2024, faculty made the following changes to drive the cycle of improvement. In 2023-2024, faculty modified instructional design to support candidates by adding additional resources addressing:

- *Instructional Plans*
- *Standards and Observations*
- *Presenting Instructional Content*
- *Academic Feedback*
- *Managing Student Behavior*

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met.

In AC 2023-2024, 100% of candidates (n = 2) met target and scored “Meets Expectations” or “Target” on the rubric. The candidates’ mean score was 3.53. The candidates’ lowest scores fell in the following categories:

- *Questioning*
- *Academic Feedback*
- *Grouping Students*

In accordance with the plan of action from 2022-2023, in 2023-2024, program faculty examined the evidence to determine student learning in each area, and resources were added to the course to provide learner support in areas where candidates missed points. These changes had a direct impact on the students’ ability to apply discipline-specific content knowledge in professional practice.

Decision.

In AC 2023-2024, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2024-2025, faculty

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will add resources addressing these areas to ECED courses:

- *Questioning*
- *Academic Feedback*
- *Grouping Students*

These changes will improve the students' 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 5010 *Advanced Child Development*

SLO 3 is assessed through a disposition form in ECED 5010 *Advanced Child Development*, which is one of candidates' first courses.

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 disposition form in ECED 5010 *Advanced Child Development*, which candidates take in their first year. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the target performance is that 80% of candidates will score at least "Sufficient" on the rubric.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In AC 2022-2023, the target was met.

In AC 2023-2024, 100% of candidates met target and scored at least "Sufficient." Candidates' mean score was 2.53 (n = 2). Student achievement was lowest in these categories:

- *Plan, Maximize Learning, Evaluate, and*
- *Model Professionalism*

Based on the analysis of AC 2022-2023 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2023-2024, faculty made the following changes to drive the cycle of improvement. In 2023-2024, faculty modified

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instructional design by adding resources relating to these categories to support candidates' performance:

- *Plan, Maximize Learning, Evaluate, and*
- *Model Professionalism*

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met.

In AC 2023-2024, 100% of candidates met target and scored at least "Sufficient." Candidates' mean score was 2.9 (n = 2). Points were missed in *Maximize Learning*. In accordance with the plan of action from 2022-2023, in 2023-2024, program faculty examined the evidence to determine student learning in each area, and resources were added to the course to provide learner support in areas where candidates missed points. These changes had a direct impact on the students' ability to model behaviors and characteristics that are professional and ethical.

Decision.

In AC 2023-2024, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2024-2025, faculty will help candidates explore strategies for *Maximizing Learning* in developmentally appropriate ways for young children.

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: EDUC 5451 *Internship in Early Childhood Education II*

- SLO 4 is assessed through a lesson plan assignment in EDUC 5451 *Early Childhood Internship in Teaching II*, which is candidates' last 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.

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Measure 4.4. (Direct – Knowledge and Skills)

SLO 4 is assessed through a lesson plan assignment in EDUC 5451 *Early Childhood Internship in Teaching II*, which is candidates' last course. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the target performance is that 80% of candidates will score at least a "2" on the rubric, which is aligned with the state teacher assessment.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In AC 2022-2023, the target was met.

In AC 2022-2023, 100% of candidates met target and scored at least a "3." The candidate's mean score was 3.05 (n = 1). Candidates' lowest scores fell into the *Reflection* and *Multiple Teaching/Learning Strategies* categories.

Based on the analysis of AC 2022-2023 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2023-2024, faculty made the following changes to drive the cycle of improvement. In 2023-2024, faculty modified instructional design by adding resources relating to *Reflection* and *Multiple Teaching/Learning Strategies* to Early Childhood courses.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met.

In AC 2023-2024, 100% of candidates met target and scored at least a "3." The candidates' mean score was 3.55 (n = 2). At the end of the course, program faculty examined the evidence to determine student learning in each area and found that candidates' lowest scores fell into the *Higher Order Thinking* and *Active Inquiry*. In accordance with the plan of action from 2022-2023, in 2023- 2024, program faculty examined the evidence to determine student learning in each area, and resources were added to the course to provide learner support in areas where candidates missed points. These changes had a direct impact on the students' ability to design and implement developmentally appropriate lesson plans that reflect research on best practices in Early Childhood Education.

Decision.

In AC 2023-2024, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2024-2025, faculty will add resources addressing *Higher Order Thinking* and *Active Inquiry* to support candidate learning.

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These changes 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 5840: Using Research to Improve Instructional Practice*

SLO 5 is assessed in *EDUC 5840, Using Research to Improve Instructional Practice*, through a paper-in-lieu-of-thesis.

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Make responsible decisions and problem-solve, using data to inform actions when appropriate.	Candidates applied the educational research process through a review of literature, analysis of data, and plans to improve instructional practice with empirically supported decisions

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

SLO 5 is assessed in *EDUC 5840, Using Research to Improve Instructional Practice*, through a paper-in-lieu-of-thesis.

The Graduate School requires each master's level candidate to complete a paper-in-lieu-of-thesis prior to graduation. Guidelines were specified by the Graduate Council and followed a traditional format with a paper introduction section, review of related literature subsections for each variable, analyses of data, and plans for improving instructional practices.

Candidates were asked to engage in reflective teaching by evaluating their instructional practices in the areas of 1) assessment, 2) instructional planning, and 3) instructional strategies. These variables aligned with standards 6, 7, and 8 from the InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards for Teachers. For each variable, candidates evaluated their essential knowledge, performances (skills), and critical dispositions using itemized lists published for each standard.

The assessment allowed candidates to self-evaluate their knowledge, skills, and dispositions while using data, along with findings from published academic studies, to inform their future instructional practices. Candidates developed specific action plans by problem-solving and making decisions about how to improve their knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the areas of assessment, instructional planning, and instructional strategies.

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The paper-in-lieu-of-thesis was graded using a holistic evaluation checklist with seven evaluative criteria and a seven-point rating scale. The evaluative criteria aligned with the Graduate School's requirements and included the following parts of the paper: 1) preface, 2) introduction, 3) section on assessment, 4) section on instructional planning, 5) section on instructional strategies, 6) conclusion with implications for future teaching, and 7) references.

The rating scale included the following rating levels: 0-Missing (not present), 1-Unsatisfactory (too underdeveloped to award credit), 2-Significant Development Needed (needed a significant amount of development), 3-More Editing Needed (needed more explanation, details, or correction), 4-Minor Polishing Needed (few errors were present in APA guidelines, mechanics, and/or grammar), 5-Target (achieved what was asked for in the directions), and 6-Beyond Expectations (exceeded expectations asked in the directions in both scope and depth with exemplary writing). The benchmark score of 3 indicated that an evaluative criterion was minimally acceptable with the required elements from the directions present in the subsection of the paper, but more editing was needed in terms of explanation, details, or corrections. Additionally, candidates had to earn an overall letter grade of C or higher (175 out of 250 points) on the paper-in-lieu-of-thesis before it was submitted to the Graduate School to meet the graduation requirement.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In AC 2022-2023, the target was not met.

In AC 2022-2023, candidates were assessed with a Paper-in-Lieu of-Thesis. The only candidate who took this course and completed the assignment scored a 64% D (159 out of 250 points) on the rubric (n = 1). At the end of the course, program faculty examined the evidence to determine student learning in each area and found that the candidate did not apply feedback given to improve her paper.

Based on the analysis of AC 2022-2023 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. In 2023-2024, faculty modified instructional design by adding resources relating to *Multiple Teaching/Learning Strategies* in Early Childhood courses.

In AC 2023-2024, the target was met.

In AC 2023-2024, 100% of candidates met target and scored at least a "3." The candidates' mean score was 4.45 (n = 2). At the end of the course, program faculty examined the evidence to determine student learning in each area and found that the candidate did not apply feedback given to improve her paper.

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Decision.

In AC 2023-2024, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2024-2025, faculty will encourage students to apply feedback to improve their papers and utilize the Academic Success Coach if needed.

These changes will improve the students' ability to document positive impact on young children's learning and development, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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 2022-2023 which resulted in improved student learning and program improvement in AC 2023-2024:

- SLO 1: Faculty offered PRAXIS workshops and encouraged students to take practice tests. Faculty partnered with the Natchitoches Parish Library to offer Learning Express and resources from Longsdale Publishing.
- SLO 2: Faculty modified instructional design to support candidates by adding additional resources addressing these topics in ECED courses:
 - *Instructional Plans*
 - *Standards and Observations*
 - *Presenting Instructional Content*
 - *Academic Feedback*
 - *Managing Student Behavior*
- SLO 3: Faculty modified instructional design by helping candidates explore strategies for these topics in ECED courses:
 - *Planning*
 - *Maximizing Learning*
 - *Evaluating*
 - *Modeling Professionalism*

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- SLO 4: Faculty modified instructional design by adding resources addressing *Reflection* and *Multiple Teaching/Learning Strategies* to ECED courses.
- SLO 5: Faculty modified instructional design by encouraging students to apply feedback to improve their papers.
- Faculty strengthened service-learning components in all ECED courses.

Plan of Action Moving Forward:

Program faculty examined the evidence and results of data analysis from AC 2023-2024 and will take steps to continue to improve student learning in AC 2024-2025:

- SLO 1: Faculty will encourage students to take praxis tests while enrolled in ECED courses, offer workshops, partner with the Natchitoches Parish Library to offer Learning Express and resources from Longsdale Publishing, and partner with 240 Tutoring to offer PRAXIS resources.
- SLO 2: Faculty will modify instructional design to support candidates by adding additional resources addressing these topics to ECED courses:
 - *Questioning*
 - *Academic Feedback*
 - *Grouping Students*
- SLO 3: Faculty will modify instructional design by helping candidates explore strategies for help candidates explore strategies for these topics in ECED courses:
 - *Maximizing Learning*
- SLO 4: Faculty will modify instructional design by adding resources addressing *Higher Order Thinking* and *Active Inquiry* to ECED courses.
- SLO 5: Faculty will modify instructional design by encouraging students to apply feedback to improve their papers and utilize the Academic Success Coach if needed.
- Faculty will strengthen service-learning components in all ECED courses.