

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

Adult Learning and Development (545)

College: 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.

School of Education 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.

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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 ensure assessment content validity and alignment with course learning objectives as provided in the syllabus, specific course

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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:

2017-18 Administration	2018-19 Administration
Cumulative Mean: 77.3% Standard Deviation: 5.9% Above/Equal Benchmark: 33% Below: 67%	Cumulative Mean: 84.2% Standard Deviation: 11.6% Above/Equal Benchmark: 56% Below: 67%

Analysis. In the 2018-19 administration, the cumulative mean increased by 5.7% from the 2017-18 administration of the assessment, and the percentage of students who achieved benchmark or above increased from 33% to 56%. While scores from the 2018-19 administration were less consistent than the 2017-18 administration with an 11.6% standard deviation versus 13% in 2017-18, both the overall mean score and the percentage of students who scored above benchmark increased. In contrast to the 2017-18 administration where most students scored below benchmark, analysis of the 2018-19 assessment results showed that most students (56%) scored above benchmark with an average deviation from benchmark of +4.2%. This is an improvement from the 2017-18 average deviation from benchmark of -2.7%. The 2018-19 cumulative mean increased by 5.7% compared to 2017-18, indicating overall improvement. Instructor comments for those students below benchmark indicated that writing, errors, grammar errors, and APA style were the areas of greatest weakness.

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Decision, action or recommendation. In the 2018-19 administration of the assessment, writing errors, grammar errors, and errors with APA style were areas of lower student performance, so an increased emphasis on writing skills will be included in the course, and an increased emphasis on APA will be included in future course offerings. The 2019-20 course content will be augmented with additional resources on APA and writing with the addition of an APA Webex workshop to be offered in fall of 2019.

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 a Self-Directed Learning Presentation and a Three Generations Study Research Paper in EDAL 5010. The assessments are evaluated using a rubric and a scoring guide for the presentation, and the benchmark performance for both is a cumulative mean score of 80%.

Finding:

2017-18 Administration	2018-19 Administration
<i>EDAL 5010 Self-Directed Learning Presentation</i> Cumulative Mean: 94.3% SdtDv: 3.2% Above/Equal Benchmark: 100% Below: 0%	<i>EDAL 5010 Self-Directed Learning Presentation</i> Cumulative Mean: 94.6% SdtDv: 5.2% Above/Equal Benchmark: 100% Below: 0%
<i>EDAL 5010 Three Generations Study Research Paper</i> Cumulative Mean: 89.9% SdtDv: 8.8% Above/Equal Benchmark: 81.8% Below: 18.2%	<i>EDAL 5010 Three Generations Study Research Paper</i> Cumulative Mean: 88.7% SdtDv: 8.0% Above/Equal Benchmark: 75% Below: 25%

Analysis. *EDAL 5010 Self-Directed Learning Presentation:* Analysis of the 2018-19 assessment results indicates that all students (n=12) scored above benchmark. This was equal to the 2017-18 administration. Compared to the 2017-18 administration, the cumulative mean of scores increased from 94.3% to 94.6% in 2018-19, which is an increase of 0.3%. Item analysis from 2018-19 indicated that students continued to

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fail to include required components in their live presentation as they did in 2017-18. Instructor feedback from the 2018-19 administration also noted that most students included the required components in their PowerPoint slide deck, but lost points because they did not follow all assignment guidelines regarding construction of the PowerPoint slides.

EDAL 5010 Three Generations Study Research Paper: In 2018-19, 75% of students scored above benchmark, which is down from 82% in 2017-18. While the percentage of students below benchmark increased in 2018-19 from the 2017-18 administration, the number of students below benchmark increased by only one student, and the average deviation from benchmark for these students was only -1.6%, which is lower than the average deviation of -3.6% in 2017-18. The 2018-19 assessment results also show that the standard deviation in scores decreased slightly from the 2017-18 administration.

Analysis of student scores indicated that students generally addressed assignment guidelines with an overall class average of 88.7%, which was a slight 1.2% drop from the 2017-18 administration. Item analysis of the results 2018-19 results from each rubric category shows that correctly applying APA style was the lowest scoring area. In 2017-18, correct APA format of citations and references was a weakness and remains so in 2018-19.

In 2017-18 course content was augmented with the addition of a course introductory video that emphasized following assignment guidelines and APA. Analysis of the data from the 2018-19 administration of both assessments showed that student performance remained relatively steady from the 2017-18 to the 2018-19 administrations.

Decision, action or recommendation. In the 2018-19 administration of the *Self-Directed Learning Presentation*, APA and citing sources was not a consistent issue, but following assignment guidelines remains the greatest weakness, so an increased emphasis on following assignment guidelines will be included in the 2019-20 course offering.

In the 2018-19 *Three Generations Study Research Paper*, correct APA form of citing sources remained a weakness. Increased emphasis will be placed on following APA guidelines in 2019-20 by offering an APA Webex to all program graduate students in fall of 2019.

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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 scoring guide for the presentation and instructor comments for the final report. The benchmark performance is a cumulative mean score of 80%.

Finding:

2017-18 Administration	2018-19 Administration
<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%	<i>EDAL 5110 Collaborative Project Presentation Guidelines</i> <i>EDAL 5110 Final Report -Teamwork and Process</i> Cumulative Mean: 93.8% Standard Deviation: 4.7% Above/Equal Benchmark: 100% Below: 0%

Analysis. As with the 2017-18 administration, all students exceeded the benchmark score in the 2018-19 administration of the assessment. The cumulative mean of scores was 93.7%, which was down by 3.8% from 2017-18. Item analysis from the scoring guide and instructor comments indicated that following assignment guidelines and APA formatting errors were evident as they were in the 2017-18 administration. In response to the student errors shown in the 2017-18 assessment, all 2018-19 course content was augmented with the addition of a research resources and additional APA guidance. Additionally, an increased emphasis was placed on writing skills in the early weeks of the semester. However, the small class size (n=5) and very small number of assignment groups (n=2) in 2018-19 make it difficult to draw conclusions from an analysis of the data.

Decision, action or recommendation. To improve student writing skills, an increased emphasis will be placed on the fundamentals of writing skills and APA in the early weeks of the 2019-20 class. Additional APA support for students will be emphasized in 2019-20 with the addition of an APA Webex offering in the fall

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of 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:

2017-18 Administration	2018-19 Administration
<i>EDAL 5030 – Final Project: Learning Program Instructor/Facilitator Guide</i> Cumulative Mean: 86.3% StdDv: 19% Above/Equal Benchmark: 78% Below: 22%	<i>EDAL 5030 Final Project: Learning Program Instructor/Facilitator Guide</i> Cumulative Mean: 91.1% Standard Deviation: 13% Above/Equal Benchmark: 82% Below: 18%

Analysis. Analysis of the 2018-19 administration of the assessment showed a decrease in percent standard deviation of 6%. Item analysis of grading of the previous year 2017-18 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 2018-19 administration. In response to the results of the 2017-18 data analysis, all course content for 2018-19 was augmented with course module notations that emphasized following assignment guidelines.

While analysis of the 2018-19 administration showed that meeting the criteria for the Instructional Plan was the primary error, the cumulative mean and percentage of students meeting benchmark increased with the 2018-19 assessment. In the 2018-19 administration of the assessment, the mean score increased by 5 percentage points from 86.3% to 91.1%, which is not only above benchmark but also represents the third consecutive annual increase in administration (78.8% in 2016-17, 86.3% in 2017-18, 91.1% in 2018-19). Also, analysis of the 2018-19 data shows the percentage of students exceeding benchmark increased by 4 percentage points,

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which also represents the third consecutive annual increase in administration (60% in 2016-17, 78% in 2017-18, 82% in 2018-19).

Decision, action or recommendation. For the 2019-20 iteration of the course, emphasis on following assignment guidelines for the instructional plan section of the assignment will be included. To provide additional guidance on project requirements and to improve student performance on this area of the assessment, explicit exemplars of the project with examples of where most student errors occur will be added to the 2019-20 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 assessments are evaluated using a rubric, and the benchmark performance is a cumulative mean score of 80%.

Finding:

2017-18 Administration	2018-19 Administration
<i>EDAL 5130 Final Grant Project</i> Cumulative Mean: 80% StdDv: 24.6% Above/Equal Benchmark: 66.7% Below: 33.7%	<i>EDAL 5130 Final Grant Project</i> Cumulative Mean: 82% StdDv: 10.9.% Above/Equal Benchmark: 67% Below: 33%
<i>EDAL 6000 Final Project: Action Research Proposal</i> Cumulative Mean: 80% StdDv: 13% Above/Equal Benchmark: 50% Below: 50%%	<i>EDAL 6000 Final Project: Action Research Proposal</i> Cumulative Mean: 94.7% StdDv: 4.2% Above/Equal Benchmark: 100% Below: 0%

Analysis. *EDAL 5130 Final Grant Project.* Very low student enrollment in the classes (n=3) in 2018-19 makes it difficult to draw valid conclusions from the data. There was an increase of 2% in the cumulative mean, which is 2 points above benchmark, and a

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decrease in score variance. Due to the low enrollment in EDAL 5130, it is difficult to draw conclusions from the changes in the cumulative mean and reduction in standard deviation. Item analysis of the 2018-19 rubric data indicated the area in greatest need of improvement was writing the project description.

For the 2018-19 course offering the course content was augmented with additional scaffolding activities and resources on writing goals and objectives and that area was no longer a weakness.

EDAL 6000 Action Research Proposal: Analysis of data for the 2018-19 (n=3) assessment indicates that the cumulative mean increased from 80% in 2017-18 to 94.7% in 2018-19. The benchmark score was exceeded by all students. Though it is difficult to draw valid conclusions due to low class enrollment, analysis of the rubric data shows that the following APA guidelines is the area where students lost the most points.

Though an increased emphasis on closely following assignment guidelines and APA style was included in the 2017-18 offering of the course, following APA guidelines remains a minor weakness in the final project in the 2018-19 course offering.

Decision, action or recommendation. *EDAL 5130 Final Grant Project:* In response to the weaknesses writing a complete project description, grant project description exemplars will be added for the 2019 - 2020 offering of the course.

EDAL 6000 Final Project: Action Research Proposal: To further support following APA guidelines, an APA workshop will be offered to all students in the fall of 2019 and the Workshop will be recorded for future access.

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

- For SLO #1 and SLO #4 in 2017-18, the content of EDAL 5000 and EDAL 5030 was augmented with additional APA guidance and an emphasis on writing skills. As a result of implementing these changes, student assessment scores improved in 2018-19 with the mean score for the assessments 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.
- For SLO #2, an increased emphasis on following assignment guidelines was included in the 2018-19 EDAL 5010 course. These measures were effective in that the cumulative mean increased slightly ($\mu = +0.4\%$) to 94.6% In the previous, 2017-18 *Three Generations Study Research Paper*, the correct

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APA form of citing sources was a weakness and an increased emphasis on APA was included in 2018-19. The results of the 2018-19 assessment show that student performance remained relatively steady with a cumulative mean drop of 1.2%.

- For SLO #3, an increased emphasis on improving writing skills in the early weeks of the semester was implemented in the EDAL 5110 course in 2018-19. The effectiveness of these changes was evidenced by 100% of students achieving the benchmark score in 2018-19, with student performance remaining steady. However, the cumulative mean, though still high at 93.8%, dropped slightly by 2.8% from the 2017-18 administration.
- For SLO #5, very low student enrollment in EDAL 5130 (n=3) and EDAL 6000 (n=3) makes it difficult to draw valid conclusions from the assessment evidence from 2018-19. For 2018-19, EDAL 5130 course content was augmented with additional resources and examples of writing instructional goals, objectives, and evaluation plans. In EDAL 6000, emphasis on the literature review was added for 2018-19, along with a literature review template. In EDAL 5130, the 2018-19 cumulative mean increased slightly by 2%, and in EDAL 6000, the cumulative mean increased by 14.7%, which indicates that the emphasis on the literature review was effective in improving student performance. In the 2018-19 assessments, the same percentage of students in EDAL 5130 (67%) achieved benchmark as did the previous year, and in EDAL 6000, 100% of students achieved the benchmark score. In 2018-19 students achieved a weighted cumulative mean in both classes of 88.5%.

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 2018-19 offering. Since the 2018-19 assessment data show that these areas of weakness remained for 2018-19, an APA WebEx workshop will be offered in 2019-20 to all program students in the fall of 2019.
- Evidence from the 2018-19 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 will be added to these courses for their 2019-20 offering.
- Evidence from the 2018-19 assessment data for SLO #4 indicated that students had difficulty with meeting the assignment criteria for the

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instructional plan portion of the assignment. To provide additional guidance on project requirements and to improve student performance on this area of the assessment, explicit exemplars of the project with examples of where most student errors occur will be added to the 2019-20 course.

- Evidence from the 2018-19 assessment data for SLO #5 indicated that students had difficulty in EDAL 5130 with writing a complete grant project description. For EDAL 5130, grant exemplars will be provided illustrating complete project descriptions. In EDAL 6000, students performed poorly properly using APA style and these students will be offered an APA WebEx workshop in the fall of 2019.