

MAT Integrated-Merged General and Mild/Moderate Special Education, Middle, Grades 4-8 (541)

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.

School of Education Mission. The School of Education 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 Northwestern State Alternate Certification program is to prepare individuals who have demonstrated knowledge of specialized content to enter the teaching profession and improve educational and life outcomes for children from culturally and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds.

The Special Education Programs at NSU follow the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Mission.

CEC's Mission Statement

The Council for Exceptional Children is a professional association of educators dedicated to advancing the success of children with exceptionalities. We accomplish our mission through advocacy, standards, and professional development.

CEC Core Values

Visionary Thinking:

Demonstrated by forward-thinking and courageous decision making dedicated to excellence and influence in an evolving environment

Integrity:

Demonstrated by ethical, responsive behavior, transparency, and accountability

Inclusiveness:

Demonstrated by a commitment to diversity, caring, and respect for the dignity and worth of all individuals

Ratified December 8, 2014, by the Council for Exceptional Children Board of Directors.

Methodology:

For the Mild/Moderate Elementary Grades 1-5 (MAT 531A), Middle School (Grades 4-8 MAT 541A) Secondary (Grades 6-12) (MAT 561A), the assessment process follows the guidelines of the CEC Initial Preparation Standards.

Step 1: The seven CEC Initial Preparation Standards are embedded in each of the Mild/Moderate courses required for M/M special education certification.

Step 2: When a student enrolls in a M/M course, the key assessment is identified for the student, so at the end of the class, he/she will have the knowledge and skills that all special educators should have for each key assessment.

Step 3: At the end of the class, the key assessment is completed and evaluated by the course instructor.

Step 4: Once the key assessment has been evaluated and feedback given to the student, then it is uploaded into the electronic portfolio, TASKSTREAM.

Step 5: Data from each key assessment is compiled, analyzed, and organized into a database of information.

Step 6: Use the data analysis for program improvement.

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SLO 1

- SLO 2 is assessed via PRAXIS exam: Special Education: Core Knowledge and Mild to Moderate Applications (0543 or 5543) exam which is required for Louisiana Mild/Moderate Special Education certification. IEP development is assessed in **EDSP 5000 Educational Psychology & SPED Applied to Teaching** and **EDSP 5010 Instructional Planning & Design for All Students**. Research-based instructional strategies and techniques are assessed in **EDSP 5020 Research in Curriculum and Instruction**.

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge (SPA #1, Praxis 5543)	PRAXIS exam: Special Education: Core Knowledge and Mild to Moderate Applications (5543) exam required for Louisiana Mild/Moderate Special Education certification.

Measure 1.1. (Direct—Knowledge)

Evidence is passage of the Special Education Core Knowledge and Mild to Moderate Applications PRAXIS exam (0543 or 5543). The State of Louisiana requires that all teachers seeking Mild/Moderate Special Education certification complete this PRAXIS exam which demonstrates their knowledge and skills in pedagogy, instruction. This assessment is nationally validated and reliable. Candidates should achieve the minimum score of 153. The Special Education: Core Knowledge and Mild to Moderate Applications (5543) PRAXIS test is designed for examinees who plan to teach students with mild to moderate disabilities at any grade level from preschool through grade 12. Five major content areas assessed are: CEC Specialty Set: Initial Special Education Individualized General Curriculum Standard 1: Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences; Standard 2: Learning Environment; Standard 3: Curricular Content Knowledge; Standard 4: Assessment; Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies; Standard 6: Professional Learning and Practice; Standard 7: Collaboration.

Finding:

- **AY 2016-2017:** 100% of candidates met target
- **AY 2017-2018:** 100% of candidates met target
- **AY 2018-2019:** 100% of candidates met target

Analysis:

Although there was 100% candidate pass rate in 2017-18, faculty identified those areas that needed to be enhanced in the course content. The data from 2017-2018 showed the need for more information on IEP development. Therefore, faculty focused on

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presenting information and assignments focused on research-based instructional strategies and techniques. The decision was made to increase the number of IEP development activities in **EDSP 5000** and **EDSP 5010**. Candidates in 2018-2019 also had a 100% pass rate and improved in IEP development. However, candidate performance in 2018-2019 indicated the need for more information on IEP development. Faculty chose to improve the Content Categories of Instruction on the SPED PRAXIS Core Knowledge and Mild to Moderate Application for 5543. The faculty evaluated the results of the SPED PRAXIS exam and noted that candidates needed additional content knowledge on Individualized Education Plans (IEP), so additional IEP development has been added to the appropriate course(s) **EDSP 5000** and **EDSP 5010**.

Candidate performance indicated that the national CEC Standards of the Knowledge and Skills that all Special Educators should possess have been met in the course content for the MAT Integrated-Merged General and Mild/Moderate Special Education program. Special Education faculty decided to examine the lowest passing scores for each content area of the SPED PRAXIS exams for all candidates who completed the 2018-2019 SPED PRAXIS exam. The consensus was that IEP Development or Planning and the Learning Environment were two areas that needed content enhancement. The “why” behind the results was to improve each candidate’s knowledge and skills in the areas of IEP Development and the Learning Environment. Evidence of improvement indicated that content test scores improved overall for all candidates.

Action - Decision or Recommendation:

In 2018-19, PRAXIS Content III Instruction findings showed that additional support in 2019-2020 is necessary. Faculty will identify the lowest content score for each SPED PRAXIS exam and embed or enhance this specific content in SPED course content. Planned use of data for course content improvement and support of candidate learning is an ongoing 12-month process. In two areas, candidate learning, and instruction, specific content items from the SPED PRAXIS exam that yielded the lowest passing scores will be embedded in course content. Program faculty identified SPED PRAXIS Content Category II Planning and the Learning Environment as one content area that yielded a passing score by all candidates; therefore, no intervention is needed in that area.

SLO 2. Teacher Observation

- SLO 2 is assessed via a Teacher Candidate Observation Form in **EDSP 5111 General-Special Education Internship in Teaching I** and **EDSP 5121 General-Special Education Internship in Teaching II**. The Teacher Candidate Observation Form is comprised of items extracted from the Danielson Framework for Teaching instrument. The rating scale was adjusted to reflect course grading requirements, but the criteria and indicators were not adjusted from the Framework. The assessment provides evidence for meeting the state identified standards because it is aligned with CEC standards, and content validity was established for the instrument. Steps were taken to assure quality of the assessment/evidence. Both

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University Supervisors and School District personnel who serve as University Supervisors are trained in effective use of the observation instrument.

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 Special Education content, curriculum, and assessment practices in a Special Education classroom setting.

Measure 2.1. (Direct—Knowledge, Skills, and Disposition)

SLO 2 is assessed via a Teacher Candidate Observation Form in **EDSP 5111 General-Special Education Internship in Teaching I** and **EDSP 5121 General-Special Education Internship in Teaching II**. Both University Supervisors and School District personnel who serve as University Supervisors are trained in effective use of the observation instrument. The Teacher Candidate Observation Form is comprised of items extracted from the Danielson Framework for Teaching instrument. The rating scale was adjusted to reflect course grading requirements, but the criteria and indicators were not adjusted from the Framework. The assessment provides evidence for meeting the state identified standards as 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 11 P-12 clinicians 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 Ration (CVR) statistic (validity) and the Fisher Intra-class correlation Coefficient (ICC) for reliability. The goal is for at least 80% of candidates to score “Meets Expectations”. To determine criteria for success:

- 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”.

Findings:

- **AY 2016-2017:** 100% of candidates met target
- **AY 2017-2018:** 100% of candidates met target
- **AY 2018-2019:** 100% of candidates met target

Analysis:

Observation forms completed by University Supervisors and District Administrators were collected and results analyzed. In AY 2017-2018, 100% of candidates met target and scored “Meets Expectations” or “Target” on the rubric (scoring at least 70%). Although 100% of candidates met target, program faculty examined the data

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and identified a trend of low performance in designing student assessment. University Supervisors then provided targeted support and remediation for interns. This proved to be effective, as 100% of candidates met target in AY 2018-2019 however, faculty examined the evidence and identified low scores in the area of professionalism. Since the assessment is tied to national standards, candidates' artifacts demonstrated student learning via mastery of those standards.

Action - Decision 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 2019-20, faculty and University Supervisors will provide targeted support and remediation in the field for those failing to meet the target during the internship process. In response to recommendations by the TEAC the Observation Form is being updated by faculty. The program specific section of the form will be aligned with CEC standards. This effort to engage in program improvement will strengthen candidates' professionalism as well as knowledge and skills relating to Special Education curriculum, development, and assessment.

SLO 3. Disposition Form

- SLO 3 is assessed through a dispositions form in **EDSP 5111** and **EDSP 5121 Internship in Teaching** (2 Semesters).

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 **EDSP 5111** and **EDSP 5121 Internship in Teaching** (2 Semesters). The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and target performance requires that 80% of candidates score at least "Sufficient." Mentors evaluate candidates' dispositions at midterm and discuss the evaluation with candidates so that they are aware of strengths and weaknesses. Mentors again use the assessment at the end of the semester (end of semester data is reported below). 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 that least 80% of candidates score "Sufficient".

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Findings:

- **AY 2016-2017:** 100% of candidates met target
- **AY 2017-2018:** 100% of candidates met target
- **AY 2018-2019:** 100% of candidates met target

Analysis:

In AY 2016-2017 and AY 2017-2018, 100% of candidates met target and scored “Sufficient.” Although 100% of candidates met target, program faculty examined the evidence to determine student learning in each area, and emphasis on Diversity and Culturally Responsive Practices was strengthened in coursework to provide learner support. These proficiencies require that candidates: (1) identify and develop culturally responsive strategies for improving learning and candidate effectiveness across the learning community; (2) apply creative instructional and management strategies to meet the needs of a diverse population; (3) assess student learning to adapt and facilitate learning for all students; (4) communicate and collaborate effectively with learning communities in ways that demonstrate sensitivity to cultural differences; (5) establish and maintain positive inclusive educational environments that adapt instruction or services for all students including linguistically or culturally diverse students and students with exceptionalities; and (6) model professional and ethical behaviors consistent with the ideas of fairness and equity and the belief that all students can learn. As a program-wide initiative, these proficiencies are introduced/supported across the curriculum but are primarily discussed in **EDSP 5000 Educational Psychology & SPED Applied to Teaching** and **EDSP 5030 Classroom & Behavior Management of All Students**. This proved to be effective, as 100% of candidates met target in AY 2018-2019. Because the assessment and rubric are tied to national standards, candidates’ artifacts demonstrated student learning via mastery of those standards.

Action - Decision or Recommendation:

Although 100% of candidates met target in AY 2017-2018 and AY 2018-2019, program faculty have reviewed the evidence to identify student learning and cultural awareness/sensitivity/inclusion, and based on the analysis of the results, faculty will introduce additional resources relating to Diversity to support student learning in 2019-2020. This effort to engage in program improvement will strengthen candidates’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions relating to growing as culturally responsive professionals.

SLO 4. CEC Mini Grant Project

- SLO 4 is assessed through a grant writing project and reflection in EDSP 5040 *Integrated-Merged Instructional Practices*.

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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, CEC Mini Grant Project)	Candidates will identify a specific classroom/student need; investigate research-based strategies designed to engage learners and accomplish student learning objectives; and write a mini-grant for funding to address the need.

Measure 4.1. (Direct—Knowledge and Skills)

SLO 4 is assessed through a Louisiana Council for Exceptional Students (LA-CEC) Grant Writing project in **EDSP 5040 Integrated-Merged Instructional Practices**. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and the target performance is that 100% of candidates will score “Proficient.” Candidates conduct research into effective educational strategies, determine how to integrate the strategies into an inclusive classroom, and write a mini-grant proposal for submission to the LA-CEC for funding consideration.

The assessment was developed through the Louisiana Council for Exceptional Children Executive Board as criteria for funding teacher proposals for \$425 plus membership in the national Council for Exceptional Children professional organization for the 2018-2019 school year. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric, and target performance requires that 100% of candidates score “Proficient.” Candidates conduct research into one of four areas of funding: (1) Educating Children with Exceptionalities; (2) Improving Relationships between Families and their Children with Exceptionalities, (3) Developing Independent Living Skills or Employment of Students with Exceptionalities, or (4) Using Technology to Enhance the Education of Children and/or Youth with Exceptionalities. Candidates write one section of the grant at a time with feedback given after each section is completed. Candidates complete the following, one section at a time: project description: title of project, duration of the project, statement of need, description of the population to be served, project objectives and activities, project timeline, evaluation procedures, project benefits, project budget, letter of endorsement from an administrator, contact information, resume. Completed mini-grant proposals are submitted to the Louisiana Council for Exceptional Children (LA-CEC) in October for funding consideration. The assessment was developed through the Louisiana Council for Exceptional Children Executive Board as criteria for funding teacher proposals for \$425 and a national CEC membership for the 2018-2019 school year.

Findings:

- **AY 2016-2017:** 100% candidates met target
- **AY 2017-2018:** 100% of candidates met target
- **AY 2018-2019:** 100% of candidates met target

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Analysis:

In AY 2018-2019, 100% of candidates met target and scored “Proficient” according to the rubric. CEC standards require mastery in this area and projects that fail to meet these standards are returned with feedback for candidates to correct.

In AY 2017-2018, 100% of candidates met target and scored “Proficient” according to the rubric. CEC standards require mastery in this area and projects that fail to meet these standards are returned with feedback for candidates to correct.

In AY 2016-2017, 100% of candidates met target and scored “Target” on the rubric (n = 25) in addition eight candidates received funding for their proposals. At the end of the course, program faculty examined the evidence to determine student learning in each area and determined that feedback and remediation provided during the grant writing process satisfied CEC standards requiring mastery and allowed all candidates to be successful.

Candidates continue to benefit from this process, and 100% of candidates met target in AY 2018-2019 (n=15); in AY 2017-2018 (n=18); and in AY 2016-2017 (n=15) by scoring “Target”. Furthermore, in AY 2018-2019 six (n=6) candidates received funding for their grant proposals; in AY 2017-2018 ten (n=10) candidates received funding for their grant proposals; in 2016-2017 eight (n=8) candidates received funding for their grant proposals.

Faculty expect all candidates to score “Mastery” and requires candidates to continuously revise drafts until they are error-free. Thus, candidates may not exit this course until their grants are polished and well-developed. Because the assessment and rubric are tied to CEC standards and state standards, candidates’ artifacts demonstrated student learning via mastery of CEC and content standards.

Action - Decision or Recommendation:

Ultimately, 100% of candidates met target in AY 2016-2017, in AY 2017-2018, and in AY 2018-2019. This assignment supports candidate learning and proficiency in the preparation of instructional assignments or activities as supported by Student Learning Impact Data. In 2019-2020, all candidates who receive the LA-CEC Mini-Grant Award will attend the Louisiana Council for Exceptional Children Annual Conference. They will create a poster to present their grant at the LA-CEC Conference Poster Session; so, they will create and present their research and scholarly activities at the LA-CEC annual state conference. This program improvement initiative to engage in research and scholarly activities will strengthen candidates’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions relating to instructional design and creative thinking that yields engaging ideas, processes, materials, and experiences appropriate for the discipline. In addition, candidates will be encouraged to join additional professional organizations, in addition to joining CEC.

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SLO 5. Student Learning Impact

- SLO 5 is assessed through a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) project and reflection in **EDSP 5030 Classroom & Behavior Management of All Students**.

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)	Candidates will collect, analyze, and use assessment data to gauge student progress and plan targeted instruction.

Measure 5.1. (Direct—Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions)

SLO 5 is assessed through a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) project and reflection in **EDSP 5030 Classroom & Behavior Management of All Students**. The assessment is evaluated using a rubric and applies the principles of behavioral assessment and modification techniques to learning, behavior, and emotional problems in the school setting. The assignment requires 30 hours of clinical and field-based experiences. The goal of the assignment is to develop an understanding of behavior management assessment and modification techniques for individuals with exceptional learning needs during their life span. Candidates must complete a functional behavioral assessment for one student with mild/moderate exceptional needs in Grades 1-12 with a challenging behavior. By completing the assignments and/or tasks of this course, each candidate will: identify antecedents that may evoke behavior and consequences that may maintain behavior through functional analysis methodology, describe appropriate interventions that are linked to functional assessment outcomes, write a systematic plan for changing behavior that includes the following components: target behavior, environment(s) where intervention will occur, intervention strategy, measurement and schedule for data collection, and graph for visual analysis, design and implement environmental adaptations to assist in the support of appropriate behaviors, and accurately measure student performance to verify the effectiveness of behavioral support programs and/or determine the need for program revision. Candidates are provided with a rubric which is used to evaluate their work. The assessment provides evidence of student learning and mastery of state standards because the assessment was specifically designed to align with both CEC and state standards. Program faculty have 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. To score “Proficient” on the rubric, candidates must earn at least 80%. The goal is for 100% of candidates to score “Proficient”.

Findings:

- **AY 2016-2017:** 100% of candidates met target
- **AY 2017-2018:** 100% of candidates met target
- **AY 2018-2019:** 100% of candidates met target

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Analysis:

In AY 2017-2018, 100% of candidates met target and scored “Proficient” on the rubric. At the end of the course, program faculty examined the evidence to determine student learning in each area. Because the assessment and rubric are tied to CEC standards and state standards, candidates’ artifacts demonstrated student learning and mastery of CEC and content standards. Although 100% of candidates met target in AY 2017-2018, program faculty have reviewed the evidence to review student learning, and based on the analysis of the results, faculty introduced information about and promoted research into various replacement behaviors to promote creative behavior management. In AY 2018-2019, 100% of candidates met target by scoring at least 80% on the rubric.

Action - Decision or Recommendation:

Although 100% of candidates met target in AY 2016-2017, AY 2017-2018, and AY 2018-2019 program faculty have reviewed the evidence to ensure student learning, and based on the analysis of the results, faculty will introduce information about and promote research into various replacement behaviors to promote the development of creative behavior management plans in 2019-2020. This effort to engage in program improvement will strengthen candidates’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions relating to growing as responsive professionals.

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 identified the lowest content score for each SPED PRAXIS exam and embedded or enhanced this specific content in SPED course content in order to meet SLO 1.
- Faculty and University Supervisors provided targeted support and remediation in the field for those who failed to meet the target during the internship process in order to meet SLO 2.
- Faculty worked with the Office of Field Experience to redesign the Observation Form to better align with program requirements and help interns be successful in their practices and meet SLO 2.
- Emphasis on Diversity and Culturally Responsive Practices has been integrated program-wide, but especially in EDSP 5000 *Educational Psychology & SPED Applied to Teaching* and EDSP 5030 *Classroom & Behavior Management of All Students* to provide learner support and enhance their ability to meet SLO 3.
- Based on conversations with TEAC, emphasis has been placed on professionalism throughout program course work. Students are also encouraged to join professional teaching organizations to meet SLO 4.

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- Faculty has introduced information about and promoted research into various replacement behaviors to promote creative behavior management and enhance ability to meet SLO 5.

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 improve student learning in 2019-2020. We will participate in TEAC to identify the needs of our stakeholders, students, and community partners and utilize course data to drive curriculum design. We will introduce information, projects, and assignments addressing Diversity in MAT-SPED courses to support candidate learning and bolster their ability to meet SLO 2. As a program-wide initiative, Diversity and Culturally Responsive Practices will be introduced/supported across the curriculum but will primarily be discussed in **EDSP 5000 Educational Psychology & SPED Applied to Teaching** and **EDSP 5030 Classroom & Behavior Management of All Students** to enhance candidate ability to meet SLO 3. Next, we will promote professionalism and creative thinking that yields engaging ideas by having candidates conduct research into effective educational strategies, determine how to integrate the strategies into an inclusive classroom, and write a mini-grant proposal to be submitted to a professional organization (CEC). Finally, faculty will introduce information about and promote research into various replacement behaviors to promote creative behavior management plans, supporting candidate learning and their ability to meet SLO 5.