Program: Master of Education Curriculum & Instruction (C & I MED)

**Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development** 

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**Northwestern Mission.** Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution that is committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The University maintains as its highest priority excellence in teaching in graduate and undergraduate programs. Northwestern State University prepares its students to become productive members of society and promotes economic development and improvements in the quality of life of the citizens in its region.

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

Department of Teaching, Leadership, and Counseling Mission. The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development offers exemplary programs that prepare candidates for career success in a variety of professional roles and settings. As caring, competent, reflective practitioners, our graduates become positive models in their communities and organizations. This mission is fulfilled through academic programs based on theory, research, and best practice. Further, all graduates learn to value and work with diverse populations and to incorporate technologies that enrich learning and professional endeavors.

**Program Mission Statement:** The Master of Education in Curriculum & Instruction (MED-CI) program provides certified teachers advanced knowledge in research, pedagogy, and content in a chosen emphasis area, including English Education, Reading, School Librarian, Transition to Teaching, or Teacher Leader. Program faculty provide highly effective coursework, electronically, to meet the needs of candidates who wish to grow as teacher leaders in their schools or districts. During the course of their program, candidates become reflective educators who understand both the practical

and the theoretical roles of education, blending them to create highly effective instruction for students, to act as mentors for other teachers, and to take on leadership roles in their discipline areas in their schools or districts. Master teachers who graduate from this program will have positive impact on student learning.

**Methodology:** The assessment process for the C & I MED program is as follows:

- 1. Candidates upload signature assignments for each course and completed field experience hours on the TaskStream system throughout the program.
- 2. Field Experiences are monitored by course instructors; passing grades are not submitted without the completion of the field work.
- 3. Program coordinator and faculty review TS data regularly to make assessment and curricular decisions for improvement.
- 4. The Program Coordinator will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and curricula and program adjustments when necessary.

## **Student Learning Outcomes:**

# SLO 1

#### **Course Map:**

EDCI 5110 Reflective and Coherent Classroom Practice

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge (SPA #1)	C & I MED graduate candidates demonstrate depth and breadth of discipline-specific content knowledge in the subjects they teach.

## Measure 1.1. (Direct – knowledge)

SLO 1 is assessed with the *Research and Reflection Essay*, a synthesis of content specific research trends in each candidate's area of certification; it is scored with a criterion-based rubric. Candidates complete this signature assessment in EDCI 5110. Program faculty designed and implemented the assessment in the fall of 2017, along with the rubric to evaluate candidates' abilities to differentiate between strong and weak research in their fields of study to make informed content-based instructional decisions for improving students' learning.

Validity was established by 1) aligning items to state and content standards, 2) avoiding bias and ambiguous language, and 3) stating items in actionable terms on the rubric. Analyses were conducted using the CAEP Evaluation Framework, resulting in Unacceptable, Acceptable, or Target ratings. Benchmark for this assessment is Acceptable. The goal is for at least 90% of the candidates to meet the benchmark.

#### Finding:

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

## Analysis:

In AY 2016-17 candidates (n=11) were evaluated. 100% met the benchmark while 90% met target. The aggregate mean score was 2.68 of 3.00. Faculty reviewed language on the rubrics to ensure that the descriptors measured content knowledge and instructional expertise while expectations were set at a more rigorous level, suitable for graduate studies. Faculty clarified language in the directions and included a requirement for the addition of evidence-based rationales, derived from the research under consideration, to support self-assessments.

In AY 2017-2018 candidates (n=16) were evaluated again with these changes in place. 100% met the benchmark with 81.25% scoring at Target or above with an aggregate mean of 2.68/3.0. Based on the added rigor to two areas of the assignment/rubric, faculty are not surprised that scores are slightly lower than those in the previous year.

Since the criteria for this assessment directly correlate to state and content standards, this artifact is a valid measure that indicates candidates' mastery of subject area content, which, in turn, should translate to increased student content learning. Based on data from this assessment, candidates demonstrate depth and breadth of discipline-specific content knowledge in the subjects they teach The SLO 1 goal is met.

## **Decisions:**

All candidates met or surpassed the benchmark AY 2016-17 and again in AY 2017-2018 (after changes were implemented), program faculty reviewed the evidence and the instrument and raised the requirement for a more sophisticated level of academic writing to strengthens ties to student learning. As a result, a plan of action was determined: In future iterations candidates will be required to synthesize two or more research findings and critically examine the findings in writing, making connections from the research to strategic changes in teaching practice and the resulting enhancement of student learning. To support these changes, rubric descriptors will be revised, and resources added to specifically support (1) critical reading of research findings (2) inclusion of evidence when synthesizing research findings (3) correct usage of APA format. Changes will be in place for Fall 2018.

Faculty believe that these changes will increase candidates' understanding for reading and rating the validity and reliability of academic research and for reflecting on their own teaching performances to improve and broaden instructional expertise with students.

# SLO 2 Course Map:

EDCI 5120 Advanced Instructional Theories and Strategies

<b>Departmental Student Learning Goal</b>	Program Student Learning Outcome
Apply discipline-specific content	C & I MED graduate candidates
knowledge in professional practice	demonstrate depth and breadth of
(SPA #4)	discipline-specific content knowledge
	and pedagogical skills that incorporate
	literacy support, in the subjects they
	teach to ensure student learning.

Measure: 2.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills)

SLO 2 is assessed with a three-part signature assignment, *The Culminating Project: A Reflective Teaching Model.* Candidates demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge and pedagogical expertise while implementing literacy support within their discipline areas. Based on current research trends and literacy support theory to improve content learning, candidates create and teach a lesson in which "best practice" strategies are implemented in their teaching. Candidates write a case study of the experience and self-reflect on their performance and student learning outcomes. Candidates also create an oral presentation that is suitable for delivery to a faculty or school board meeting in which literacy-based content learning is highlighted. The assessment is administered in EDCI 5120 *Advanced Instructional Theories and Strategies*, across all emphasis areas in the C & I program.

Program faculty designed this comprehensive assessment and developed the rubrics in AY 2017. The first iteration of the assessment is presented here as a baseline, and the second iteration is compared below. Analyses of rubrics are conducted using the CAEP Evaluation Framework, which results in three rating levels: Exemplary, Satisfactory, or Developing/Emerging ratings. Benchmark for this assessment is Satisfactory. The goal is for at least 90% of the candidates to meet benchmark.

# Finding:

- AY 2016-2017 (summer 2017-<u>initial iteration</u> of this new assessment; set baseline): 100% of candidates met the target.
- AY 2017-2018: 91% of candidates met the target.

## Analysis:

In AY 2016-2017 100% of the candidates (n=16) scored Exemplary or Satisfactory. Data show an aggregate mean of 2.93/3.0. Although all candidates met target in this <u>baseline sample</u> and the assignment is comprehensive and reflective, program faculty feel that candidates will benefit by strengthening criteria in three areas—synthesizing research findings, selecting research-based literacy strategies, and reflecting more specifically on student outcomes.

In AY 2017-2018, 10 of the candidates (n=11) scored Exemplary or Satisfactory while 1 scored Developing/Emerging, not meeting target. Data show a slightly higher aggregate mean of 2.98/3.0 for this iteration. As a result of the 2016-2017 data, faculty did focus on the three categories listed above—synthesizing research findings, selecting research-based literacy strategies—and found that 4 candidates offered reflections and rationales with little bases in evidence from texts or course information, but most attended closely to the rubric requirements. Faculty also understand that the assessment asks classroom teachers to offer samples of their work and reflect on the actual results of that work. Therefore, the quality of the assessed projects has been high, and 10 of the candidates have conscientiously attended to the rubric throughout their work. Locating relevant research upon which to support professional practice and reflections for student learning improvement remains a focus for faculty in this course.

#### **Decisions:**

Changes made in AY2016-2017 were in place before the AY 2017-2018 assessment iteration was scored. Program faculty believe that re-focusing on these areas during scoring, brought improvement to the assessment's reliability and a better understanding for candidate responses. This understanding leads to changes in the coursework for AY2018-2019. EDCI 5120 faculty are now asked to be more proactive in the provision of a model that demonstrates procedures for professional self-reflection of teaching practices; the model will also lead to candidates to adopt research-based strategies in their practice. Faculty believe these changes are more likely to improve practice if the new strategies or behaviors are ones that are validated by research. A checklist of reflective behaviors will also be developed, adopted, and provided through the discussion forum format as part of the EDCI 5120 coursework. The forum's requirements will include examples of how to support teacher outcomes with research-based teaching strategies for improving practice. Candidates will explain how their reflections lead to quality changes in practice and provide strong evidence of their choices. By continuing to improve the signature assignment/assessment, faculty believe that program efficacy, candidate practice, and student learning will be positively impacted. These changes take effect in the summer of 2019.

# SLO 3 Course Map:

Though this assessment follows a candidate through every course and all field experiences, the assessment is administered in the following two courses:

EDCI 5110 Reflective and Coherent Classroom Practice (early in the program) EDUC 5850 Action Research for School Improvement (late in the program)

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Model professional behaviors and Characteristics.	C & I MED graduate candidates demonstrate the professional dispositions and characteristics of effective educators in their interactions with peers and program faculty;

generate new ideas and commit to fair and equitable treatment of others as evidenced in their interactions with all stakeholders in their chosen specialized fields.
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## **Measure 3.1. (Indirect/Dispositions)**

SLO 3 is assessed through the *Professional Dispositions and Characteristics Scale in Advanced Programs (PDC)* likert scale. The measure of professional dispositions and characteristics of program candidates is based on a compilation of each candidate's professional demeanor during coursework, communication interchanges, and field experiences throughout the program. The assessment is completed by instructors in EDCI 5110, an early course in the program, and by the three committee members sitting for the *C & I Portfolio Defense Presentation* at the end of the candidate's program as part of the research course EDUC 5850. The SY 2017-2018 cycle provides baseline data as this is the first administration for the C & I candidates.

The PDC (Likert scale) instrument allows faculty to evaluate attributes recognized as professional dispositions & characteristics of practicing teachers. Faculty created the dispositional evaluation based on agreed-upon best practices and constructs outlined in InTASC standards. 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 Created Assessments, resulting in "below sufficient," "sufficient," "above sufficient," and "not applicable" ratings. Benchmark for this assessment is a Sufficient rating with at least 80% of candidates meeting benchmark.

#### Findings:

• AY 2017-2018: 100% of candidates met benchmark in both iterations of this assessment for this academic year data cycle.

## Analysis:

The first iteration of this instrument for the Curriculum and Instruction Program was administered in AY 2017-2018 at two points in the program—summer 2017 and fall 2017. Early program evaluations were completed at the end of EDCI 5110 (n=14), resulting in mean scores ranging between 2.0 and 3.0 with an aggregate mean of 2.86. Faculty selected the "not applicable" category 32 times in three criteria descriptors--"Collaboration: Works effectively with professional colleagues, parents, and other adults; Responsibility: Prepares well for professional duties; and, Commitment to Diversity: Demonstrates respect for others of various cultural backgrounds, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, social classes, abilities, political beliefs." The second iteration of the assessment was also in AY 2017-2018; the end-of-program evaluations were completed in EDUC 5850 (n=9) also resulting in an aggregate mean of 2.86. Evaluators applied the "not applicable" category 23 times in the same three categories, described above.

When considering the data collected early and late in the program, growth is not apparent since scores are statistically the same. Program faculty feel that the results are likely skewed by the large number of attributes assigned "not applicable." These results may indicate that some instructors are not comfortable scoring areas when they have "limited" or "no real access" to professional dispositions at the candidate's school setting in an online program. Nevertheless, candidates scored above benchmark in most categories throughout the data analyses.

The plan of action for this SLO is for faculty to review the language in the three areas that caused instructors to select "not applicable" as a rating rather than to consider evaluation levels. It is important for faculty instructors to "know" candidates well enough to rate these important indicators. Faculty will begin by revising the language for these descriptors.

Criteria for this assessment align with state and content standards, avoid bias/ambiguous language and state items in actionable terms; therefore, this assessment is viewed as valid by program faculty. According to the analyses of these data, candidates demonstrate the professional dispositions and characteristics of effective educators in their interactions with peers, parents, administrators, and program faculty; demonstrate abilities to create and generate new ideas; and commit to fair and equitable treatment of others as evidenced in their interactions with all stakeholders in their chosen specialized fields. Therefore, faculty are satisfied that the SLO 5 goal is met.

#### **Decisions:**

The second scoring was originally set in EDCI 5140 *Clinical Internship in Curriculum and Instruction*. Based on the analysis of the results in 2017-2018 it was moved to EDUC 5850 *Action Research for School Improvement* before the first scoring. The rationale for this change was that instructors of EDUC 5850 have more interaction with the candidates as they work individually on the research designs of each candidate and may gain more insight into candidates' teaching practices and professional demeanors. Additionally, only one faculty member instructs EDCI 5140 whereas there are several who instruct the EDUC 5850 course. Program faculty agree that a variety of evaluators lends credibility to the assessment.

# SLO 4 Course Map:

EDCI 5020 Curriculum Development for School Improvement
EDCI 5140 Clinical Internship in Curriculum and Instruction
EDUC 5850 Action Research for School Improvement
Emphasis Area Courses (in Reading, School Librarian, English Education, or Transition to Teaching)

<b>Departmental Student Learning Goal</b>	Program Student Learning Outcome
Exhibit creative thinking that yields	C & I MED graduate candidates
engaging ideas, processes, materials,	demonstrate their leadership abilities to

and experiences appropriate for the	recognize, analyze, and solve school-
discipline	wide/district-wide problems and plan
(SPA #3)	strategically for school and instructional
	improvement in their disciplines with
	the goal of improving student learning.

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

SLO 4 is assessed through a 10-part *Intern Portfolio of Leadership Experiences* and scored with a criteria-based rubric; ratings depend on the quality of rationales for categorizing an experience and the rich description of each experience as it relates to student learning in the candidate's emphasis area. The work is a collection of a candidate's evidence of school-wide or district-wide strategic planning and various related areas that have occurred during the academic year in which the EDCI 5140 course is taken. Evidence of the level of participation is required for each entry in the portfolio. Experiences suitable for inclusion involve district and school leadership, such as administrative meetings or trainings regarding strategic planning, school vision, community or school problems/issues, school technology acquisition/funding, and curriculum improvement.

Analysis was conducted using the CAEP Evaluation Framework for levels of quality when rating assessments, resulting in "below sufficient," "sufficient," or "above sufficient" ratings. Benchmark for this assessment was "sufficient" with at least 85% of candidates scoring benchmark.

# Findings:

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

## Analysis:

In 2016-2017, candidates (n=10) had an aggregate mean of 2.80/3.0, and 100% of the candidates scored sufficient or above sufficient. In 2017-2018 (n=13) candidates had an aggregate mean of 2.692/3.0 with 100% also scoring sufficient or above sufficient. When reviewing individual rubric criteria, the results show candidates in both cycles were heavily involved in leadership roles during the year in which they completed the final practicum class in the program. With the first iteration of the data in AY 2016-2017, it was decided by faculty that more rigor was needed in the written rationales. As a result, the rubric language was tweaked to require strong narratives in which candidates provided rationales when completing the work in the AY 2017-2018 data cycle. Candidates included rich descriptions of the activities, clearly tying the category to the experience. The updated rubric provided data that further suggest a strong understanding by candidates for the application of their own knowledge and skills in the field of curriculum and instruction. In looking at the similar data for the two cycles, program faculty believe that candidates achieved a more advanced level of understanding for their experiences in the second iteration of the assessment based on the addition of the rationale.

Because the criteria for this assessment are directly based on state and content standards, this instrument is a valid measure of leadership skills and knowledge acquired by candidates. Benchmark scores demonstrate mastery in their abilities to recognize, analyze, and solve school-wide/district-wide problems and plan strategically for school and instructional improvement in their disciplines with the goal of improving student learning.

#### **Decision:**

100% of candidates met criteria at the sufficient or above sufficient levels in both cycles of data. Based on the analysis of the results from 2017-2018 program faculty were satisfied with the improvements described above, but after further review feel that there is no direct tie from candidates' experiences to student learning in their classrooms or schools. Because student learning is the goal of coursework and experiences throughout the MED CI program, faculty feel strongly that action is required to correct this oversight in AY 2018-2019. Going forward the rubric will include criteria that require candidates to provide a strong, reflective correlation between each of the portfolio leadership experiences and how each directly supported student learning.

# Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 5 Course Map:

EDCI 5020 Curriculum Development for School Improvement EDCI 5030 Instructional Improvement and Assessment EDUC 5010 Educational Research and Evaluation EDUC 5850 Action Research for School Improvement

<b>Departmental Student Learning Goal</b>	Program Student Learning Outcome
Make responsible decisions and	C & I MED candidates demonstrate
problem-solve, using data to inform	their proficiency in the planning and
actions when appropriate	execution of action research and data
(SPA #5, Student Learning Impact)	analyses, designed to measure
	curriculum knowledge and instructional
	approaches that directly affect student
	learning in their content areas.

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

The SLO 5 goal is assessed through the *C & I Portfolio Defense Presentation*, a performance-based evaluation of action research and a direct approach to the measurement of candidates' knowledge and skills in the program. The work for this assessment is accomplished over two semesters toward the end of the program. Initiated in EDUC 5010, the work is completed in EDUC 5850 when the work is defended to a committee of three faculty. The defense also includes important "takeaways" from EDCI 5020 (curriculum) and EDCI 5030 (instruction). Passing this defense is a condition of graduation and results are submitted to the Graduate School.

Program faculty collaborated to redesign the end-of-program assessment in 2010, and have completed multiple revisions to the rubric since then to ensure it reliably measures six areas of classroom-based action research and four areas of program curricular knowledge and instructional design skills. Overall, the work provides evidence that candidates know how to plan and execute research that is relevant to their practice and has positive impact on student learning. Instrument validity was established by 1) aligning items to state and content standards, 2) avoiding bias and ambiguous language, and 3) stating items in actionable terms on the rubric. Analyses of criteria are conducted using the CAEP Evaluation Framework with ratings of Unacceptable, Acceptable, and Target.

Benchmark for this assessment is Acceptable. The goal is for at least 90% of the students to meet the benchmark.

## Findings:

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

## **Analysis:**

75% of candidates in AY 2016-2017 (n=3) scored Target and (n=1) 25% scored Acceptable with an aggregate mean of 2.75/3.0. In AY 2017-2018 candidates scored an aggregate mean of 2.62/3.0. Of the eleven candidates, 72.72% scored Target and 27.28% scored Acceptable.

During the annual review of the data, which took place after the AY 2016-2017 assessment, program faculty narrowed concerns to (1) A lack of understanding for preparation for the presentation, and (2) a general response to committee prompts from the EDCI 5020 and EDCI 5030 course content.

In AY 2017-2018 actions implemented to improve included the creation/posting of a new and more comprehensive guide for defense preparation. The EDUC 5850 instructor also scheduled individual phone conferences with candidates to answer questions about the process. Because of the actions, committee members noted that responses to prompts involving the content from EDCI 5020 and 5030 were more thoughtful and answers were readily provided. Additionally, candidates seemed more prepared for the defense and more confident in the presentation. Candidates reflected on how learning about curriculum, assessment, and instructional strategies positively influenced their understanding for the action research process. Additionally, candidates were able to connect the action research process in their own studies to positive impact on student learning.

Since the criteria for this assessment are based on state and content standards, faculty believe that this assessment is a valid measure of candidates' mastery of the action research process, including data analysis, designed to measure curriculum knowledge and instructional approaches that directly benefit student learning. Faculty are satisfied that the SLO 5 goal is met.

#### **Decisions:**

In AY 2016-2017 and in AY 2017-2018, 100% of the candidates met the benchmark goal for the *C & I Portfolio Defense Presentation*. Although data and responses from committee members remain positive after recommended changes were made prior to the AY 2017-2018 data cycle, program faculty continue to monitor for possible areas of improvement. Based on the analysis of the results from 2017-2018 three areas of action are to be implemented prior to the fall 2018 iteration of the assessment in EDUC 5850: (1) Reframe the *C & I Portfolio Defense Presentation* with "student learning" as the focus in every facet of the project;

(2) refine criteria language to accurately rate the new focus of the work; and, (3) schedule web-ex sessions to provide ongoing support for candidates throughout the EDUC 5850 semester.

Faculty feel that these changes will refocus the candidates on the end goal (improvement of student learning), and that candidates will be more successful with a web-ex venue for support. These changes take effect in fall of 2018 and will provide data for the next cycle.

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

#### **SLO 1:**

- Revised rubric criteria to ensure that the descriptors measured content knowledge and instructional expertise while expectations were set at a more rigorous level, suitable for graduate studies.
- Required evidence-based rationales to support self-assessments

#### **SLO 2:**

 Implemented the requirement for a narrative describing how the literacy strategies directly support content teaching and strengthen student learning; added peer editing and comments prior to submitting assessment

#### **SLO 3:**

 Changed end-of-program scoring from the EDCI 5140 Clinical Internship in Curriculum and Instruction to occur in the EDUC 5850 Action Research for School Improvement course for scoring in AY 2017-2018.

#### **SLO 4:**

 Revised rubric criteria to strengthen written rationales for the selection of their artifacts that includes how the provided evidence logically supports the reasoning.

#### **SLO 5:**

 Revised and clarified rubric criteria for items dedicated to the areas under review in the presentation from EDCI 5020 Curriculum Development for

School Improvement and EDCI 5030 Instructional Improvement and Assessment.

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

## **SLO 1:**

- Add requirement to critically analyze and write synthesis of research findings for academic reporting
- Revise rubric descriptors and add resources to support (1) critical reading of research findings, (2) inclusion of evidence when synthesizing research findings, (3) correct usage of APA format.

#### **SLO 2:**

- Provide a self-reflection model, based on research-supported change for candidates to follow.
- Develop/adopt and provide a behavioral checklist to guide self-reflection toward researching and selecting appropriate strategies to increase student learning.

#### **SLO 3:**

Revise the language in the areas of the rubric that received significantly large numbers of "not applicable" ratings, including 1) Collaboration:
 Works effectively with professional colleagues, parents, and other adults,
 (2) Responsibility: Prepares well for professional duties, and (3)
 Commitment to Diversity: Demonstrates respect for others of various cultural backgrounds, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, social classes, abilities, political beliefs."

#### **SLO 4:**

 Revise rubric criteria to require a strong reflective correlation between selected portfolio experiences and how those experiences directly support student learning.

#### **SLO 5**:

- Reframe the *C & I Portfolio Defense Presentation* with "student learning" as the focus in every facet of the project.
- Refine criteria language to accurately rate the new focus (student learning) of the work.
- Schedule web-ex sessions to provide ongoing support for candidates throughout the EDUC 5850 semester