

## AC 2024 – 2025 Assessment

### M.A.T. Early Childhood Education (548A) - Annual Report

**Division: Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development 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 the 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 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

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profession.

### Methodology:

The assessment process for this program includes:

1. Data from assessments provide results on candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions as appropriate for professional education programs.
2. Content and key assessments in each program/course are aligned with the respective professional preparation/application standards, and candidates apply the standards in all their coursework.
3. Data from assessment tools are collected and returned to the program coordinator.
4. The program coordinator analyzes the data to determine student learning and whether students have met measurable outcomes and discusses the results with program faculty.
5. Annually, program faculty and stakeholders review data to make data driven, curricular decisions.
6. The program coordinator, in consultation with program faculty and other relevant stakeholders, proposes needed changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period, and the curricula and overall program.

### Student Learning Outcomes:

**SLO 1: Demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge.**

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge. (Praxis PLT: Principles of Learning & Teaching 5621).	Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of Developmentally Appropriate Practices relating to early childhood.  <i>100% of candidates will meet proficiency (minimum score of 157) on Praxis PLT: Principles of Learning &amp; Teaching 5621.</i>

**Course Map:** Prior to Internship

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

SLO 1 is assessed through PRAXIS Principles of Learning & Teaching (PLT) respective of the certification grade level. The PRAXIS assessments are published by ETS and are nationally normed. Proficiency is measured by scoring at least the minimum qualifying score

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set forth by the State of Louisiana for teacher certification requirements. Quality of the assessment/evidence is assured because (1) the State of Louisiana requires the tests and (2) the tests are nationally normed.

Application to clinical experiences (residency) requires a passing PRAXIS score; therefore, for candidates to be successful, they must achieve a score that is at least as high as the State required scores in the table below.

Certification Area	Pedagogy test	Pedagogy test#/minimum score
<i>Early Childhood PK-3</i>	PLT Early Childhood	5621/157

**Finding.** In AC 2024 – 2025 the target was met.

### **Analysis.**

In AC 2023 - 2024, the target was met. In AC 2023 - 2024, 100% (n=2) of candidates achieved proficiency on the PRAXIS PLT exam. Candidates' scores ranged from 162 to 170 with a mean score of 166. The cutoff score for the PLT is 157.

Based on the information gathered from an analysis of the AC 2023 - 2024 results, program faculty made the following changes to drive the cycle of continuous improvement. In AC 2024 - 2025, faculty encouraged students to take praxis tests while enrolled in ECED courses, offered workshops, partnered with the Natchitoches Parish Library to offer Learning Express and resources from Longsdale Publishing, and partnered with 240 Tutoring to offer PRAXIS resources to support candidate learning and their ability to meet SLO 1. These changes helped to improve the students' ability to demonstrate knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices relating to early childhood, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2024 - 2025, the target was met. Candidates' PLT scores ranged from 157 to 162 with a mean score of 159.5 (n=2), with a cutoff score of 157. Candidates' Content 5002 scores ranged from 163 to 176 with a mean score of 169.5 (n=2), with a cutoff score of 157. Candidates' Content 5003 scores ranged from 160 to 168 with a mean score of 164 (n=2), with a cutoff score of 157. Candidates' Content 5004 scores ranged from 165 to 194 with a mean score of 179.5 (n=2), with a cutoff score of 155. Candidates' Content 5005 scores ranged from 166 to 169 with a mean score of 167.5 (n=2), with a cutoff score of 159. These changes had a direct impact on the students' ability to achieve proficiency on the Praxis test.

100% of candidates (n=2) achieved proficiency by passing the Praxis in 2024-2025.

### **Decision.**

In AC 2024 - 2025, the target was met.

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Based on the analysis of the AC 2024 - 2025 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025 - 2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. Program faculty will encourage students to take advantage of the support services offered in the Center for Excellence and Teaching and through discounted 240 Tutoring services.

These changes will improve candidates' ability to meet proficiency on the Praxis PLT and Content exams, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### **SLO 2: Apply discipline-specific content knowledge in professional practice.**

<b>Departmental Student Learning Goal</b>	<b>Program Student Learning Outcome</b>
Apply discipline-specific content knowledge in professional practice.	Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of Developmentally Appropriate Practices relating to Early Childhood development, curriculum, and assessment.  <i>100% of candidates will meet proficiency (minimum of 3.0) on the Teacher Candidate Observation Form.</i>

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

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

SLO 2 is assessed through the use of the Teacher Candidate Observation Form. The adopted, state-mandated form is the Louisiana Educators Rubric (LER), which was implemented in Fall 2024. Moving forward, the state of Louisiana has mandated that all EPPs implement the Louisiana Aspiring Educators Rubric (LAER).

Validity and Reliability was established for the Louisiana Educator Rubric (LER) in 2025. A panel of 8 P-12 clinicians viewed a model teaching vignette and conducted independent evaluations of the teaching performance using this tool. The Content Validity Ratio (CVR) was calculated using the Lawshe (1975) method to assess content validity. The CVR mean = .956 with CVR(Critical), 8) = .75 and no single item below critical value of .75. The Intra-class Correlation Coefficient (ICC) by Fisher (1954) was used as a measure of inter-rater reliability with respect to the Lawshe method ratings. The ICC = .87. ICC of .75-1.00 reflects "excellent" inter-rater agreement.

The Louisiana Educator Rubric (LER) brings a comprehensive focus on four key domains: instruction, planning, environment, and professionalism. Each domain is further broken down into indicators and descriptors that clearly define effective

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teaching. Performance definitions are provided at levels 5 (Exemplary), 3 (Proficient), and 1 (Unsatisfactory). Observers can score performance at levels 2 or 4 based on evidence and their professional judgment. Assessed indicators include: standards and objectives; motivating students; presenting instructional content; lesson structure and pacing; activities and materials; questioning; academic feedback; grouping students; teacher content knowledge; teacher knowledge of students; thinking; problem-solving; instructional plans; student work; assessment; expectations; engaging students and managing behavior; environment; respectful conditions; growing and developing professionally; reflecting on teaching; school improvement; and school responsibilities.

**Finding.** In AC 2024 – 2025, the target was met.

### **Analysis.**

In AC 2023 - 2024, the target was met. In AC 2023 - 2024, 100% (n=2) of candidates achieved proficiency by scoring at least a 3 on the Teacher Candidate Observation Form. The mean score was 3.53.

Based on the information gathered from an analysis of the AC 2023 - 2024 results, program faculty made the following changes to drive the cycle of continuous improvement. In AC 2024-2025, faculty modified instructional design by adding resources addressing the following topics where points were missed to support candidate learning and their ability to meet SLO 2:

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

These changes helped to improve the students' ability to demonstrate proficiency on the Teacher Candidate Observation Form, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2024 - 2025, the target was met. These changes had a direct impact on the students' ability to achieve proficiency on the Teacher Candidate Observation Form.

100% of candidates (n = 2) met target and scored at least a 3 on the Teacher Candidate Observation Form. The mean score was 4.25. The candidates' lowest scores fell in the following category: *Questioning*

### **Decision.**

In AC 2024 - 2025, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024 - 2025 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025 - 2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2025 - 2026, program faculty will modify instructional design by adding resources addressing: *Questioning*.

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These changes will improve the candidates' ability to apply discipline-specific content knowledge in professional practice, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### SLO 3: Model professional behaviors and characteristics.

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.  <i>100% of candidates will meet proficiency in the Dispositional Evaluation by scoring at least a 3.</i>

#### Course Map: ECED 5010 *Advanced Child Development*

#### Measure 3.1. (Direct – Dispositions)

SLO 3 is assessed through an electronic Professional Disposition Evaluation tool in ECED 5010 *Advanced Child Development*, which candidates take in their first year. The tool was implemented in the 2022 - 2023 AY and re-evaluated after first-year implementation. The Louisiana CAEP Consortium has drafted an updated dispositional evaluation tool to be piloted in 2025 - 2026 AY.

Content Validity was re-established for the Dispositional Evaluation in 2025. A panel of EPP faculty members from initial and advanced programs, as well as programs not associated with CAEP accreditation conducted an independent critique using the 2021 CAEP workbook. Construct validity was established by 1) aligning items to constructs, 2) avoiding bias and ambiguous language, and 3) stating items in actionable terms. The Data Quality was determined to be sufficient, with all items being sufficient according to CAEP criteria for EPP-created surveys.

The Professional Disposition Scale informs candidates' professional responsibility, integrity, enthusiasm, communication, and reflection. Each domain entails three to six statements that confirm the degree to which candidates demonstrate each characteristic. Evaluators can rate candidates a 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree) or 4 (strongly agree). The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the target performance is that 100% of candidates will score at least "Agree" (3) on the rubric.

**Finding.** In AC 2024 – 2025, the target was not met.

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### Analysis.

In AC 2023 - 2024, the target was met. In AC 2023 - 2024, 100% (n=2) of candidates achieved proficiency by scoring at least 2 on the Dispositional Evaluation. The mean score was 2.9. The form was updated for 2024-2025.

Based on the information gathered from an analysis of the AC 2023 - 2024 results, program faculty made the following changes to drive the cycle of continuous improvement. In AC 2024 - 2025, faculty modified instructional design by adding resources addressing the following topic where points were missed to support candidate learning and their ability to meet SLO 3: Maximize *Learning*

No data are available for AC 2024 – 2025, as no candidates took the course.

### Decision.

In AC 2024 - 2025, the target was not met, as no candidates took the course.

**SLO 4: Exhibit creative thinking that yields engaging ideas, processes, materials, and experiences appropriate for discipline.**

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Exhibit creative thinking that yields engaging ideas, processes, materials, and experiences appropriate for the discipline. (Lesson Plan)	Candidates will design and implement developmentally appropriate lesson plans that reflect research on best practices in Early Childhood Education.  <i>80% of candidates will meet proficiency (minimum of 2.0) on the lesson plan and reflection.</i>

**Course Map:** EDUC 5451 *Internship in Early Childhood Education II*

### Measure 4.4. (Direct – Knowledge and Skills)

SLO 4 is assessed through a lesson plan and reflection in EDUC 5451 *Internship in Early Childhood Education II*, which candidates take in their final semester. SLO 4 assesses the ability to competently write and design a lesson plan worthy of effective execution. Lesson plans address the Louisiana State Standards and are the blueprint for candidates' executing the best teaching practices. The EPP uses the lesson plan assessment to ensure candidates possess the ability to effectively and strategically plan for all students, connecting assessment to measurable learning outcomes.

Validity and Reliability was established for the Teacher Candidate Observation Assessment in 2025. A panel of 8 EPP faculty each conducted independent rubric-based evaluations of anonymous work samples submitted by candidates from various initial



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teacher preparation programs. The Content Validity Ratio (CVR) was calculated using the Lawshe (1975) method to assess content validity. The CVR mean = .952 with CVR(Critical, 8) = .75 and no single item below critical value of .75. The Intra-class Correlation Coefficient (ICC) by Fisher (1954) was used as a measure of inter-rater reliability with respect to the Lawshe method ratings. The ICC = .89. ICC of .75-1.00 reflects “excellent” inter-rater agreement.

The lesson plan assessment measures for the following components: pre-assessment; lesson standard(s)/objective(s); essential questions; lesson vocabulary, bellringer, connections, and hook; content knowledge; post-assessment; sequence of the lesson; accommodations and differentiation; materials/equipment/technology; and SAMR Model. Candidates can score 10 (proficient), 5 (emerging), or 0 (beginning) on each lesson plan component.

**Finding.** In AC 2024 - 2025, the target was met.

### **Analysis.**

In AC 2023 - 2024, 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). Based on the information gathered from an analysis of the AC 2023 – 2024 data, program faculty made the following changes to drive the cycle of continuous improvement. In AC 2024-2025, faculty helped candidates explore strategies for Maximizing Learning in developmentally appropriate ways for young children in the areas of *Higher Order Thinking and Active Inquiry*.

These changes helped to improve the candidates’ ability to demonstrate proficiency on the lesson plan, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2024 - 2025, the target was met. These changes had a direct impact on the candidates’ ability to achieve proficiency in the lesson plan.

100% of candidates (n=2) met target and scored at least a 2.0 on the lesson plan in AC 2024 - 2025. The mean score was 3.88.

The candidates’ lowest scores fell in the following categories: *Adaptations, Technology, and Planning*.

### **Decision.**

In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, program faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025 - 2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2025 - 2026, faculty will modify instructional design by adding resources addressing: *Adaptations, Technology, and Planning*.

These changes will improve the candidates’ ability to exhibit creative thinking that yields engaging ideas, processes, materials, and experiences appropriate for the discipline,



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thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

**SLO 5: Make responsible decisions and problem-solve, using data to inform actions when appropriate.**

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Make responsible decisions and problem-solve, using data to inform actions when appropriate. (Paper-in-Lieu)	Candidates applied the educational research process through a review of literature, analysis of data, and plans to improve instructional practice with empirically supported decisions.  <i>100% of candidates will meet proficiency (minimum of 70% / grade of C) on the paper-in-lieu.</i>

**Course Map:** *EDUC 5840: Using Research to Improve Instructional Practice*

### Measure 5.1. (Direct – Knowledge and Skills)

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.

Based on the action plan for SLO 5 from the 2021-2022 assessment cycle, a construct-related validity analysis was conducted on the evaluation checklist. Data was included from the 2022 calendar year to assess a couple types of validity. First, an external evaluator reviewed the face validity of the evaluation checklist and determined that the checklist appeared to be valid on face value by measuring what it was designed to measure. Next, the external evaluator assessed the content validity of the checklist. The evaluative criteria on the checklist were compared to the directions provided to candidates throughout the course and paper guidelines provided by the Graduate School. The evaluation checklist appeared to have content validity compared to reference materials. Because of low candidate numbers enrolled in the fall 2022 semester, predictive validity was not evaluated.

Candidates are 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

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published for each standard.

The assessment allows 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 develop 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.

The paper-in-lieu-of-thesis is 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 includes 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 (needs more explanation, details, or correction), 4-Minor Polishing Needed (few errors in APA guidelines, mechanics, and/or grammar), 5-Target (aligns with directions), and 6-Beyond Expectations (exceeds expectations asked in the directions in both scope and depth with exemplary writing). The benchmark score of 3 indicates that an evaluative criterion is minimally acceptable with the required elements from the directions present in the subsection of the paper, but more editing is needed in terms of explanation, details, or corrections. Additionally, candidates must earn an overall letter grade of C or higher (175 out of 250 points) on the paper-in-lieu-of-thesis before it is submitted to the Graduate School to meet the graduation requirement.

**Finding.** In AC 2024 - 2025, the target was met.

### **Analysis.**

In AC 2023 - 2024, the target was met. In AC 2023 - 2024, 100% of candidates met target and scored at least a "B" (n = 2).

Based on the information gathered from an analysis of the AC 2023 - 2024 results, program faculty made the following changes to drive the cycle of continuous improvement. In AC 2024 - 2025, faculty modified instructional design by encouraging students to apply feedback to improve their papers and utilize the Academic Success Coach as needed to meet SLO 5.

These changes helped to improve the candidates' ability to demonstrate proficiency on the lesson plan, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2024 - 2025, the target was met.

100% of candidates (n=2) met target and scored an A on the Paper-in-Lieu assessment in AC

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2024 - 2025. The mean score was 96.4%.

The candidates' lowest scores fell in the following categories:

- *Introduction*
- *Planning for Instruction*
- *References*

### **Decision.**

In AC 2024 - 2025, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024 - 2025 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025 - 2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2025 - 2026, faculty will modify instructional design by encouraging students to apply feedback to improve their papers and utilize the Center for Excellence and Teaching as needed.

These changes will improve the candidates' ability to make responsible decisions and problem-solve, using data to inform actions when appropriate, 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 2023 - 2024 which resulted in improved student learning and program improvement in AC 2024 - 2025:

SLO 1: Faculty encouraged students to take praxis tests while enrolled in ECED courses, offered workshops, partnered with the Natchitoches Parish Library to offer Learning Express and resources from Longsdale Publishing, and partnered with 240 Tutoring to offer PRAXIS resources.

SLO 2: Faculty modified instructional design to support candidates by adding additional resources addressing these topics to ECED courses: *Questioning, Academic Feedback, and Grouping Students*.

SLO 3: Faculty modified instructional design by helping candidates explore strategies for help candidates explore strategies for these topics in ECED courses: *Maximizing Learning*

SLO 4: Faculty modified instructional design by adding resources addressing *Higher Order Thinking* and *Active Inquiry* to ECED courses.

SLO 5: Faculty modified instructional design by encouraging students to apply feedback to improve their papers and utilize the Academic Success Coach if needed.

Faculty strengthened service-learning components in all ECED courses.

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### Plan of Action for Moving Forward:

The Program faculty examined the evidence and results of data analysis from AC 2024 - 2025 and will take steps to continue to improve student learning in AC 2025 - 2026:

SLO 1: Faculty will encourage students to take advantage of the support services offered in the Center for Excellence and Teaching and through discounted 240 Tutoring services.

SLO 2: Faculty will modify instructional design to support candidates by adding additional resources addressing these topics to ECED courses:  
*Questioning*

SLO 3: Faculty will modify instructional design by helping candidates explore strategies to help candidates explore strategies for these topics in ECED courses:  
*Maximizing Learning*

SLO 4: Faculty will modify instructional design by adding resources addressing these topics to ECED courses: *Adaptations, Technology, and Planning.*

SLO 5: Faculty will modify instructional design by encouraging students to apply feedback to improve their papers and utilize the Center for Excellence and Teaching as needed.

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