

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

Middle School Masters of Art in Teaching (MS MAT) (507)

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.

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 2018-2019

Program Mission Statement. The MAT Middle Level Program faculty provide highly effective coursework, fully online, to meet the needs of candidates who are seeking their initial certification as middle level educators. Program candidates gain the knowledge and skills necessary to implement literacy- and standards-based instructional strategies for increasing student content learning in each candidate's academic area of study; candidates also develop effective management expertise critical to the establishment of responsive student-centered learning environments. During the course of their program, candidates become reflective educators who also develop the pedagogical skills necessary to differentiate instruction, to meet the widely diverse needs of young adolescent students, to apply assessment data for instructional planning, and to collaborate professionally with their peers and administrators within a school setting. The development of the program and courses is based on standards set by the American Middle Level Education (AMLE), InTasc, and the State of Louisiana. The ultimate goal is to educate and credential highly effective teachers for employment in Louisiana schools where they will have positive impact on student learning.

Methodology.

- (1) Program assessment begins as part of the application process for each potential candidate. Entry into the program depends upon passage of, Praxis II, the core knowledge standardized assessment required by the State of Louisiana for each subject area(s) of certification.
- (2) As they matriculate through the program, candidates upload signature assignments for each course and an end-of-program portfolio on an electronic folio system. These assessments are evaluated by program faculty and inform adjustments to courses.
- (3) At the end of the coursework, candidates complete a comprehensive exam (COMPS), scored by a committee that includes the candidate's major professor. The exam includes a presentation of research and the paper-in-lieu (PIL) of thesis and responding to oral prompts, based on program objectives.
- (4) Candidates then enter a two-semester internship during which they are evaluated regularly by faculty supervisors and school administrators for subject area knowledge and application of their teaching and management skills.
- (5) Program faculty and stakeholders regularly review and analyze data on selected assessments. Data analyses guide any needed curricular or program adjustments.

Student Learning Outcome 1.

Course Map: Because this is a gateway assessment, the courses required for the development of a candidate's depth of subject knowledge are completed in previous programs.

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge (SPA #1)	To ensure successful student content learning, middle-level teacher candidates demonstrate depth and breadth of subject matter content knowledge in the area(s) in which they plan to certify.

Measure 1.1. (Direct – knowledge)

SLO 1 is assessed through the **Praxis II: Middle School Content Knowledge Exam** in one of four core areas of certification (English 5047, Social Studies 5089, Science 5440, or Math 5169), depending on the candidate's chosen area of certification. Designed by the Education Testing Service (ETS), each examination measures the depth of content knowledge in one of the four core areas for teachers at the middle school level. The quality of these assessments is assured by its recognition by the State of Louisiana as a requirement for the initial credentialing of middle level teachers. The Praxis II is also an acceptable measure of content learning for meeting SPA reporting for the MAT programs. Faculty depend on Praxis II to demonstrate subject area content knowledge. The target is achieved by meeting or exceeding the State of Louisiana's cut scores.

Findings:

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

Analysis:

Average Performance Ranges on Praxis II

Subject Areas for Middle School Grades 4-8	NSU Range for Applicants 2017-2018	NSU Range for Applicants 2018-2019	National Range 2018-2019
English (State cut score = 164)	164 - 172	170 - 184	154 -172
Math (State cut score = 165)	166 - 179	169 - 179	157 - 180
Science (State cut off score = 150)	158 - 173	158 - 174	146 - 171
Social Studies (State cut off score = 149)	152 – 179	157 - 175	154 - 179

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

In 2017-2018 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2017-2018 results the following changes were implemented in 2018-2019 to drive improvement: Praxis II preparatory workshops were implemented by faculty. As a result of this change, in 2018-2019 the target was met.

Analysis of the data included comparisons between applicant scores in AY 2017-2018 and AY 2018-2019. Data indicated that scores for applicants remained consistent. When comparing the data from the current cycle to the national averages, NSU candidates averaged higher in middle school ELA and Science. Scores in Social Studies and Math were consistent with national averages for middle school applicants.

Program faculty agree that SLO 1 was met for AY 2018-2019.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the following changes will be made: Faculty will provide online links to subject area study sessions, and, in some cases, advisement into undergraduate courses, which will strengthen content knowledge for serious applicants and increase the number of applicants who are able to qualify for entry into the program.

SLO 2.

Course Map:

EDUC 5420 & 5421 Middle School Internship in Teaching – 2 semesters.

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Apply discipline-specific content knowledge in professional practice (SPA #2)	Candidates pass a teaching evaluation to assess content, pedagogical knowledge, and skills in professional practice

Measure 2.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills)

Faculty elected to change the previous assessment for SOL 2 from a second use of the PRAXIS II assessment to the **Teacher Candidate Observation Form** which more precisely rates teacher performances through their application of content knowledge in professional practice. The form is based on effective teaching behaviors listed on the Danielson Framework for Teaching instrument. Criteria and indicators were not changed from the framework in the design of the checklist; however, the rating scale was customized to reflect course grading criteria established in the College.

Domains of assessment include (1) planning/preparing lessons to include alignment among standards, activities, and assessments and the implementation of engaging activities through literacy enhancement of the content subject (2) instructing/assessing students to include questioning techniques, differentiating strategies for varied student needs, and establishing an ongoing form of informal assessment on which to base instructional adjustments as well as more formal assessments of subject matter (3)

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

establishing positive classroom environment to include procedures and motivational techniques that support content learning.

University field supervisors and cooperating principals evaluated each criterion using a three-point rating scale with the following options: Ineffective = 1, Effective Emerging = 2, and Emerging Proficient = 3; the scale is based on the Louisiana Compass Teaching Evaluation, which, in turn, is also based on the Danielson Framework. Items on the instrument were evaluated 10 times during the two internship semesters (8 times by the university supervisor, and twice by the cooperating principal). Scores were uploaded to TaskStream for each candidate.

Because scores have been traditionally high for this assessment, three years ago, a formal review was conducted by an external evaluator. As a result, revisions were made to the assessment, including an “actionable” feedback section that now require evaluators to list areas in which candidates need to refine their practice. The areas for improvement are expected to be supported with specific evidence from the observation. Follow-up occurs in a subsequent observation when the evaluator documents candidate progress in the areas previously noted for improvement. These new evaluation requirements are meant to help evaluators reflect more closely and provide explicit feedback to candidates. Training was provided to evaluators to ensure understanding for the process.

Alignment to InTASC standards and content validity are supported by a panel of 11 P-12 clinicians who viewed two 20-minute teaching vignettes and conducted independent evaluations of the teaching performance using this tool. Analyses were conducted using the Lawshe Content Validity Ratio (CVR) statistic (validity) and the Fisher Intra-class Correlation Coefficient (ICC) for reliability. CVR mean = -.03 with CVR (Critical, 11) = .59 and no single item meeting critical value of .59 ICC = .59. ICC of .4 - .59 reflects "fair" inter-rater agreement, and .6 is considered “good.”

The target for this assessment was for 90% of candidates to meet a 2.5 of 3.0 mean score.

Finding:

AY 2018-2019 (Baseline): 100% of candidates met the target.

Analysis: In 2017-2018 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2017-2018 baseline results the following changes were implemented in 2018-2019 to drive improvement: A second use of the Praxis II data failed to provide needed information; faculty replaced the assessment with the Teacher Candidate Observation Form which more precisely rates teacher performances through their application of content knowledge in professional practice. Resulting data from the initial use of this assessment in 2018-2019, the target was met.

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

The cohort mean for all subject areas was 2.93 on a 3.00 scale (n=19). 100% of candidates in each subject area exceeded the target: ELA candidates (n=8) 2.91; Science candidates (n=5) 2.88; Social Studies candidates (n=3) 2.98; Math candidates (n=3) 2.97. Data showed that candidates scored primarily in the Emerging Proficient and Effective Emerging categories, suggesting that they consistently met the expectations set forth in the assessment.

Three candidates received scores of 2 more frequently than others in their cohort in the areas labeled “Makes Instructional Decisions Based on Assessment, Adjusts Lesson when Appropriate, and Uses Formal and Informal Assessment Techniques Effectively.” Another area in which there was a slight dip in scores was “Accommodates Individual Differences.”

Scores were consistent in each degree program, and data indicated that by the end of their program, candidates were prepared and ready to be effective teachers in the classroom.

Program faculty agree that SLO 2 was met for AY 2018-2019.

Decision: Faculty feel that annual training for field evaluators is critical to the program’s efficacy and to the meaningful evaluation of this assessment as new evaluators come into the program. A second iteration of data will provide needed information going forward.

SLO 3.

Course Map:

EPSY 5490 Educational Psychology Applied to Teaching

EDUC 5840 Research Based Decision-Making in Education

EDUC 5420 & 5421 Middle School Internship in Teaching – 2 semesters

Departmental Student Learning	Program Student Learning Outcome
Model professional behaviors and characteristics (SPA #6)	Middle-level teacher candidates demonstrate the professional dispositions and characteristics of effective educators in their interactions with students, administrators, co-workers, parents, and university faculty throughout the program.

Measure 3.1 (Indirect/Dispositions)

SLO 3 outcomes are assessed using the **Professional Dispositions and Characteristics (PDC) Likert Scale**, which is scored by university faculty, NSU field supervisors, cooperating principals, and candidates themselves in key courses throughout the program. The criteria checklist was revised in 2017 to better assess strengths and weaknesses of middle school teacher candidates as outlined in the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) standards. These revisions have added

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

specificity to the categories, making assessment items more relevant to the MAT MS candidates and the data more valid to faculty in this online program. Candidates complete this assessment themselves during EPSY 5490 as a form of self-reflection and to familiarize them with the professional expectations measured on this instrument; it is then completed at least twice by their university field supervisor and twice by their cooperating principals during the yearlong internship. Additionally, instructors of EDUC 5840 complete this assessment on each graduating candidate.

The instrument has 43 items placed within three domains—Professionalism Expected of the Middle Level Educator, Professional Demeanor and Attitudes Expected of a Middle Level Educator, and Communication Acumen and Commitment to Professional Growth Expected of a Middle Level Educator. Faculty created the evaluation based on agreed-upon best practices and constructs outlined in InTASC standards, which underscore its content validity. The likert scale offers 5 categories for scoring each descriptor: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, and N/A (added to facilitate scoring candidates in online programs). The quality of the evidence is further established because faculty 1) aligned items to constructs, 2) avoided bias and ambiguous language 3) stated items in actionable terms.

Target for this assessment was for 90% of candidates to score a 4.00/5.00 mean.

Findings:

AY 2017-2018: 100% of candidates met or exceeded the target.

AY 2018-2019: 100% of candidates met or exceeded the target.

Analysis: In 2017-2018 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2017-2018 results the following changes were implemented in 2018-2019 to drive improvement: Language in the descriptors of this assessment were revised to support interaction with online candidates. As a result of these changes, in 2018-2019 the target was met. As a result, in AY 2017-2018 (n=43) the compiled assessments of the middle school candidates scored by item from 4.6 and 4.861. 100% of the candidates also met or exceeded the target.

Compiled assessments in AY 2018-2019 (n=29) had similar item mean scores falling between 4.76 and 5.00. 100% of the candidate scorings exceeded the target of 4.00.

Once again, the highest scores were garnered in areas that measured the valuing of diversity and the respect shown to children and adults of various cultural backgrounds. Lower scores were given in the area of analyzing problems and attempting to resolve them independently.

Program faculty agree that SLO 3 was met for AY 2018-2019.

Decision: Faculty remain concerned that candidates, who do not necessarily see the results of the disposition scores from university and school personnel, may not be stimulated to reflect on areas in which they want to improve their level of

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

professionalism. Since trends in current educational research support the value of self-reflection as a powerful professional growth exercise, it is suggested that candidates complete two iterations of this assessment—one at the beginning of the program in the course EPSY 5490, which is already in place, and another during the internship. The second iteration will now be discussed with the university field supervisor as part of the first meeting for that semester. Both assessments would be uploaded to provide data, and candidates would have formal opportunities to set goals for professional improvement.

SLO 4

Course Map:

EDUC 5420 & 5421 Middle School Internship in Teaching (2 semesters)

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)	Middle-level teacher candidates create a lesson plan to demonstrate their ability to select/create appropriate instructional practices to deliver/assess the content of their discipline, specifically to engage student learners and increase achievement.

Measure 4.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills)

For the AY 2018-2019 cycle, faculty replaced the Comprehensive Portfolio Assessment with the more specific department **Lesson Plan** to better assess program quality as designated in the descriptors for SLO 4. This is the initial iteration of this assessment for the MAT Middle Program.

The Lesson Plan Assessment addresses the Louisiana State Standards and is aligned to InTASC standards for content validity. The template requires candidates to plan for and explain elements of lessons on which MAT Middle teacher evaluations were based for AY2018-19. Candidates were measured on a wide variety of knowledge and skills needed to teach effectively in accordance with the Louisiana Compass rubric, the Louisiana State Standards, and the AMLE; each lesson plan was scored for its application of specific content in an engaging and meaningful design and delivery format. To establish validity, 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.

CVR mean = -.58 with CVR (Critical, 8) = .75 and 13 items (62%) meeting critical value of .75 ICC = .573. ICC of .4 - .59 reflects “fair” inter-rater agreement, and .6 is considered “good.”

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

Target for this assessment was that 90% of the candidates would score a 3.00/4/00 mean.

Finding:

AY 2018-2019 (baseline): Target was met.

Analysis: In 2017-2018 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2017-2018 baseline results the following changes were implemented in 2018-2019 to drive improvement: The assessment was changed to the Lesson Plan which more precisely rates program quality and teacher performances as designated in the descriptors for SLO 4. According to data gathered from the initial use of this assessment in 2018-2019, the target was met.

As a result, in AY2018-19 the MAT Middle mean cohort score was 3.57 on a 4.00 scale. The scores were also collected in the areas of: English (n =12) ranged from 3.00 to 3.92 with a subject mean of 3.62; Math (n=8) ranged from 2.50 to 3.75 with a subject mean of 3.20; Science (n= 3) ranged from 3.33 to 4.00 with a subject mean of 3.76; Social Studies (n=3) ranged from 3.00 to 4.00 with a subject mean of 3.70. Data showed that most candidates scored in the two highest categories across all items—Exemplary or Proficient. Three math candidates were scored on a total of 18 lesson plan submissions; of these plans, 6 were scored below the 3.00 target which accounted for the shortfall.

Strengths from this data included literacy and alignment to state standards. Most groups scored a perfect average on these two categories. Weaker categories included technology and reflection on instruction as to how assessment should inform instruction. Technology scores may reflect a lack of technology in the classrooms rather than a lack of planned integration on the part of candidates, particularly in Math. Data collected for EPP purposes likely exceed those relevant for CAEP accreditation.

Program faculty agree that SLO 4 was met for AY 2018-2019.

Decision: Faculty feel that training for increasing interrater reliability to help field supervisors accurately score the rubric is crucial. A second iteration of data will provide needed information going forward.

SLO 5

Course Map:

EDUC 5421 Middle School Internship in Teaching

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
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Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

Make responsible decisions and problem- solve, using data to inform actions when appropriate (SPA #5)	Middle-level teacher candidates demonstrate the ability to select/implement appropriate instructional/assessment practices in an ongoing, data informed process to ensure all students are successful.
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Measure 5.1 (Direct – Knowledge, Skills)

Faculty and cooperating teachers worked together in 2016 to create the Student Learning Impact (SLI) assessment which aligns with the Louisiana Compass teaching performance evaluation, based on InTASC standards, the Louisiana State Standards, and the AMLE standards. The assessment requires candidates to plan and create instruction, administer assessments, and analyze data to interpret rates of student learning. Candidates then reflect on and make instructional decisions/adjustments based on these findings.

A panel of 8 EPP faculty each conducted four independent rubric-based evaluations of anonymous student learning impact work samples submitted by candidates in four different initial teacher preparation programs. The assessment was validated by the Lawshe Content Validity Ration (CVR) statistic (validity) and the Fisher Intra-class Correlation Coefficient (ICC) for reliability. CVR mean = -.61 with CVR(Critical, 8) = .75 and 7 items (78%) meeting critical value of .75. ICC = .954. ICC greater than .75 reflects “excellent” inter-rater reliability.

Target for this assessment was for 90% of candidates to score a 3.00 or better mean based on a 4.00 scale.

Findings.

- AY 2017-2018: 100% of candidates exceeded the target.
- AY 2018-2019: 100% of candidates exceeded the target.

Analysis: In 2017-2018 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2017-2018 results the following changes were implemented in 2018-2019 to drive improvement: Faculty changed the curriculum requirements by creating two new courses more relevant to first year teachers, replacing two courses dedicated to research-based goals. As a result of these changes, in 2018-2019 the target was met.

As a result, in AY 2017-2018 six candidates were scored on this assessment which is divided into 6 basic domains with 9 sets of criteria. The overall mean score was 3.54/4.00. The average means by groups were as follows: Setting assessment criteria 3.19; Preparing instructional assignments or activities 3.74; Analysis of formative data 3.37; Student learning targets 3.56; Self-reflection of performance 3.86; Student learning targets based on reflective practice 3.57.

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

In AY 2018-2019 26 candidates completed the MAT Middle Level Student Learning Impact Data. With 6 basic domains and 9 sets of criteria, the overall mean score was 3.63/4.00. The average means by groups were as follows: Setting assessment criteria 3.75; Preparing instructional assignments or activities 3.85; Analysis of formative data 3.54; Student learning targets 3.53; Self-reflection of performance 3.58; Student learning targets based on reflective practice 3.54.

Program faculty agree that SLO 5 was met for AY 2018-2019.

Decision: To better address the important areas assessed in the SLI instrument, faculty created two new courses changing the curriculum requirements for AY 2018-2019. These courses—ETEC 5610 and EDUC 5840—were specifically designed to strengthen candidates' understanding of the process for assessing student learning and for using the data to inform next step instruction. Based on the recent implementation of these courses, scores may be skewed for the above analysis because some candidates were enrolled in the former courses while others matriculated through the new ones. With the significant change in curriculum, a second iteration of data post implementation of the course changes are indicated for AY 2019-2020.

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvements Based on Analysis of Results in AY 2018-2019.

The following changes were implemented to drive improvement in 2018-2019:

SLO 1. Praxis II preparation workshops provided for applicants on campus. As a result of these changes, in 2018-2019 the target was met.

SLO 2. A second use of the Praxis II data failed to provide needed information; faculty replaced the assessment with the Teacher Candidate Observation Form which more precisely rates teacher performances through their application of content knowledge in professional practice. Resulting data from the initial use of this assessment in 2018-2019, the target was met.

SLO 3. Language in the descriptors of this assessment were revised to support interaction with online candidates. As a result of these changes, in 2018-2019 the target was met.

SLO 4. The assessment was changed to the Lesson Plan which more precisely rates program quality and teacher performances as designated in the descriptors for SLO 4. According to data gathered from the initial use of this assessment in 2018-2019, the target was met.

SLO 5. Faculty changed the curriculum requirements by creating two new courses more relevant to first year teachers, replacing two courses dedicated to research-based goals. As a result of these changes, in 2018-2019 the target was met.

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

Plan of Action Moving Forward:

SLO 1. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the following changes will be made: Faculty will provide online links to subject area study sessions, and provide advisement into undergraduate courses, if necessary to strengthen content knowledge for serious applicants while increasing the number of applicants who are able to qualify for entry into the program.

SLO 2. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the following changes will be made: (1) Provide annual training for field evaluators for the meaningful evaluation of this somewhat complicated assessment as new evaluators come into the program. (2) Administer the second iteration of the assessment to confirm validity and reliability when comparing results with those rated on the baseline established in AY 2018-2019.

SLO 3. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the following change will be made: Add a second self-evaluation at the beginning of EDUC 5421. Candidates will discuss the self-assessment with their field supervisor at the first meeting of the second semester during the year of internship and submit a plan for improving the areas they find lacking in themselves during the final semester of the program.

SLO 4. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the following changes will be made: (1) Offer training during the annual field orientation for new and returning field supervisors to clarify descriptors of items and ensure interrater reliability. (2) Administer the second iteration of the COE Lesson Plan assessment to confirm validity and reliability when comparing results with those rated on the baseline established in AY 2018-2019.

SLO 5. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the following change will be made: (1) Phase out the former two research courses completely. (2) Implement a second iteration of the assessment that will clarify data results.