

Assessment Cycle Report

Academic Year 2017 – 2018

Program: [Adult Learning and Development \(545\)](#)

College: Education and Human Development

Prepared by: Bill Morrison

Date: 6/7/18

Approved by: Kimberly McAlister

Date: 6/14/18

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.

Assessment Cycle Report

Academic Year 2017 – 2018

Program Mission Statement: The mission of the Adult Learning and Development program at Northwestern State University is to prepare adult educator-leaders for careers in the many different venues where adults learn, including corporate training centers, online education, community colleges, the workforce, and adult education programs. The online program emphasizes practice-based learning and research and provides graduate and undergraduate learning experiences to adult learning practitioners who come from, or wish to pursue, advanced practice and leadership roles in the variety of contexts in which adult learning occurs.

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

- (1) Data from assessments provide results on candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions as appropriate for professional education programs.
- (2) In June of each year, program faculty and stakeholders review data to make data-driven, curricular decisions.

To determine specific areas of weakness in student performance against the student-learning outcome, an item analysis of each assessment was conducted, and the following descriptive statistics for each assessment were calculated: cumulative mean of the overall project score, standard deviation of the scores based on percentage score, the percentage of student above and below the benchmark score, and the mean deviation from benchmark for students not achieving the benchmark.

The student projects and papers used in this assessment fall into three categories: research papers, presentations, and reflections. Each of these assessment instrument types was developed from the following resources and best practices:

- Research paper assessments and rubrics or scoring guides were developed using recommendations from the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th Edition and Sarah Efron and Ruth Ravid's work in *Action Research in Education*.
- Presentation assessments and scoring guides were developed from Robert Garmston and Bruce Wellman's work in *How to Make Presentations that Teach and Transform*.
- Reflection assessments and scoring guides were developed based on the work of David Boud on reflective practice and self-assessment.

Course content was developed using input from program stakeholders, community, industry, and from content-area experts. To assessment ensure content validity and

Assessment Cycle Report

Academic Year 2017 – 2018

alignment with course learning objectives as provided in the syllabus, specific course objectives are explicitly aligned with each course module and assessment.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 1:

| Departmental Student Learning Goal | Program Student Learning Outcome |
|--|---|
| Demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge (SPA #1) | Demonstrate an understanding of the formal and informal organizational systems of adult learning. |

Measure 1.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills)

SLO 1 is assessed through a research paper in EDAL 5000. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the benchmark performance is a cumulative mean score of 80%.

Finding:

| 2016-17 Administration | 2017-18 Administration |
|---|--|
| Cumulative Mean: 71.5% Standard Deviation: 13% Above/Equal Benchmark: 0% Below: 100% | Cumulative Mean: 77.3% Standard Deviation: 5.9% Above/Equal Benchmark: 33% Below: 67% |

Analysis: As with the 2016-17 administration, analysis of the 2017-18 assessment results shows that most students scored below benchmark with an average deviation from benchmark of -2.7%. This is an improvement from the 2016-17 average deviation from benchmark of -7.76%. The 2017-18 cumulative mean increased by 5.8% compared to 2016-17, showing overall improvement. Item analysis from the rubric for those students below benchmark indicated that writing errors, citation of sources, and APA formatting were the areas that resulted in a slightly greater percentage of lost points (average 27.8% loss) versus the content of the paper (average 25.4% loss). In response to the errors noted in 2016-17, all course content for 2017-18 was augmented with the addition of library research and additional APA guidance. Also, an increased emphasis on improving writing skills in the early weeks of the semester for indicated students was implemented in this course. As a result, in the 2017-18 administration, the cumulative mean increased by 5.8% from the 2016-17 administration of the assessment, and the percentage of students who achieved benchmark or above increased from 0% to 33%. Scores from the 2017-18 administration were more

Assessment Cycle Report

Academic Year 2017 – 2018

consistent that the 2016-17 administration with a 5.9% standard deviation percentage of points in 2017-18 versus 13% in 2016-17.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: In order to continue the increase in student performance, an emphasis on writing skills will be included in the course, and an increased emphasis on APA will be included in future course offerings. The 2018-19 course content will be augmented with additional resources on APA and writing.

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 2:

| Departmental Student Learning Goal | Program Student Learning Outcome |
|---|--|
| Apply discipline-specific content knowledge in professional practice (SPA #2) | Apply principals of development through adulthood to the adult learning process, learning how to learn, and self-directed learning |

Measure: 2.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills)

SLO 2 is assessed through an SDL contract and presentation in EDAL 5010. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the benchmark performance is a cumulative mean score of 80%.

Finding:

| 2016-17 Administration | 2017-18 Administration |
|---|--|
| <i>EDAL 5010 Self-Directed Learning Presentation</i> Cumulative Mean: 86.8% SdtDv: 13.5% Above/Equal Benchmark: 64% Below: 36% | <i>EDAL 5010 Self-Directed Learning Presentation</i> Cumulative Mean: 94.3% SdtDv: 3.2% Above/Equal Benchmark: 100% Below: 0% |
| <i>EDAL 5010 Three Generations Study Research Paper</i> Cumulative Mean: 80.1% SdtDv: 17.7% Above/Equal Benchmark: 71% Below: 29% | <i>EDAL 5010 Three Generations Study Research Paper</i> Cumulative Mean: 89.9% SdtDv: 8.8% Above/Equal Benchmark: 81.8% Below: 18.2% |

Analysis:

EDAL 5010 Self-Directed Learning Presentation: Analysis of the 2017-18 assessment results indicates that all students (n=11) scored above benchmark. This is an increase

Assessment Cycle Report

Academic Year 2017 – 2018

of 36% from the 2016-17 administration. Compared to the 2016-17 administration, the cumulative mean of scores increased from 86.8% to 94.3% in 2017-18, which is an increase of 7.5%. Item analysis from 2016-17 indicated that students failed to include required components in their presentation. Instructor feedback from the 2017-18 administration noted that most students included the required elements, but lost points because they did not follow assignment guidelines a regarding construction of the PowerPoint.

EDAL 5010 Three Generations Study Research Paper: In 2016-17, a slight majority of students scored below benchmark with an average deviation from benchmark of (-2.18%). An analysis of the results from 2017-18 shows that a majority of student scored above benchmark. Only 18% (n=2) of students scored below benchmark, and the average deviation from benchmark was only 3.6%. The 2017-18 assessment results also show that the average deviation below benchmark was small and the standard deviation in scores decreased from the 2016-17 administration. In the 2017-18 administration, most students exceeded the benchmark score on the final research paper, which is an increase in the cumulative mean of 9.8% when compared to the cumulative mean in 2016-17. There was a 10.8% increase in the number of students exceeding benchmark in 2017-18. The standard deviation between the two administrations decreased showing that scores also became more consistent in 2017-18. Rubric item analysis indicated that students addressed assignment guidelines more closely in 2017-18. In 2016-17, item analysis of the results shows that citing of sources and following assignment content guidelines were the major errors. In 2017-18, citing sources and references improved by identifying material that needs to be cited, but the correct APA format of citations remains a weakness.

In response to these errors, all 2017-18 course content was augmented with the addition of a course introductory video that emphasized following assignment guidelines. Analysis of the data from the 2017-18 administration of both assessments, student performance increased as evidenced by the benchmark score being met and increases in both cumulative mean and consistency from 2016-17 to 2017-18.

The overall recommendation from the 2016-17 administration was to emphasize content, research/citation skills, and following assignment guidelines. In the 2017-18 administration of the *Self-Directed Learning Presentation*, APA and citing sources was not an issue, but following assignment guidelines remains the greatest weakness, so an increased emphasis on following assignment guidelines will be included in the 2018-19 course.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: In the 2017-18 *Three Generations Study Research Paper*, deciding on the material that requires citation improved, but the correct APA form of citing sources remained a weakness as was following assignment guidelines, therefore to continuously improve an increased emphasis will be placed on

Assessment Cycle Report

Academic Year 2017 – 2018

these areas in 2018-19.

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 3:

| Departmental Student Learning Goal | Program Student Learning Outcome |
|--|--|
| Model professional behaviors and characteristics | Demonstrate/model knowledge of how adults learn in small group settings with emphasis on personal, interpersonal, and leadership skills. |

Measure: 3.1. (Direct – Skills, Dispositions)

SLO 3 is assessed through a group project, presentation, and reflection in EDAL 5110. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the benchmark performance is a cumulative mean score of 80%.

Finding:

| 2016-17 Administration | 2017-18 Administration |
|--|---|
| <i>EDAL 5110 Collaborative Project Presentation Guidelines</i> <i>EDAL 5110 Final Report -Teamwork and Process</i> Cumulative Mean: 97.75% Standard Deviation: 5% Above/Equal Benchmark: 100% Below: 0% | <i>EDAL 5110 Collaborative Project Presentation Guidelines</i> <i>EDAL 5110 Final Report -Teamwork and Process</i> Cumulative Mean: 97.6% Standard Deviation: 0% Above/Equal Benchmark: 100% Below: 0% |

Analysis: All students exceeded the benchmark score in the 2016-17 administration of the assessment. The increased emphasis on writing skills and correct APA formatting and citations resulted in all students exceeding the benchmark score in the second administration in 2016-17. Though scores were high with a mean of 97.87%, item analysis from the rubric indicated that writing errors and APA formatting errors were still evident. In response to the errors evident in 2016-17 assessment, all course content was augmented with the addition of a research resources and additional APA guidance in the course. Additionally, an increased emphasis was placed on writing skills in the early weeks of the semester for indicated students. However, the small class size (n=4) in 2017-18 makes it difficult to draw conclusions from an analysis of the data, but the cumulative mean was approximately the same (<.15%) and all students scored above benchmark.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: To continuously improve student writing skills, an increased emphasis will be placed on the fundamentals of writing skill in the early weeks of the semester for indicated students will continue to be emphasized in

Assessment Cycle Report

Academic Year 2017 – 2018

2018-2019.

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 4:

| Departmental Student Learning Goal | Program Student Learning Outcome |
|--|---|
| Exhibit creative thinking that yields engaging ideas, processes, materials, and experiences appropriate for the discipline (SPA #3) | Design, develop, conduct, and assess adult learning experiences applying relevant research-based practice and theory. |

Measure: 4.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills)

SLO 4 is assessed through a final learning program project in EDAL 5030. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the benchmark performance is a cumulative mean score of 80%.

Finding:

| 2016-17 Administration | 2017-18 Administration |
|---|---|
| <i>EDAL 5030 – Final Project: Learning Program Instructor/Facilitator Guide</i> Cumulative Mean: 78.8% StdDv: 13% Above/Equal Benchmark: 60% Below: 40% | <i>EDAL 5030 – Final Project: Learning Program Instructor/Facilitator Guide</i> Cumulative Mean: 86.3% StdDv: 19% Above/Equal Benchmark: 78% Below: 22% |

Analysis: Analysis of the 2017-18 administration of the assessment shows an increase in percent standard deviation of 6%. This is due to one student failing to complete several sections of the paper, which resulted in a very low score of 42% on the assessment. Item analysis of grading of the 2016-17 assessment indicated that the majority of lost points were due to student omitting various required sections of the final project. This was also the primary error in the 2017-18 administration. In response to the results of the 2016-17 data analysis, all course content for 2017-18 was augmented with a course introductory video that emphasized following assignment guidelines. While analysis of the 2017-18 administration showed that following assignment guidelines remained the primary error, the cumulative mean and percentage of students meeting benchmark increased with the 2017-18 assessment. In the 2017-18 administration of the assessment, the mean score increased by 7.5% to 86.3%, which is above benchmark. Also, analysis of the 2017-18 data shows the percentage of students exceeding benchmark increased by 18% (from 60% to 78%).

Assessment Cycle Report

Academic Year 2017 – 2018

Action - Decision or Recommendation: For the 2019 iteration of the course, continued emphasis on following assignment guidelines will be included. To provide additional guidance on project requirements and to improve student performance on these areas of the assessment, explicit examples of the project with examples of where most student errors occur will be added to the 2019 course.

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 5:

| Departmental Student Learning Goal | Program Student Learning Outcome |
|---|--|
| Make responsible decisions and problem-solve, using data to inform actions when appropriate (SPA #5) | Use research, evidence, and best practices guidelines to critically and creatively use evidence to make educational decisions. |

Measure: 5.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills)

SLO 5 is assessed through a final need-based grant in EDAL 5130, and a final project in EDAL 6000. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the benchmark performance is a cumulative mean score of 80%.

Finding:

| 2016-17 Administration | 2017-18 Administration |
|--|--|
| <i>EDAL 5130 Final Grant Project</i> Cumulative Mean: 79% StdDv: 8% Above/Equal Benchmark: 60% Below: 40% | <i>EDAL 5130 Final Grant Project</i> Cumulative Mean: 80% StdDv: 24.6% Above/Equal Benchmark: 66.7% Below: 33.7% |
| <i>EDAL 6000 Final Project: Action Research Proposal</i> Cumulative Mean: 57% StdDv: 17% Above/Equal Benchmark: 11% Below: 89% | <i>EDAL 6000 Final Project: Action Research Proposal</i> Cumulative Mean: 80% StdDv: 13% Above/Equal Benchmark: 50% Below: 50% |

Analysis:

EDAL 5130 Final Grant Project: Very low student enrollment in the classes (n=7) in 2017-18 makes it difficult to draw valid conclusions from the data. There was an increase of 1% in the cumulative mean, which is at benchmark, and an increase in score variance that is likely due to the very low enrolment. Item analysis from 2016-17

Assessment Cycle Report

Academic Year 2017 – 2018

indicated the areas in greatest need of improvement were writing goals and objectives and budgeting, while the analysis of the 2017-18 data showed that the areas of greatest need were defining the problem, describing the project, and writing an effective evaluation plan.

Though low enrollment makes it difficult to draw valid conclusions, over the two administrations of the assessment, describing the problem, instructional goals, objectives, and assessment strategies were areas of weakness in final student projects. In the 2017-18 assessment, writing goals and objectives improved, likely because of the course content being augmented with additional scaffolding activities and resources on writing goals and objectives.

EDAL 6000 Action Research Proposal: 2016 was the first offering of this class and administration of this assessment. Class enrollment was nine students and the cumulative mean was 57%, which is 23% below benchmark. Only one student in 2016-17 exceeded benchmark, with other student scores varying widely below benchmark. Rubric analysis indicates that students failed to follow assignment guidelines in all areas of the research proposal, with the literature review section having the lowest average score. Analysis of data for the 2017-18 (n=4) assessment indicates that the cumulative mean increased to 80%. The benchmark score was exceeded by two students and was not met by the remaining two students with an average deviation from the benchmark of -10%. Analysis of the rubric data shows that the literature review section remains the area with the lowest average score.

Though an increased emphasis on closely following assignment guidelines and including required components in the proposal was included in the 2017-18 offering of the course, the literature review section remains a weakness in the final project.

Action - Decision or Recommendation:

EDAL 5130 Final Grant Project: In response to the weaknesses in describing an instructional problem and writing effective evaluation plans, additional course content will be added in these two areas for the 2018 - 2019 offering of the course.

EDAL 6000 Final Project: Action Research Proposal: To improve student performance in this area, a literature review template and exemplars will be added to the next offering of the course in 2018-2019.

Assessment Cycle Report

Academic Year 2017 – 2018

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvements Based on Analysis of Assessment Data

- For SLO#1 and SLO#4, EDAL 5000 and EDAL 5030 course content was augmented with the additional APA guidance and an emphasis on writing skills. As a result of implementing these changes, our results improved in 2017-18 with the mean score for the assessment increasing by 5.8% and 33% more students achieving the benchmark score in EDAL 5000. In EDAL 5030, the benchmark was achieved with a cumulative mean of 86.3% on the assessment.
- In EDAL 5010 an introductory video was added to provide emphasis on following assignment guidelines and using correct APA formatting. These emphases were effective in improving results for 2017-18 as evidenced by all students achieving benchmark on the *Self-Directed Learning* project and 81.8% achieving benchmark on the final *Three Generations Study Research Paper*, an increase of 36% and 10.8% respectively.
- EDAL 5110 course content was augmented with the addition of research resources and additional APA guidance. To improve student writing skills, an increased emphasis on improving writing skills in the early weeks of the semester was also implemented in this course and will continue to be emphasized in future offerings of the course. The effectiveness of these changes was evidenced by 100% of students achieving the benchmark score in 2017-18, an increase of 40% from the previous administration.
- Very low student enrollment in EDAL 5130 (n=3) and EDAL 6000 (n=4) makes it difficult to draw valid conclusions from the assessment evidence from 2017-18. EDAL 5130 course content was augmented with additional resources and examples of writing instructional goals, objectives, and evaluation plans. In EDAL 6000 emphasis on including required research proposal elements was added along with scaffolding activities and examples for building the research proposal. In both classes, 100% of students achieved the benchmark score with a cumulative mean of 80%.

Plan of Action for Moving Forward

- For SLO#1, SLO #2, and SLO#3, an emphasis on writing skills and APA was added for the 2017-18 course offerings. Since these areas of weakness remain, additional resources from our course *EDAL 5500, Professional Writing*, will be added to these courses to help improve student writing skills and use of APA formatting.

Assessment Cycle Report

Academic Year 2017 – 2018

- Evidence from the assessment data for SLO#2 and SLO#4 showed that there is a common student performance weakness of not following assignment guidelines. Though course content was augmented with videos emphasizing the importance of following assignment guidelines in 2017-18, additional emphasis on following guidelines and examples of where students commonly make errors

Assessment Cycle Report

Academic Year 2017 – 2018

will be added to these courses for their next offering.

- To improve student performance in defining an instructional problem/need and in writing a literature review under SLO#5, a literature review template and exemplars of problem/need statements and literature reviews will be added to the next offering of the course.