

Assessment Cycle 2023 - 2024

MAT Integrated-Merged General and Mild/Moderate Special Education, Elementary, Grades 1-5 (531A)

MAT Integrated-Merged General and Mild/Moderate Special Education, Middle, Grades 4-8 (541A)

MAT Integrated-Merged General and Mild/Moderate Special Education, Secondary, Grades 6-12 (561A)

Division: Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development

Department: School of Education

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Date: May 30, 2024

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Date: June 11, 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 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.

Assessment Cycle 2023 - 2024

Program Mission Statement:

The mission of the Northwestern State Alternate Certification program is to prepare individuals who have demonstrated knowledge of specialized content to enter the teaching profession and improve educational and life outcomes for children from culturally and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds.

Methodology:

For the Mild/Moderate Elementary Grades 1-5 (MAT 531A), Middle School (Grades 4-8 MAT 541A) Secondary (Grades 6-12) (MAT 561A), the assessment process follows the guidelines of the CEC Initial Preparation Standards.

- Step 1: The seven CEC Initial Preparation Standards are embedded in each of the Mild/Moderate courses required for M/M special education certification.
- Step 2: When a student enrolls in a M/M course, the key assessment is identified for the student, so at the end of the class, he/she will have the knowledge and skills that all special educators should have for each key assessment.
- Step 3: At the end of the class, the key assessment is completed and evaluated by the course instructor.
- Step 4: Once the key assessment has been evaluated and feedback given to the student, then it is uploaded into the electronic portfolio, TASKSTREAM.
- Step 5: Data from each key assessment is compiled, analyzed, and organized into a database of information.
- Step 6: Use the data analysis for program improvement.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1

SLO 1 is assessed via PRAXIS exam: Special Education: Core Knowledge and Mild to Moderate Applications (0543 or 5543) exam which is required for Louisiana Mild/Moderate Special Education certification. IEP development is assessed in EDSP 5000 Educational Psychology & SPED Applied to Teaching and EDSP 5010 Instructional Planning & Design for All Students. Research-based instructional strategies and techniques are assessed in EDSP 5020 Research in Curriculum and Instruction.

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge (SPA #1, Praxis 5543)	PRAXIS exam: Special Education: Core Knowledge and Mild to Moderate Applications (5543) exam required for Louisiana Mild/Moderate Special Education certification.

Measure 1.1. (Direct—Knowledge)

Evidence is passage of the Special Education Core Knowledge and Mild to Moderate Applications PRAXIS exam (5543). The State of Louisiana requires all teachers seeking Mild/Moderate Special Education certification successfully complete this PRAXIS exam which demonstrates their knowledge and skills in pedagogy and instruction. This assessment is nationally validated and reliable. Candidates must pass with a minimum score of 153. The Special Education: Core Knowledge and Mild to Moderate Applications (5543) PRAXIS test is designed for examinees who plan to teach students with mild to moderate disabilities at any grade level from preschool through grade 12.

Major content areas assessed are: CEC Specialty Set: Initial Special Education Individualized General Curriculum Standard 1: Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences; Standard 2: Learning Environment; Standard 3: Curricular Content Knowledge; Standard 4: Assessment; Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies; Standard 6: Professional Learning and Practice; Standard 7: Collaboration.

The benchmark for SLO 1 is 100% passing scores on PRAXIS exam 5543.

Finding: Target was met; 100% of candidates met the target.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-2023, the target was met. Although there was a 100% candidate pass rate in AC 2022-2023, faculty identified those areas that needed to be enhanced in the course content. The data showed the need for more information on assessment. Based on 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 focused on presenting information and assignments focused on research-based instructional strategies and techniques. Faculty also increased the number of IEP development and assessment activities in EDSP 5000 and EDSP 5010. The faculty identified the lowest content score for each SPED PRAXIS exam and enhanced this specific content in SPED course content. Two areas (planning and learning environment, and assessment) specific content items from the SPED PRAXIS exam that yielded the lowest passing scores were embedded in course content for AC 2023-2024. Program faculty identified SPED PRAXIS Content Category II Planning and the Learning Environment as one content area that yielded lower scores by all candidates and therefore was addressed in 2023-2024.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to demonstrate discipline- specific content knowledge. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024 the target was met.

Candidates in AC 2023-2024 also had a 100% pass rate and improved in IEP

development. However, candidate performance in AC 2023-2024 indicated the continued need for more information and instruction in assessment. The faculty evaluated the results of the SPED PRAXIS exam and noted that candidates needed additional content knowledge on differentiation in assessing students with exceptionalities. Candidate performance indicated that the national CEC Standards of the Knowledge and Skills that all Special Educators should possess have been met in the course content for the MAT Integrated-Merged General and Mild/Moderate Special Education program. Special Education faculty decided to examine the lowest passing scores for each content area of the SPED PRAXIS exams for all candidates who completed the 2023-2024 SPED PRAXIS exam.

Action - Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. In AC 2023-2024, the target was that 100% of MAT students seeking Special Education certification would demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge by successfully passing (minimum score 153) the Special Education: Core Knowledge and Mild to Moderate Applications (5543) Praxis Exam. Based on information gathered from 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 additional assessment development instructional activities and faculty created (Louisiana specific IEP manual) resources to the appropriate course(s) EDSP 5000 and EDSP 5010. Candidates in AC 2023-2024 achieved a 100% passing rate, but individual test scores continued to be lower in the area of assessment.

Faculty will introduce assignments and instruction aimed at increasing knowledge in assessing students with exceptionalities in EDSP 5000 and EDSP 5010 and enhanced materials and texts addressing assessment have been adopted/added. These changes will improve the students' ability to properly assess all students to determine if learning is taking place, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 2. Teacher Observation

SLO 2 is assessed via a Teacher Candidate Observation Form in EDSP 5111 General- Special Education Internship in Teaching I and EDSP 5121 General-Special Education Internship in Teaching II.

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 Special Education content, curriculum, and assessment practices in a Special Education classroom setting.

Measure 2.1. (Direct—Knowledge, Skills, and Disposition)

NSU Evaluation Instrument (NIET/TAP)

The evaluation instrument used in prior years was aligned with the Danielson and Compass rubrics. To improve program alignment, it was determined that this instrument, which was content specific, needed to be a universal instrument measuring teaching pedagogy across programs. Partner districts had recently adopted the NIET/TAP evaluation instrument, and as a result, offered full-time faculty training on the NIET evaluation process. 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 internship semesters.

The target for this assessment is for 85% of candidates to attain a minimum 3.0 (proficiency) score on the evaluation instrument.

Finding: Target was met; 100% of candidates met the target.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-2023, the target was met. Based on analysis of the AC 2022-2023 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty provided targeted support and instruction aimed at increasing knowledge about culture and poverty and its intersectionality with children with exceptionalities in EDSP 5030 and EDUC 5021. In addition to exposing students to cultural relevance and awareness, assignments were also aligned with CEC standards. This effort to engage in program improvement strengthened candidates’ professionalism as well as knowledge and skills relating to the effects of poverty and cultural nuance and norms on Special

Education curriculum, development, and assessment.

These changes had a direct impact on the student’s ability to apply discipline-specific content knowledge in professional practice. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024 the target was met.

In AC 2023-2024, 100% of MAT students seeking Special Education certification demonstrated knowledge of Special Education content, curriculum, and assessment practices in a Special Education classroom setting. 100% of candidates met target in AC 2023-2024; however, faculty examined the evidence and identified low scores in the areas of designing/adopting lessons that address state standards and objectives, and assessment. Since the assessment is tied to national standards, candidates’ artifacts demonstrated student learning via mastery of those standards.

Action - Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2023-2024 data, faculty and University Supervisors will provide targeted support and remediation in the field for those failing to meet the target during the internship process (EDSP 5111 and EDSP 5121) in 2024-2025. In response to findings, University Supervisors in the MAT program will increase opportunities to review lesson design that addresses specific standards and objectives as well as assess student performance after instruction. This effort to engage in effective lesson development will strengthen candidates’ professionalism as well as knowledge and skills relating to Special Education curriculum, development, and assessment.

SLO 3. Disposition Form

SLO 3 is assessed through a dispositions form in EDSP 5111 and EDSP 5121 Internship in Teaching (2 Semesters). Benchmark for SLO 3 is for 80% of candidates to score “sufficient” or higher on the dispositions form

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 EDSP 5111 and EDSP 5121 Internship in Teaching (2 Semesters). The assessment is evaluated using a rubric,

and target performance requires that 80% of candidates score at least “Sufficient.” Mentors evaluate candidates’ dispositions at midterm and discuss the evaluation with candidates so that they are aware of strengths and weaknesses. Mentors again use the assessment at the end of the semester (end of semester data is reported below). 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 that at least 80% of candidates score “Sufficient”.

Findings: Target was met; 100% of candidates met the target.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-2023, 100% of candidates met target and scored “Sufficient.” Based on analysis of the AC 2022-2023 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty introduced additional resources related to diversity through assignments across all program courses. These changes improved students’ ability to properly grow as culturally responsive professionals thereby pushing the cycle of improvement forward. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024 the target was met.

In AC 2023-24, 100% of MAT students scored “sufficient” or higher on the Professional Dispositions form. These changes had a direct impact on the student’s ability to model professional behaviors and characteristics.

Action - Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2023-2023, the target was met. Based on analysis of data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will introduce additional resources relating to professionalism to support student learning in 2024-2025. This effort to engage in program improvement will strengthen candidates’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions relating to growing as culturally responsive professionals.

SLO 4. Innovation Project

SLO 4 is assessed through a grant writing project and reflection in EDSP 5040 *Integrated- Merged Instructional Practices*.

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, CEC Mini Grant Project)	Candidates will identify a specific classroom/student need; investigate research-based strategies designed to engage learners and accomplish student learning objectives; and write a mini-grant for funding to address the need.

Measure 4.1. (Direct—Knowledge and Skills)

SLO 4 is assessed through an Innovation Project in EDSP 5040 Integrated-Merged Instructional Practices. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the target performance is that 100% of candidates will score “Proficient.” Candidates conduct research into effective educational strategies, determine how to integrate the strategies into an inclusive classroom, and write a mini-grant proposal.

The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and target performance requires that 100% of candidates score “Proficient.” Candidates conduct research into one of four areas of funding: (1) Educating Children with Exceptionalities; (2) Improving Relationships between Families and their Children with Exceptionalities, (3) Developing Independent Living Skills or Employment of Students with Exceptionalities, or (4) Using Technology to Enhance the Education of Children and/or Youth with Exceptionalities.

Candidates write one section of the grant at a time with feedback given after each section is completed. Candidates complete the following, one section at a time: project description: title of project, duration of the project, statement of need, description of the population to be served, project objectives and activities, project timeline, evaluation procedures, project benefits, project budget, letter of endorsement from an administrator, contact information, resume.

Finding: Target was met; 100% of candidates met the target.

Analysis:

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

Faculty supported candidate learning and proficiency in the preparation of instructional assignments or activities as supported by Student Learning Impact

Data. Faculty supported students in identifying professional organizations and funding sources in which to present their original research and scholarly activities. This program improvement initiative to engage in research and scholarly activities strengthened candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions relating to instructional design and creative thinking that yields engaging ideas, processes, materials, and experiences appropriate for the discipline. In addition, faculty encouraged candidates to join additional professional organizations, in addition to joining CEC.

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

Action - Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2023-2024, the target was met.

Based on information gathered from 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 require that students become involved in organizations such as the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and other organizations that offer competitive funding opportunities for student and classroom needs. These changes will improve the students' ability to properly grow as responsive professionals and to exhibit creative thinking that yields engaging ideas, processes, materials, and experiences appropriate for the discipline, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 5. Student Learning Impact

SLO 5 is assessed through a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) project and reflection in **EDSP 5030 Classroom & Behavior Management of All Students**. Benchmark for SLO 5 is for 100% of candidates to score "Proficient" or higher (80% or higher).

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Exhibit creative thinking that yields engaging ideas, processes, materials, and experiences appropriate for the discipline	Candidates will collect, analyze, and use assessment data to gauge student progress and plan targeted instruction.

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

SLO 5 is assessed through a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) project and reflection in **EDSP 5030 Classroom & Behavior Management of All Students**. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric and applies the principles of behavioral assessment and modification techniques to learning, behavior, and emotional problems in the school setting. The assignment requires 30 hours of clinical and field-based experience. The goal of the assignment is to develop an understanding of behavior management assessment and modification

techniques for individuals with exceptional learning needs during their life span. Candidates must complete a functional behavioral assessment for one student with mild/moderate exceptional needs in Grades 1-12 with a challenging behavior. By completing the assignments and/or tasks of this course, each candidate will: identify antecedents that may evoke behavior and consequences that may maintain behavior through functional analysis methodology, describe appropriate interventions that are linked to functional assessment outcomes, write a systematic plan for changing behavior that includes the following components: target behavior, environment(s) where intervention will occur, intervention strategy, measurement and schedule for data collection, and graph for visual analysis, design and implement environmental adaptations to assist in the support of appropriate behaviors, and accurately measure student performance to verify the effectiveness of behavioral support programs and/or determine the need for program revision.

Candidates are provided with a rubric which is used to evaluate their work. The assessment provides evidence of student learning and mastery of state standards because the assessment was specifically designed to align with both CEC and state standards. Program faculty have 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. To score “Proficient” on the rubric, candidates must earn at least 80%. The goal is for 100% of candidates to score “Proficient”.

Findings: Target was met; 100% of candidates met the target.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-2023, 100% of candidates met the target and scored “Proficient” on the rubric. At the end of the course, the program faculty examined the evidence to determine student learning in each area. Because the assessment and rubric are tied to CEC standards and state standards, candidates’ artifacts demonstrated student learning and mastery of CEC and content standards. Although 100% of candidates met target in AC 2022-2023, program faculty reviewed the evidence to review student learning, and based on the analysis of the results, faculty introduced information about and promoted research into various replacement behaviors to promote creative behavior management. In AC 2023-2024, 100% of candidates met target by scoring at least 80% on the rubric. Based on analysis of the AC 2022-2023 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty introduced information about and promoted research into various replacement behaviors to promote the development of creative behavior management plans. This effort to engage in program improvement strengthened candidates’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions relating to growing as responsive professionals.

These changes had a direct impact on the student’s ability to exhibit creative thinking that yields engaging ideas, processes, materials, and experiences

appropriate for the discipline. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024 the target was met.

Action - Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2023 – 2024 the target was met. Based on an analysis of these results, faculty will make the following changes for AC 2024 – 2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will introduce information about and promote research into various replacement behaviors to promote creative behavior management plans, supporting candidate learning and their ability to meet SLO 5.

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

Program faculty examined the evidence and results of data analysis from AC 2022-2023 and made the following changes to improve student learning in AC 2023-2024.

SLO 1: Faculty identified the lowest content score for each SPED PRAXIS exam and embedded or enhanced this specific content in SPED course content in order to meet SLO 1.

SLO 2: Faculty and University Supervisors provided targeted support and remediation in the field for those who failed to meet the target (or scored lower than in other areas) during the internship process in order to meet SLO 2.

SLO 3: Emphasis on Diversity and Culturally Responsive Practices has been integrated program-wide, but especially in EDSP 5000 Educational Psychology & SPED Applied to Teaching and EDSP 5030 Classroom & Behavior Management of All Students to provide learner support and enhance their ability to meet SLO 3.

SLO 4: Based on conversations with TEAC, emphasis has been placed on professionalism throughout program course work. Students are also encouraged to join professional teaching organizations to meet SLO 4.

SLO 5: Faculty has introduced information about and promoted research into various replacement behaviors in an effort to promote creative behavior management and enhance ability to meet SLO 5.

Plan of Action Moving Forward:

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

SLO 1: Faculty will participate in TEAC to identify the needs of our stakeholders, students, and community partners and utilize course data to drive curriculum design.

SLO 2: Faculty will introduce information, projects, and assignments addressing Diversity in MAT-SPED courses to support candidate learning and bolster their ability to meet SLO 2.

SLO 3: As a program-wide initiative, Diversity and Culturally Responsive Practices will be introduced/supported across the curriculum but will primarily be discussed in EDSP 5000 Educational Psychology & SPED Applied to Teaching and EDSP 5030 Classroom & Behavior Management of All Students to enhance candidate ability to meet SLO 3.

SLO 4: Faculty will promote professionalism and creative thinking that yields engaging ideas by having candidates conduct research into effective educational strategies, determine how to integrate the strategies into an inclusive classroom, and write a mini-grant proposal to be submitted to a professional organization or funding source.

SLO 5: Faculty will introduce information about and promote research into various replacement behaviors to promote creative behavior management plans, supporting candidate learning and their ability to meet SLO 5.