Program: Middle School Masters of Art in Teaching (MS MAT) (507)

College: Education and Human Development

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Mission Statements:

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. 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 Department of Teaching, Leadership, and Counseling 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.

AY 2017-2018 Assessment

Program Mission Statement: The MAT Middle Level Program faculty provide highly effective coursework, fully online, to meet the needs of candidates who are seeking their initial certification as middle level educators. Program candidates gain the knowledge and skills necessary to implement literacy- and standards-based instructional strategies for increasing student content learning in each candidate's academic area of study; candidates also develop effective management expertise critical to the establishment of responsive student-centered learning environments. During the course of their program, candidates become reflective educators who also develop the pedagogical skills necessary to differentiate instruction, to meet the widely diverse needs of young adolescent students, to apply assessment data for instructional planning, and to collaborate professionally with their peers and administrators within a school setting. The development of the program and courses is based on standards set by the American Middle Level Education (AMLE), InTasc, and the State of Louisiana. The ultimate goal is to educate and credential highly effective teachers for employment in Louisiana schools where they will have positive impact on student learning.

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

(1) Program assessment begins as part of the application process for each potential candidate. Entry into the program depends upon passage of, Praxis II, the core knowledge standardized assessment required by the State of Louisiana for each subject area(s) of certification.

(2) As they matriculate through the program, candidates upload signature assignments for each course and an end-of-program portfolio on the TaskStream system. These assessments are evaluated by program faculty and inform adjustments to courses.

(3) At the end of the coursework, candidates complete a comprehensive exam (COMPS), scored by a committee that includes the candidate's major professor. The exam includes a presentation of research and the paper-in-lieu (PIL) of thesis and responding to oral prompts, based on program objectives.

(4) Candidates then enter a two-semester internship during which they are evaluated regularly by faculty supervisors and school administrators for subject area knowledge and application of their teaching and management skills.

(5) Program faculty and stakeholders regularly review and analyze data on selected assessments. Data analyses guide any needed curricular or program adjustments.

Student Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 1: Course Map

Because this is a gateway assessment, the courses required for the development of a candidate's depth of subject knowledge are completed in previous programs.

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge (SPA #1)	To ensure successful student content learning, middle-level teacher candidates demonstrate depth and breadth of subject matter content knowledge in the area(s) in which they plan to certify.

Measure 1.1.

SLO 1 is assessed through the Praxis II: Middle School Content Knowledge Exam in four core areas of certification (English 5047, Social Studies 5089, Science 5440, or Math 5169). Designed by the Education Testing Service, each examination measures the depth of content knowledge in one of the four core areas for teachers at the middle school level. The quality of these assessments is assured by its recognition by the State of Louisiana as a requirement for the initial credentialing of middle level teachers. The Praxis II is also an acceptable measure of content learning for meeting SPA reporting for the MAT programs. Faculty depend on Praxis II to demonstrate subject area content knowledge. The target is achieved by meeting or exceeding the State of Louisiana's cut scores.

Findings:

- **AY 2016-2017:** 100% of candidates met target.
- **AY 2017-2018:** 100% of candidates met target.

Analysis:

Average Performance Ranges on Praxis II

	NSU 2016/17	NSU 2017/18	National 2017/18
English (State cut score = 160)	162 - 166	**164 – 172**	155 - 172
Math (State cut score = 165)	165 - 166	**166 - 179**	156 - 179
Science (State cut off score = 150)	150 to 164	**158 - 173**	146 to 171

Social Studies (State cut off score = 149)	184 (only one applicant passed)	**152 - 179**	155 - 172

Analysis of the data included comparisons between AY 2016-2017 and AY 2017-2018. Evidence shows that scores were slightly up in all categories except social studies. However, in 2016-2017 the social studies score only represents one candidate whose score was exceptionally high at 184. When comparing the data from the current cycle to the national averages, NSU applicants averaged just higher in every subject area.

Based on the analysis of results from 2016-2017 in 2017-2018, applicants were given access to Praxis II prep workshops offered on campus to PREP program applicants. Passage of the Praxis II is recognized by CAEP in SPA reporting as an acceptable assessment for content knowledge; results provide evidence that SLO 1 is met for those accepted into the program.

Decisions: Though all applicants who were accepted into the MAT MID program met or surpassed the State cut offs, many applicants failed to do so. Faculty agree that some of these applicants may be viable prospective candidates who are experiencing test anxiety, while others may need to refresh their content knowledge before taking the exam. Based on the analysis of results from 2017-2018 in 2018-2019, MAT faculty will attempt to increase the number of quality candidates in the program by developing online web-ex test practice sessions for accessible to applicants who have strong GPAs in their undergraduate or former graduate courses and have met all other entry requirements.

Faculty believe that such support will enable more candidates to meet the State cut score in their subject area, therefore, making the program stronger in numbers while maintaining candidate quality as established by the Praxis II assessment.

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 2:

Course Map: Because this is a gateway assessment, the courses required for the development of a candidate's depth of subject knowledge are completed in previous programs.

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Apply discipline-specific content knowledge in professional practice (SPA #2)	Middle-level teacher candidates demonstrate depth and breadth of subject matter and pedagogical skills in the subject area(s) in which they plan to certify to ensure student learning.

AY 2017-2018 Assessment

Measure: 2.1. (Direct Knowledge, Skills)

SLO 2 is also assessed through the PRAXIS II: Middle School Content Knowledge Exam (English0049, Social Studies 0089, Science 0439, or Math 0069); however, we are focused on first time pass rates. This focus gives critical information on how to assist candidates that are pursuing alternative certification.

Findings:

- **AY 2016-2017:** 100% of candidates met target.
- **AY 2017-2018:** 100% of candidates met target.

Analysis: Analysis of the data included comparisons between AY 2016-2017 and AY 2017-2018. Evidence shows that scores were slightly up in all categories except social studies. However, in 2016-2017 the social studies score only represents one candidate whose score was exceptionally high at 184. When comparing the data from the current cycle to the national averages, NSU applicants averaged just higher in every subject area.

Based on the analysis of results from 2016-2017 in 2017-2018, MAT faculty were encouraged to explore the creation of a support program to "ready applicants" for taking the Praxis II.

During the 2017-18 SACSCOC cycle, faculty depended on Praxis II to demonstrate subject area content knowledge and for professional practice. However, after further consideration, faculty have determined that the assessment is not suitable for SLO 2 because it does not specifically measure professional practice skills necessary for the instructional delivery of content knowledge to students.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of results from 2017-2018 in 2018-2019, MAT faculty will replace the current assessment with the MAT MS Professional Standards Checklists Part 1 (EDUC 5420/21). This assessment is designed to measure the growth and effectiveness of candidates' content knowledge and pedagogical skills during their internship year. Candidates are rated on their abilities to create discipline-specific instruction within a responsive middle school environment. Part 1 of the four-part assessment packet is comprised of items extracted from the Danielson Framework for Teaching instrument, the model for InTASC. The assessment aligns with the AMLE, Louisiana State Standards, and the Louisiana Compass evaluation for teacher performance.

AY 2017-2018 Assessment

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 3:

Course Map:

EPSY 5490 Educational Psychology Applied to Teaching

EDUC 5840 Research Based Decision-Making in Education

EDUC 5420 Middle School Internship in Teaching

EDUC 5421 Middle School Internship in Teaching

Departmental Student Learning	Program Student Learning Outcome
Model professional behaviors and characteristics	Middle-level teacher candidates demonstrate the professional dispositions and characteristics of effective educators in their interactions with students, administrators, co-workers, parents, and university faculty throughout the program.

Measure 3.1

SLO 3 outcomes are assessed using the Professional Dispositions and Characteristics (PDC) Likert Scale, which is scored by university faculty, NSU field supervisors, cooperating principals, and candidates in key courses throughout the program. The criteria checklist was revised in 2016 to better assess strengths and weaknesses of middle school teacher candidates as outlined in the AMLE standards. These revisions have added specificity to the categories, making assessment items more relevant to the MAT MS candidates and the data more valid to faculty in this program.
Candidates complete this assessment themselves during EPSY 5490 as a form of self-reflection and to familiarize them with the professional expectations measured on this instrument; it is then completed at least twice by their university field supervisor and twice by their cooperating principals during the yearlong internship. Additionally, instructors of EDUC 5840 complete this assessment on each graduating candidate. With each successive assessment of this instrument, candidates have the chance to set goals for professional improvement.

The instrument has 43 items placed within three domains—Professionalism Expected of the Middle Level Educator, Professional Demeanor and Attitudes Expected of a Middle Level Educator, and Communication Acumen and Commitment to Professional Growth Expected of a Middle Level Educator. Faculty created the evaluation based on agreed-upon best practices and constructs outlined in InTASC standards, which underscore its content validity. The likert scale offers 5 categories for scoring each descriptor: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, and N/A (added to facilitate scoring candidates in online programs). The quality of the evidence is further established because faculty 1) aligned items to constructs, 2) avoided bias and ambiguous language,

and 3) stated items in actionable terms. A rating of 4.0 of 5.0 is the target performance with at least 90% of the candidates reaching that target.

Findings:

- **AY 2016-2017:** 100% of candidates met or exceeded the target.
- **AY 2017-2018:** 100% of candidates met or exceeded the target.

Analysis: In AY 2016-2017, compiled assessments (n=24) of the middle school candidates scored by item from 4.125 and 4.708; 100% of the candidates met or exceeded the target. When evaluators were asked if candidates should be encouraged to remain in and complete the program, 20 candidates received a "decidedly yes" response (88.33%); 4 received a "yes, with reservations" (16.67%); and, no candidates received a "decidedly no" response.

Compiled assessments in AY 2017-2018 (n=43) had similar item mean scores falling between 4.6 and 4.861. 100% of the candidates also met or exceeded the target. When evaluators were asked if candidates should be encouraged to remain in and complete the program, responses were very close to the previous year: 40 candidates received a "decidedly yes" response (93.02%); 1 received a "yes, with reservations" (2.33%); and, 2 received a "decidedly no" response (4.65%).

In viewing the data for AY 2016/2017, faculty were concerned that scores were possibly inflated for beginning teachers and, therefore, failed to give candidates meaningful feedback for professional growth. With the similar scores for AY 2017-2018 this issue remains a concern, and more is needed to ensure accurate measurement of professional dispositions and characteristics.

Based on the analysis of results from 2016-2017 in 2017-2018, Program faculty revised the instrument to support faculty scoring of dispositional characteristics when working with candidates in an online format. However, the data collected for EPP purposes likely exceed those relevant for CAEP accreditation, and based on the current data, SLO 3 is met.

Decisions: Based on the analysis of results from 2017-2018 in 2018-2019, program faculty feel scores would more accurately represent beginning teacher candidates' dispositions and characteristics with judicious attention to descriptive criteria. The assessment is less effective if specific areas are scored unrealistically high or the area is rated as "not applicable" for online candidates. Additionally, trends in current educational research support the value of self-assessment as a powerful professional growth exercise. Though candidates score themselves early in the program, it may be valuable to add a self-assessment to the end of the program as well. With these thoughts in mind, program faculty have two recommendations for change:

(1) Reinforce the importance of "realistic consideration" for the item descriptors to NSU field supervisors (during the orientation from Field Experience Director) and collaborate more closely with school personnel and individual candidates to gain insight before scoring. Data will then more realistically guide the need for improvement in identified areas.

(2) Add a second, self-evaluation to occur at the beginning of EDUC 5421. Candidates will discuss the self-assessment with their NSU supervisor at the first meeting of the second semester during the year of internship and submit a plan for improving the areas they find lacking in themselves during the final semester of the program.

(3) Include both candidate self-assessments on TaskStream. The candidate evaluations will then become part of the overall data.

Faculty feel that these changes will refocus the candidates on the end goal (improvement of student learning). These changes will take effect in fall of 2018 and will provide data for the next cycle.

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 4 Course Map:

EDUC 5421 Middle School Internship in Teaching

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Exhibit creative thinking that yields engaging ideas, processes, materials, and experiences appropriate for the discipline (2017/2018)	Middle-level teacher candidates demonstrate the ability to select/create appropriate instructional practices to deliver/assess the content of their discipline, specifically to engage student learners and increase achievement.

Measure 4.1

AY 2016/17 the Second Semester Internship Competency Portfolio Work Samples (ICP) assessment was selected for assessing SLO 4. However, as no data was required at that time, there was none provided in the AY 2016-2017 report.

AY 2017-2018 Assessment

The ICP was developed by a committee of faculty to measure a candidate's ability to satisfactorily complete a unit of instruction that includes three lesson plans and assessments of student learning outcomes. Candidates are measured on a wide variety of knowledge and skills needed to teach effectively in accordance with the Louisiana Compass rubric, the Louisiana State Standards, and the AMLE.

The quality of the evidence was also determined by 1) aligning criteria to InTASC, 2) avoiding bias and ambiguous language, and 3) stating items in actionable terms. A panel of 8 EPP faculty each conducted four independent rubric-based evaluations of anonymous lesson plan work samples submitted by candidates in four different initial teacher preparation programs. Analyses were conducted using the Lawshe Content Validity Ration (CVR) statistic (validity) and the Fisher Intra-class Correlation Coefficient (ICC) for reliability. To determine criteria for success, • CVR mean = -.58 with CVR (Critical, 8) = .75 and 13 items (62%) meeting critical value of .75 • ICC = .573. ICC of .4 - .59 reflects "fair" inter-rater agreement, and .6 is considered "good."

Analyses were conducted using the CAEP Evaluation Framework, resulting in Unsatisfactory, Needs Improvement, Proficient, or Exemplary ratings. Target for this assessment is a rating of Proficient (3.0/4.0). The goal is for at least 90% of the candidates to meet the target.

Based on the analysis of results from 2016-2017 in 2017-2018, MAT faculty established a baseline using this assessment; however, the assessment has been dropped by the department and replaced. See below.

Findings:

- **AY 2016-2017:** 100% of candidates exceeded the target.

- **AY 2017-2018:** 100% of candidates exceeded the target.

Analysis: In SY 2016-2017 mean scores (n =12) ranged from 3.083 (Ability to Analyze Data for Intervention) to 3.583 (Setting Clear & Measurable Criteria for Content Area Teaching) on the 4-point scale. In SY 2017-2018 mean scores (n=34) for all indicators were higher falling between 3.31 (Multiple Teaching/Learning Strategies) and 3.90 (Significance of Learning Outcomes) in the 10 areas scored with "Adapting strategies to meet diverse approaches to learning—creating effective instruction" also receiving a low rating at 3.35. Technology use garnered a strong 3.67 rating. Data show that most candidates scored in the two highest categories across all items—Exemplary or Proficient—for both data cycles. Data collected for EPP purposes likely exceed those relevant for CAEP accreditation. SLO 4 is met.

Decisions: Based on the analysis of results from 2017-2018 in 2018-2019, MAT faculty will align Middle Level assessments with those in other MAT programs by selecting a common assessment; therefore, SLO #4 will be collected using the College of Education

Lesson Plan.

Faculty feel that this change will strengthen the data presented by the MAT programs overall. The change will take effect in fall of 2018 and will provide data for the next cycle.

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 5 Course Map: EDUC 5420/5421 Middle School Internship in Teaching.

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Make responsible decisions and problem-solve, using data to inform actions when appropriate (SPA #5)	Middle-level teacher candidates demonstrate the ability to select/implement appropriate instructional/assessment practices in an ongoing, data informed process to ensure all students are successful.

Measure 5.1

Faculty and cooperating teachers collaborated to create the Student Learning Impact (SLI) assessment to align with the new Louisiana Compass (teaching performance evaluation) and Common Core State Standards' (since abandoned and readopted as the Louisiana State Standards) expectations. The assessment requires candidates to plan and create instruction, administer assessments, and analyze data to rate student learning. Candidates then reflect on and make instructional decisions/adjustments based on their analyses of the results. The instrument is aligned to InTASC, AMLE, and Louisiana State standards; these standards support its content validity. A panel of 8 EPP faculty each conducted four independent rubric-based evaluations of anonymous student learning impact work samples submitted by candidates in four different initial teacher preparation programs. Target for this assessment is 3.0/4.0 with 100% meeting target. The assessment was validated by the Lawshe Content Validity Ration (CVR) statistic (validity) and the Fisher Intra-class Correlation Coefficient (ICC) for reliability. CVR mean = -.61 with CVR(Critical, 8) = .75 and 7 items (78%) meeting critical value of .75. ICC = .954. ICC greater than .75 reflects "excellent" inter-rater reliability. Target is 3.00/4.00.

 Findings:

        AY 2017-2018: 100% of the candidates exceeded the target in the baseline iteration.

AY 2017-2018 Assessment

Analysis: The 2017-2018 4-8 MAT Middle Level Student Learning Impact Data: Six candidates were scored on this assessment. With 5 basic categories and 9 sets of criteria, the overall mean score was 3.54/4.00. The average means by groups: Setting assessment criteria 3.19; Preparing instructional assignments or activities 3.74; Analysis of formative data 3.37; Student learning targets 3.56; Self-reflection of performance 3.86; Student learning targets based on reflective practice 3.57.

Based on the analysis of results from 2016-2017 in 2017-2018, MAT faculty administered this newly created assessment, and as such, it has only been administered once, providing a baseline upon which to compare data in the next cycle. Candidates scored well in all categories with the lowest scores in setting assessment criteria (3.19) and analysis of formative data (3.37). Data collected for EPP purposes likely exceed those relevant for CAEP accreditation. SLO 5 is met.

Decision: Baseline was established for the new assessment for the current cycle, but data is minimal with only six candidates completing the evaluation. Based on the analysis of results from 2017-2018 in 2018-2019, MAT faculty will administer the second iteration of the new assessment to confirm validity and reliability in the next cycle.

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvements Based on Analysis of Results in AY 2016-2017:

SLO 1:
- Program faculty offered workshops for Praxis II applicants in both programs (MAT and PREP) who needed extra preparation for middle-grade core subject tests.

SLO 2:
- Program faculty offered workshops for Praxis II applicants in both programs (MAT and PREP) who needed extra preparation for middle-grade core subject tests.

SLO 3:
- Program faculty revised the instrument to support faculty scoring of dispositional characteristics when working with candidates in an online format.

SLO 4:

- There were no changes suggested in the AY 2016-17 report as the assessment set a baseline.

AY 2017-2018 Assessment

SLO 5:

- There was no assessment required in AY 2016-2017 at the time of the SACSCOC report. However, baseline measures were completed early in AY 2017-2018 for the newly created Student Learning Impact assessment.

Plan of Action Moving Forward: Based on Analysis of Results in AY 2017-2018:

SLO 1:
- Develop online web-ex test practice sessions for accessible to applicants who have strong GPAs in their undergraduate or former graduate courses and have met all other entry requirements.

SLO 2:
- Replace the current assessment with the MAT MS Professional Standards Checklists Part 1 with data collected during EDUC 5420/21 in the internship.

SLO 3:

Since NSU field supervisors are typically the only ones who work face-to-face with candidates during the internship, heavy reliance is placed on their assessments using this instrument. The following are suggestions to help them assess fairly and judiciously.

- Field Director meets with NSU field supervisors face-to-face (or through web-ex) to reinforce the importance of "realistic consideration" for the item descriptors on this instrument as they relate to beginning teachers. Data will then more accurately guide the need for improvement in identified areas.
- Add a second self-evaluation to occur at the beginning of EDUC 5421. Candidates will discuss the self-assessment with their NSU supervisor at the first meeting of the second semester of the internship (EDUC 5120) and submit a plan for improving the areas they find lacking in themselves.
- Include both self-assessment samples currently completed in EPSY 5490 and "to be" completed in EDUC 5421 with all program faculty samples. Upload self-assessment samples to TaskStream. The candidates' self-evaluations will then become part of the overall data.

SLO 4:
- Adopt the College of Education Lesson Plan in the RDG 5150 course beginning in Spring 2019. The change in assessments provides consistency of measurement criteria for this SLO across all MAT programs.

SLO 5:

- Administer the second iteration of the Student Learning Impact assessment to confirm validity and reliability when comparing results with those rated on the baseline established in AY 2017-2018.