

## Assessment Cycle 2018 – 2019

### M.Ed. Early Childhood Education (547)

**College: Education**

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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 Department of Teaching, Leadership, and Counseling Mission 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 mission of the Northwestern State University graduate Early Childhood Education Program is to help certified educators increase their repertoire of research-based teaching strategies while strengthening their knowledge, skills, and dispositions relating to Early Childhood Education. The advanced program builds on practicing educators' abilities to meet young children's diverse needs in a variety of settings while documenting and assessing their growth over time in relation to state standards. Upon completion of the program, which meets the National Association for the Education of Young Children's accreditation standards, candidates are equipped to meet the many demands of the teaching profession and to act as

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school leaders.

**Methodology:** The assessment process for the M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education is as follows:

- Data from assessment tools are collected and returned to the program coordinator;
- The program coordinator analyzes the data to determine student learning and whether students have met measurable outcomes;
- Results are shared with program faculty; and
- The program coordinator works with program faculty analyze results; based on this analysis, faculty collaborate to make any necessary changes to course instruction and/or assessments for program improvement purposes.

### Student Learning Outcomes.

#### SLO 1

**Course Map:** EDUC 5850 *Action Research for School Improvement*.

- Candidates complete a portfolio defense in their last year of coursework while enrolled in EDUC 5850 *Action Research for School Improvement*. They must successfully defend their portfolios in order to graduate.

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge (SPA #1)	Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of Developmentally Appropriate Practices relating to early childhood curriculum and assessment.

#### Measure 1.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions)

SLO 1 is assessed through a portfolio defense. Candidates complete this defense in their last year of coursework while enrolled in EDUC 5850 *Action Research for School Improvement*. Program faculty collaborated to design the assessment along with a rubric to evaluate candidates' work. Candidates' knowledge and skills in relation to state standards and SPA standards are made visible through the compilation of course artifacts they create along with written and oral reflections. Through multiple iterations of the assessment and evaluation process, program faculty have collaborated to edit and refine the assessment and rubric to ensure that the portfolio defense assesses what we intend for it to assess and that the rubric continues to be a valid, reliable instrument. The target goal for this assessment is for at least 80% of candidates to score at least "Meets Expectations" on the rubric.

#### Finding.

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

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- **AY 2018-2019:** 100 % of candidates met target

### Analysis.

In AY 2017-2018, 100% of candidates met target and scored “Target” on the rubric (n = 4), as faculty do not let candidates schedule portfolio defenses until candidates demonstrate readiness.

Again, in AY 2018-2019, 100% of candidates met the target and scored “Target” (n = 6). Candidates’ artifacts, written reflections, and oral reflections demonstrated student learning via mastery of NAEYC and content standards. After examining the evidence from last year and based on the analysis of 2017-2018 results, faculty fine-tuned the explanation handout candidates were given to prepare for the portfolio defense. As a result of the clarifying the process for candidates, in 2018-2019 data show the streamlined process enhanced program data.

### Decision, action, or recommendation.

As previously stated, 100% of candidates met the target for the portfolio defense in AY 2017-2018 and AY 2018-2019. However, faculty fine-tuned the portfolio defense explanation handout to clarify the process. Based on analysis of the results, in 2019-2020, faculty will have candidates submit written reflections in each course, tying their artifacts to NAEYC and content standards. To maximize student learning and to continue to improve the program, faculty will examine data gleaned from candidates’ course artifacts, written reflections, and oral reflections to determine necessary changes for portfolio defense instruction and find innovative ways to support candidates in their courses to help them be successful on their defense.

### SLO 2

**Course Map:** ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation*

- SLO 2 is assessed through a Practicum Observation Form in ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation*, which is the practicum course.

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Apply discipline-specific content knowledge in professional practice (SPA #4, Teacher Candidate Observation Form)	Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of Developmentally Appropriate Practices relating to Early Childhood development, curriculum, and assessment.

### Measure: 2.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions)

- SLO 2 is assessed through a Practicum Observation Form in ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation*, which is the practicum course.

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The candidates' mentors assess candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions relating to social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and/or language/literacy skills in relation to early childhood curriculum and research-based assessments. Candidates are provided with a rubric which is used to evaluate their work. The assessment was developed in a collaborative fashion by program faculty, and it provides evidence of student learning and mastery of state standards because the assessment was specifically designed to align with both NAEYC and state standards. The assessment and rubric have been tweaked as necessary with each iteration based on results of student learning and changes in state standards. Program faculty have also reviewed the rubric for validity and reliability, ensuring that the assessment measures what it is intended to measure and that it is reliable over time. The goal is for at least 80% of candidates to score at least "Meets Expectations" on the rubric.

### Finding.

- **AY 2017-2018:** 100% of candidates met target
- **AY 2018-2019:** 100% of candidates met target

### Analysis.

In AY 2017-2018, 100% of candidates met target and scored "Meets Expectations" or "Target" on the rubric. Candidates' mean score was 98.8% (n = 5). Although all candidates met target, program faculty examined the evidence to determine student learning in each area, and content and pedagogical resources were added to the course to provide learner support in areas where candidates missed points (Promoting Child Development and Learning). This proved to be effective, as 100% of candidates met target in AY 2018-2019, and scores increased in Promoting Child Development and Learning.

In AY 2018-2019, 100% of candidates met target and scored "Target" on the rubric. Candidates' mean score was 99% (n = 6).

Because the assessment and rubric are tied to NAEYC standards and state standards, candidates' artifacts demonstrated student learning via mastery of NAEYC and content standards.

### Decision, action, or recommendation.

In AY 2017-2018, 100% of candidates met target and scored "Target" on the rubric. Based on changes made from analyzing the results the previous year, scores improved in AY 2018-2019. Although all candidates met target in 2018-2019, program faculty examined the evidence to determine student learning in each area, and additional videos and resources will be added in 2019-2020 to provide learner support. Such ongoing program improvement effort will positively enhance candidates' knowledge and skills relating to early childhood curriculum, development, and assessment.

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### SLO 3

**Course Map:** ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation*

- SLO 3 is assessed through a dispositions form in ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation*, which is candidates' practicum course.

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Model professional behaviors and Characteristics. (Dispositional Evaluation)	Candidates will model behaviors and characteristics that are professional and ethical.

### Measure 3.1. (Direct – Dispositions)

SLO 3 is assessed through a dispositions form in ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation*, which is candidates' practicum course. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the target performance is that 80% of candidates will score at least "Sufficient." Faculty created the dispositional evaluation based on agreed-upon best practices and constructs outlined in InTASC standards. The assessment provides evidence for meeting the state identified standards because it is aligned with InTASC standards, and face validity was established for the instrument. Steps were taken to assure Quality of the assessment/evidence. 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 EPP-Created Assessments, resulting in "below sufficient," "sufficient," or "above sufficient" ratings. The goal is for at least 80% of candidates to score "Sufficient".

### Findings.

- **AY 2017-2018:** 100% of candidates met target
- **AY 2018-2019:** 100% of candidates met target

### Analysis.

In AY 2017-2018, 100% of candidates met target and scored "Above Sufficient." Candidates' mean score was "3" (n = 3). Although 100% of candidates met target, program faculty examined the evidence to determine student learning in each area, and emphasis on Professionalism was strengthened in coursework to provide learner support. This proved to be effective, as 100% of candidates met target in AY 2018-2019.

In AY 2018-2019, 100% of candidates met target and scored "Above Sufficient." Candidates' mean score was "3" (n = 6).

As this assessment is used in the Practicum Course, which is one of the last courses candidates take, faculty expect scores to be strong. Because the assessment and rubric

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are tied to NAEYC standards and state standards, candidates' artifacts demonstrated student learning via mastery of NAEYC and content standards.

### Decision, action, or recommendation.

Although 100% of candidates met target in AY 2017-2018 and AY 2018-2019, program faculty have reviewed the evidence to review student learning, and based on the analysis of the results in 2019-2020, faculty will add videos and resources relating to Professionalism to support student learning, as this is a growing concern in the field. This effort to engage in program improvement will strengthen candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions relating to growing as professionals who prepare young children for life and learning in the classroom and beyond.

### SLO 4

**Course Map:** ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation*

- SLO 4 is assessed through a lesson plan assignment in ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation*, which is candidates' practicum course.

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, Lesson Plan)	Candidates will design and implement developmentally appropriate lesson plans that reflect research on best practices in Early Childhood Education.

### Measure 4.1. (Direct – Knowledge and Skills)

SLO 4 is assessed through a lesson plan assignment in ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation*, which is candidates' practicum course. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the target performance is that 80% of candidates will score at least a "3" on the rubric, which is aligned with the state teacher assessment. A group of faculty and cooperating teachers collaborated to create the lesson planning template to align with (at the time) new Louisiana Compass and Common Core State Standards' expectations. The template requires candidates to plan for and explain elements of lessons on which in-service teacher evaluations were based. The assessment provides evidence for meeting the state identified standards because it is aligned with InTASC standards, and content validity was established for the instrument. Steps were taken to assure Quality of the assessment/evidence. A panel of 8 EPP faculty each conducted four independent rubric-based evaluations of anonymous lesson plan work samples submitted by candidates in four different initial teacher preparation programs. Analyses were conducted using the Lawshe Content Validity Ratio (CVR) statistic (validity) and the Fisher Intra-class Correlation Coefficient (ICC) for reliability. To determine criteria for success,

- CVR mean = -.58 with CVR(Critical, 8) = .75 and 13 items (62%) meeting critical value of .75

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- ICC = .573. ICC of .4 - .59 reflects “fair” inter-rater agreement, and .6 is considered “good.”

### Finding.

- **AY 2017-2018:** 100% of candidates met target
- **AY 2018-2019:** 100% of candidates met target

### Analysis.

In AY 2017-2018, 100% of candidates met target and scored at least a “3.” Candidates’ mean score was 4 (n = 3).

At the end of the course, program faculty examined the evidence to determine student learning in each area and determined that more emphasis was needed on Differentiation. Action was taken by increasing course content on Differentiation and adding two professional development sessions provided by outsider presenters to provide learner support. As a result, 100% of candidates met target in AY 2018-2019.

In AY 2018-2019, candidates’ mean score was 4 (n = 6).

While candidates teach a minimum of 10 lesson plans, data gathered from the last lesson plan they teach was used for this assessment. As this assessment is used in the Practicum Course, which is one of the last courses candidates take before graduating, and since the candidates taught at least nine lesson plans before teaching this one, faculty expect scores to be strong. Because the assessment and rubric are tied to NAEYC standards and state standards, candidates’ artifacts demonstrated student learning via mastery of NAEYC and content standards.

### Decision, action, or recommendation.

Although 100% of candidates met target in AY 2017-2018 and AY 2018-2019, program faculty have reviewed the evidence to review student learning, and based on the analysis of the results in 2019-2020, faculty will add resources relating to Differentiation to support student learning, as this is a critical component of Early Childhood Education, and children with special needs are increasing each year in public school regular education classrooms. This effort to engage in program improvement will strengthen candidates’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions relating to meeting individual students’ varying needs in the classroom.

### SLO 5

**Course Map:** EDUC 5850 *Action Research for School Improvement*

SLO 5 is assessed through a paper in EDUC 5850 *Action Research for School Improvement*, which is the candidates’ last course.

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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)	Candidates will conduct investigations relevant to the field of Early Childhood and discuss implications for further research.

### Measure 5.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions)

SLO 5 is assessed through a paper in EDUC 5850 *Action Research for School Improvement*, which is the candidates' last course. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the target performance is that at least 80% will score minimally "Meets Expectations". To complete this assessment, candidates implement an action research project in their own classrooms to improve student outcomes. The rubric was developed in a collaborative fashion by program faculty, and it provides evidence of student learning and mastery of state and national standards because the assessment was specifically designed to align with NAEYC and state expectations. Program faculty have also reviewed the rubric for validity and reliability, ensuring that the assessment measures what it is intended to measure and that it is reliable over time.

#### Findings:

- **AY 2017-2018:** 100% of candidates met target
- **AY 2018-2019:** 100% of candidates met target

#### Analysis:

In AY 2017-2018, one candidate took EDUC 5850 and met Target on the rubric, with a mean score of "3" (n = 1). At the end of the course, program faculty examined the evidence to determine student learning in each area, and determined that a review of research writing skills and APA format would benefit candidates. Action was taken by increasing focus on research writing and on APA format in courses taken prior to this course.

In AY 2018-2019, 100% of candidates scored Target on the rubric, with a mean score of "3" (n=6).

Faculty expect all candidates to score at least "Meets Expectations" simply because candidates must continue revising drafts until they are error-free. Papers are not submitted to the Graduate School until they are free of errors. Thus, candidates may not exit this course until their papers are polished. Because the assessment and rubric are tied to NAEYC standards and state standards, candidates' artifacts demonstrated student learning via mastery of NAEYC and content standards.

#### Decision, action, or recommendation.

Although 100% of candidates met target in AY 2017-2018 and AY 2018-2019, program faculty have reviewed the evidence to review student learning and based on the analysis of the results in 2019-2020, faculty will provide support relating to the research writing process and APA format. Further, we will share sample papers and online



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resources to support student learning. This effort to engage in program improvement will strengthen candidates' ability to complete their papers in a timely fashion.

### Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvements Based on Analysis of Results.

Program faculty made several decisions after examining results of data analysis which resulted in improved student learning and program improvement.

- Faculty fine-tuned the explanation handout candidates were given to prepare for the portfolio defense in EDUC 5850 *Action Research for School Improvement*, and this seemed to clarify the process for candidates, helping them achieve SLO 1.
- Resources related to addressing Diversity and Differentiation were added to ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation* to provide learner support in Promoting Child Development and Learning and help them meet SLO 2.
- Content addressing Professionalism was added to ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation* to facilitate candidates' professional dispositions and enhance their ability to meet SLO 3.
- Faculty increased course content on Differentiation and added two professional development sessions in ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation* to provide learner support and help them meet SLO 4.
- Faculty increased focus on research writing and on APA format in courses taken prior to EDUC 5850 *Action Research for School Improvement*, and sample papers and additional online resources were shared with candidates to support student learning and to help them achieve SLO 5.
- Based on conversations with principals in the field, faculty placed more focus on current assessments and curricular programs.
- A service-learning component was emphasized in all Early Childhood courses.
- Candidates were invited to publish peer-reviewed articles with the major professor to build candidates' content, pedagogical, and leadership skills.
- Candidates were invited to present at professional conferences with the major professor to build their content, pedagogical, and leadership skills.

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### Plan of Action Moving Forward.

Program faculty have examined the evidence and results of data analysis from AY 2018-2019 and will take steps to continue to improve student learning:

- Candidates will submit written reflections in each course, tying their artifacts to NAEYC and content standards, in order to prepare for the Portfolio Defense in EDUC 5850 and meet SLO 1.
- More videos and other resources will be added to ECED 5580 *Early Childhood Practicum: Performance Based Assessment and Documentation* to provide learner support in addressing Diversity and Differentiation and help them meet SLO 2.
- Videos and resources relating to Professionalism will be added to Early Childhood courses to facilitate candidates' professional dispositions and enhance their ability to meet SLO 3.
- Faculty will add videos, resources, and professional development sessions relating to Differentiation in Early Childhood Courses to provide learner support and help them meet SLO 4.
- Faculty will increase focus on research writing and on APA format in courses taken prior to EDUC 5850 *Action Research for School Improvement*, and sample papers and additional online resources will be shared with candidates to support student learning and to help them achieve SLO 5.
- The service-learning component will become a stronger focus in ECED courses.
- Candidates will be invited to publish peer-reviewed articles with the major professor to build candidates' content, pedagogical, and leadership skills.
- Candidates will be invited to present at professional conferences with the major professor to build their content, pedagogical, and leadership skills.