Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

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. 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 AY 2017-2018 Assessment 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.

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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 throughout the program.
(2) Field Experiences are monitored by course instructors; passing grades are not submitted without the completion of assigned field work.
(3) Program coordinator and faculty review each key assessment regularly to make assessment and curricular decisions for improvement.
(4) The Program Coordinator and course instructors will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period, and implement program adjustments, when necessary.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)

SLO 1:
Course Map:
EDCI 5110 Reflective and Coherent Classroom Practice

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge	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 critical synthesis of current research through which candidates explore highly effective instructional strategies in their areas of certification. Program faculty designed and implemented the assessment in the fall of 2017; it is scored with a criterion-based rubric. Candidates are asked to identify quality research in their fields, synthesize two or more content specific teaching strategies, and critically examine the findings and practical relevance in writing. They are also expected to make connections from the research to their own teaching practices. In 2018 rubric descriptors were specifically revised in the areas of (1) critical reading of research findings and (2) inclusion of evidence when synthesizing research findings.

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. Since the criteria for this assessment directly correlate to state and content standards, this artifact is a valid measure that indicates candidates' mastery of content-specific pedagogical practice, which, in turn, should translate to increased student content learning. Benchmark for this assessment is Acceptable. The goal is for at least 90% of the candidates to meet the benchmark of 2.5/3.0.

Findings:
- **AY 2017-2018:** 100% of candidates met benchmark.
- **AY 2018-2019:** 82% of candidates met benchmark.

Analysis:

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In AY 2017-2018 100% of candidates (n=11) met the benchmark with 81.25% scoring at Target with an aggregate cohort mean of 2.68/3.0. However, analysis by faculty resulted in the belief that the rubric lacked specificity. As a result of this analysis, the following changes were implemented in 2018-2019 to drive improvement: Rubric language was strengthened to add rigor to the assessment, and faculty were asked to adhere closely to the rubric language when scoring and provide explicit feedback to areas that were considered short of expectations. Based on the analysis of the 2017-2018 results, the target was met.

In AY 2018-2019 only 82% of candidates (n=11) met the benchmark with an aggregate cohort mean of 2.55/3. Eight candidates scored Exemplary, one scored Satisfactory, and two scored in the Developing/Emerging category. While scores dipped, based on changes described, faculty believe that candidates' learning benefited through the more specific feedback from instructors. Resulting data from the use of this assessment in 2018-2019, indicate that the target was met.

Decisions:
Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, 2019-2020 instruction will include the implementation of more direct instruction in the form of an interactive discussion board through which the instructor will provide further explanations for using criteria to distinguish reliable research and how the application of instructional strategies, supported by valid research, can strengthen teaching practices to increase content learning.

SLO 2
Course Map:
EDCI 5120 *Advanced Instructional Theories and Strategies*

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Apply discipline-specific content knowledge in professional practice	C & I MED graduate candidates demonstrate depth and breadth of 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 in their fields of study, candidates create and teach a lesson in which "best practice" literacy strategies are implemented. 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 grade level meeting at their schools and to share with peers in a class discussion forum. This Project Based Learning (PBL) assignment/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 2017; following collection of the AY 2017-2018 data, the rubric language was strengthened to re-focus instructional efforts directly toward course objectives assessed in this case study.
Analyses of the rubric descriptors were conducted using the CAEP Evaluation Framework, which incorporates three rating levels: Exemplary, Satisfactory, or Developing/Emerging ratings.

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

Findings:
- **AY 2017-2018:** 91% of candidates met the benchmark**.**
- **AY 2018-2019:** 100% of candidates met the benchmark.

Analysis: In AY 2017-2018, ten of the candidates (n=11) scored Exemplary or Satisfactory while one scored Developing/Emerging. Four candidates offered reflections and rationales with little to no evidence from texts or course information; however, the quality of the assessed projects was high overall with the ten successful candidates conscientiously attending to the rubric. As a result of the data, faculty clarified rubric language in three categories (synthesizing research findings, selecting research-based literacy strategies, and reflecting more specifically on student outcomes). Based on the analysis of the 2017-2018 results, the target was met.

As a result of these changes, in AY 2018-2019 a small cohort of candidates (n=5) were evaluated on the revised rubric which was based on the elevated expectations instituted in AY 2017-2018. 100% of the candidates met the benchmark with all five falling in the exemplary category. Average scores were 97.43%. Data show an aggregate mean of 3.00/3.00. Resulting data from the use of this assessment in 2018-2019, indicate that the target was met.

Decisions: Based on the analysis on the 2018-2019, in 2019-2020 EDCI 5120 faculty will implement a discussion forum in which candidates will upload their models and offer rationales with evidence from approved texts and/or research studies for their reflective conclusions to their peers for interactive feedback. The further reflection required through this process will emphasize procedures for professional self-reflection and task candidates to provide specific plans for changes in practice. Candidates will be given an opportunity to revise work prior to submission for instructor scoring.

SLO 3
Course Map:
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;

Measure 3.1. (Indirect/Dispositions)
SLO 3 is assessed through the Professional Dispositions and Characteristics Scale in Advanced Programs (PDC) Likert scale. Criteria for this assessment align with state and content standards, avoid bias/ambiguous language, and state items in actionable terms. 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 major professor, who guides the candidate's research

in EDUC 5850 and sits for the C & I Portfolio Defense Presentation at the end of the candidate's program.

The PDC 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. The revised assessment, designed for online programs, was first administered in SY 2017-2018 cycle for C & I candidates. 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. The goal is for at least 90% of the candidates to meet benchmark.

Findings:
- **AY 2017-2018.** 100% of candidates met benchmark in both iterations.
- **AY 2018-2019.** 100% of candidates met benchmark in both iterations.

Analysis:

In AY 2017-2018 candidates were assessed at two points in the program. 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. The second iteration of the assessment was completed on candidates (n=9) who were at the end of their programs during EDUC 5850, also resulting in an aggregate mean of 2.86. During these assessments, faculty scored candidates in the "not applicable" category 23 times.

However, based on the analysis of the 2017-2018 results, the target was met.

As a result of this analysis, the following changes were implemented in 2018-2019 to drive improvement: Rubric descriptors were clarified in the areas involving "not applicable" for online candidates, resulting in ratings added for the new academic year in most categories. Early program evaluations were completed at the end of EDCI 5110 (n=12) for candidates beginning their programs. Mean scores ranged between 2.58 and 3.00 with an aggregate mean of 2.87 compared to 2.86 in AY2017-2018. The second iteration of the assessment for AY2018-19 occurred in EDUC 5850 (n=5). This cohort's aggregate mean was 2.92 compared to 2.86 in AY 2017-18. Prior to scoring in the current cycle, terminology was clarified to faculty evaluators, and indicators were understood within the context of online courses. As a result, the "not applicable" rating was applied only twice in both groups. Resulting data from the use of this assessment in 2018-2019, indicate that the target was met.

Decision:
Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the following change will be made: The program coordinator will ensure that instructors in the two courses in which this assessment is administered are familiar with the intent of the terminology as it relates to online courses. Any new faculty assigned to the courses will be trained in the rubric language.

SLO 4
Course Map:
EDCI 5140 Clinical Internship in Curriculum and Instruction

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Exhibit creative thinking that yields engaging ideas, processes, materials, and experiences appropriate for the discipline	C & I MED graduate candidates demonstrate their leadership 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.

Measure: 4.1. **(Direct – Knowledge, Skills)**
SLO 4 is assessed through the 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 leadership-related opportunities that have occurred during the academic year in which EDCI 5140 is taken. Evidence of the level of participation is required for each entry in the portfolio, including three categories—observer, participant, leader. Experiences suitable for inclusion enhance candidates' understanding for recognizing, analyzing, solving school-wide/district-wide problems, and planning strategically for school and instructional improvement in their disciplines with the end goal of improving student learning. Activities include attendance and involvement in administrative meetings or trainings regarding strategic planning, school vision, community or school problems/issues, school technology acquisition/funding, literacy program administration, and curriculum improvement. In AY 2017-2018 revisions of this assessment were made by faculty to include rationales for candidates to explain their experiences overall and how each activity met the requirements for leadership and participation over observation and how the activity fit into the list of required activity descriptions of leadership involvement at their schools.

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 in their end-of-program practicum course. 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 90% of candidates scoring benchmark.

Findings:
- AY 2017-2018: 100% of candidates met benchmark
- AY 2018-2019: 100% of candidates met benchmark

Analysis:
In 2017-2018 (n=13) candidates achieved an aggregate mean of 2.69/3.0 with 100% scoring Sufficient or Above Sufficient. Based on the analysis of the 2017-2018 results, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of these data, the following changes were implemented in 2018-2019 to drive improvement: Rigor was added to rubric language to ensure that candidates. who scored in the "Above Sufficient" or "Sufficient" categories, provided rich descriptions of their activities, clearly tying the category of leadership described in a reflection of the experience to the candidate's perceived professional growth. Faculty were also asked to carefully consider the language of rubric indicators and score judiciously in all areas.

The 2018-2019 (n=7) candidates had an aggregate mean of 2.71/3.00 with all seven candidates falling within these top two categories. When reviewing individual rubric criteria, the results showed candidates were heavily involved in instructional leadership roles school wide. The close attention to the intent of the assignment as defined by the rubric provided data that suggested a strong development of knowledge and skills in the field of curriculum and instruction leadership during the year in which they completed the final practicum class in their programs. As a result of these changes, in 2018-2019 the target was met.

Decision:
Based on these results, in 2019-2020 the following change will be made: A new assessment area will be added to the assignment/assessment requiring candidates to provide a reflective correlation between each of the portfolio leadership experiences and student learning.

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 5 Course Map:
EDUC 5850 Action Research for School Improvement

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Make responsible decisions and problem-solve, using data to inform actions when appropriate (SPA #5, Student Learning Impact)	C & I MED candidates demonstrate their proficiency in the planning and execution of action research and data 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 research and presentation components are completed in EDUC 5850 when the work is defended to 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 formally submitted to the Graduate School.

Program faculty collaborated to redesign the end-of-program performance-based 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 practice in their disciplines and has positive impact on student content learning.

Instrument validity was established by 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 with a 2.5 mean. The goal is for at least 90% of the students to meet the benchmark.

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Findings:
- AY 2017-2018: 100% of candidates met benchmark
- AY 2018-2019: 100% of candidates met benchmark.

Analysis:
In AY 2017-2018 candidates (n=11) scored an aggregate mean of 2.62/3.0. Of the eleven candidates, 72.72% scored Target and 27.28% scored Acceptable. Based on the analysis of the 2017-2018 results, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of these data, the following changes were implemented in 2018-2019 to drive improvement: The rubric was scored according to the candidate's ability to provide a connection from the research findings and curriculum knowledge to "student learning." Though web-ex sessions were suggested in the last report, faculty found it more effective to meet individually with each student for a 30 to 45-minute phone conference. Each conference agenda included a review of the candidate's research, orientation to the oral assessment format, and time for answering the candidate's questions.

Because of the personalized conferences and focus on student learning, faculty agree that the AY 2018-2019 cohort members responded with more depth and reflection during their oral presentations. Candidates also seemed more prepared for the defense of their research and more confident in the presentation. Throughout the process, candidates reflected on how learning about curriculum, assessment, and instructional strategies positively influenced their understanding for the action research process. More importantly, candidates were able to connect the research process in their own studies to data-supported positive impact on their students' content learning. As a result, in AY2018-19 candidates (n=7) scored an aggregate mean of 2.56/3.0. Of the seven candidates, 57% scored Target and 43% scored Acceptable. Resulting data from the use of this assessment in 2018-2019, indicate that the target was met.

Decisions: Based on these results, in 2019-2020 the following change will be made: Candidates will be required to upload the summarized PowerPoint presentation of their work for peer review in an interactive discussion forum. The feedback will require candidates to query each other for the tie of research findings and curriculum studies to their students' learning. This peer review will occur a week prior to the assessment presentation, allowing candidates time to revise presentations for faculty committee scoring.

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvements Based on Analysis of Results in AY 2017-2018:

SLO 1: Revised language on the rubric and more conscientious scoring most candidates met and exceeded the requirement for more accurate and meaningful synthesis of relevant research trends, meant to inform content area instructional practice. Because of higher expectations set in 2018-2019, the target fell short of the benchmark when considering all candidate responses, and target was not met.

SLO 2: Rubric language descriptors were clarified, and rigor was added to the descriptors requiring an element of specificity to the assessment while emphasizing the need for evidence to support rationales. As a result of these changes, candidates were better informed and in 2018-2019 the target was met.

SLO 3: Rubric descriptors were clarified in the areas involving "not applicable" for online candidates, resulting in ratings added for the new academic year in most categories. Prior

to scoring for the 2018-2019 cycle, terminology was clarified to faculty evaluators, and indicators were better understood within the context of online courses. As a result, the "not applicable" rating was applied only twice in both groups. As a result of this change, in 2018-2019 the target was met.

SLO 4: Rationales explaining experiences overall and how each activity met the requirements for leadership activity experiences were added to the rubric before AY 2018-2019 data were collected. Strict attention to rubric descriptors was requested of instructors. The close attention to the intent of the assignment as defined by the rubric provided data that suggested a strong understanding by candidates for the application of their own leadership skills in the field of curriculum and instruction. As a result of these changes, in 2018-2019 the target was met.

SLO 5: The rubric was scored based on the candidate's ability to provide a connection from the research findings and curriculum knowledge to "student learning." Personalized conferences were added to help candidates prepare for their oral presentations. Candidates were more confident and prepared for their oral assessment; they were also able to directly connect the research process in their own studies to data-supported positive impact on their students' content learning. As a result of these changes, in 2018-2019 the target was met.

Plan of Action Moving Forward: Based on Analysis of Results in AY 2018-2019:

SLO 1: Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the following change will be made to ensure target is met: Faculty will create an interactive discussion board to ensure candidates understand the specific criteria for identifying and rating research studies and trends in their content areas.

SLO 2: Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the following changes will be made: 1) Faculty will implement a discussion forum in which candidates will upload their models and offer rationales with evidence from approved texts and/or research studies that specifically support their reflective conclusions. 2) Candidates will offer and receive interactive feedback from peers. 3) Candidates will be encouraged to revise their work prior to final upload for instructor scoring.

SLO 3: Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the following change will be made: The program coordinator will ensure that instructors in the two courses in which this assessment is administered are familiar with the intent of the terminology as it relates to online courses, and any new faculty assigned to the courses will be trained in the rubric language.

SLO 4: Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the following change will be made: A new assessment area will be added to the assignment, requiring candidates to provide a strong, reflective correlation between each of the portfolio leadership experiences and how their experiences directly support student learning in their placements.

SLO 5: Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the following change will be made: Candidates will be required to upload the summarized PowerPoint presentation of their work for peer review in an interactive discussion forum. The feedback will require candidates to query in all areas of the rubric, but particularly as to how the research findings and curriculum studies relate to student learning. This peer review will occur a week prior to the assessment presentation, allowing candidates time to revise presentations before presenting for faculty committee scoring.