

## Assessment Cycle 2019-2020

### Master of Education Curriculum & Instruction (C & I MED) (504)

Department: School of 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 committed to working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge to Northwestern students through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. Through the School of Education and Departments of Health and Human Performance, Military Science, Psychology, and Social Work, the College produces knowledgeable, inspired, and innovative graduates ready for lifelong learning who contribute to the communities in which they reside and professions they serve. Additionally, the GCEHD is dedicated to the communities served by the Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, NSU Elementary Laboratory School, NSU Middle Laboratory School, and the NSU Child and Family Network to assist children and their families related to learning and development.

**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 effective instructional practices. 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 Master of Education in Curriculum & Instruction (MED-CI) program provides certified teachers advanced knowledge in research, pedagogy, and content instruction in a chosen emphasis area, including English Education, Reading, School Librarian, Transition to Teaching, or English as a Second Language. Program faculty provide highly effective coursework, electronically, to meet the needs of candidates who wish to grow as teacher leaders in their schools or districts. During the course of their program, candidates become reflective educators

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who understand both the practical and the theoretical roles of education, blending them to create highly effective instruction for students, to act as mentors for other teachers, and to take on leadership roles in their discipline areas in their schools or districts. Master teachers who graduate from this program will have positive impact on student learning.

### Methodology.

1) Candidates upload signature assignments for each course and complete quality field experience hours throughout the program.

(2) Field Experiences are monitored by course instructors and school site personnel; video clips provide further evidence of teaching activities. Passing grades are not submitted without the completion of assigned field work.

(3) The Program Coordinator and course instructors propose changes to assessments, monitor measurable outcomes of candidate learning, and implement program adjustments, when necessary.

### Student Learning Outcomes:

#### SOL 1.

**Course Map:** *EDCI 5110 Reflective and Coherent Classroom Practice*

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge (SPA #1)	C & I MED graduate candidates demonstrate depth and breadth of discipline-specific content knowledge in the subjects they teach.

#### Measure 1.1. (Direct – knowledge)

SLO 1 is assessed with the **Research and Reflection Essay**, a critical synthesis of current research through which candidates explore highly effective, proven instructional strategies in their areas of emphasis and certification. Program faculty designed and implemented the assessment in the fall of 2017; it is scored with a criterion-based rubric.

Candidates are asked to identify quality research in their fields, synthesize two or more content specific teaching strategies, and critically examine the findings and practical relevance in writing. They are also expected to make connections from the research to their current teaching practices and draw conclusions as to how the studied strategies can improve future practice. In 2018 rubric descriptors were specifically revised in the areas of (1) critical reading of research findings and (2) inclusion of evidence when synthesizing research findings.

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Validity was established by 1) aligning items to state and content standards, 2) avoiding bias and ambiguous language, and 3) stating items in actionable terms on the rubric. Analyses were conducted using the CAEP Evaluation Framework, resulting in Unacceptable, Acceptable, or Target ratings. Since the criteria for this assessment directly correlate to state and content standards, this artifact is a valid measure that indicates candidates' mastery of content-specific pedagogical practice, which, in turn, should translate to increased student content learning. Benchmark for this assessment is Acceptable.

The goal is for at least 90% of the candidates to meet the benchmark of 2.5/3.0.

### Findings:

- AC 2019-2020: Target was met.
- AC 2018-2019: Target was not met.

**Analysis:** In AC 2018-2019 the target was not met. Based on the analysis of AC 2018-2019, the following change was implemented in AC 2019-2020 to drive improvement: Faculty implemented a different approach to the instruction through an interactive discussion board that included a voiced PowerPoint created by the instructor. The topics for the discussion included explanations for using criteria to distinguish reliable research and how the application of instructional strategies, supported by valid research, strengthen teaching practices and, in turn, increase content learning.

In AC 2019-2020, 81.74% of candidates (n=19) met the benchmark target with an aggregate cohort mean of 2.63/3.0 and a range from 2.285 to 3.00. Strengths included the three sections of the essay in which candidates critically explore, interpret, and discuss main areas of their selected topics. The lowest range scores were derived from Rubric Section 5: The topic's direct support from research and Section 7: The formatting and selection of quality references.

As a result, SLO 1 was met for AC 2019-2020.

**Decision:** Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, in AC2020-2021 the course instructor will require candidates to customize their research for the essay within their area of emphasis that is of specific relevance to the improvement of their content instruction. Candidates will submit a formal proposal in which they provide a rationale for their choice of topics and explain how the research of the topic will benefit their content teaching and student learning. The proposal will be approved by instructor and feedback will be provided to candidate as a guide for revision and resubmission. The rubric will be revised to include points that depend on the alignment of the essay topic, content relevancy, and student learning as supported by at least 2 "quality" research studies.

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### SLO 2.

#### Course Map: *EDCI 5120 Advanced Instructional Theories and Strategies*

Departmental Student Learning Goal Program Student Learning Outcome

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Apply discipline-specific content knowledge in professional practice (SPA #2)	C & I MED graduate candidates demonstrate depth and breadth of discipline-specific content knowledge and pedagogical skills that incorporate literacy support, in the subjects they teach to ensure student learning.

#### Measure 2.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills)

SLO 2 is assessed with a three-part signature assignment, the ***Culminating Project: A Reflective Teaching Model***. Candidates demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge and pedagogical expertise while implementing literacy support within their discipline areas. Based on current research trends and literacy support theory to improve content learning in their fields of study, candidates create and teach a lesson in which “best practice” literacy strategies are implemented. Candidates write a case study of the experience and self-reflect on their performance and student learning outcomes. Candidates also create an oral presentation that is suitable for delivery to a grade level meeting at their schools and to share with peers in a class discussion forum. This Project Based Learning (PBL) assignment/assessment is administered across all emphasis areas in the C & I program.

Program faculty designed this comprehensive assessment and developed the rubrics in 2017; following collection of the AY 2017-2018 data, the rubric language was strengthened to re-focus instructional efforts directly toward course objectives assessed in this case study. Analyses of the rubric descriptors were conducted using the CAEP Evaluation Framework, which incorporates three rating levels: Exemplary, Satisfactory, or Developing/Emerging ratings.

Benchmark for this assessment is Satisfactory. The goal is for at least 90% of the candidates to meet benchmark.

#### Findings:

- AC 2019-2020: Target was met.
- AC 2018-2019: Target was met.

**Analysis:** In AC 2018-2019 the target was met. Based on the AC 2018-2019 results, the following change was implemented in AC 2019-2020 to drive improvement: Faculty instituted a discussion forum in which candidates uploaded their models and offered

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rationales with evidence from approved texts and/or research studies to specifically support their conclusions. Peer feedback encouraged revisions to works prior to final upload for instructor scoring. As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 faculty agree that the target was met.

In AC 2019-2020, 89.5% of assessed candidates (n=19) met the benchmark with an aggregate cohort mean of 2.841/3.00 and a range from 2.631 to 3.00. Strengths included the three sections of the assignment in which candidates aligned standards with learning targets and centered planning around student needs. The lowest range scores involved using writing as assessment and seeking leadership roles, such as mentoring new teachers, in teaching placements.

As a result of this change, SLO 2 was met for AC2019-2020.

**Decisions:** Based on the analysis of AC 2019-2020, the following change will be implemented in AC 2020-2021 for continued improvement: Faculty will adjust instruction to include an interactive discussion forum, through which candidates will explore resources for broader understanding of writing as an assessment process and how it can be implemented to support content learning for students.

### SLO 3

**Course Map:** *EDCI 5110 Reflective and Coherent Classroom Practice* (early in the program); *EDUC 5850 Action Research for School Improvement* (late in the program)

Departmental Student Learning	Program Student Learning Outcome
Model professional behaviors and characteristics (SPA #6)	C & I MED graduate candidates demonstrate the professional dispositions and characteristics of effective educators in their interactions with peers and program faculty;

### Measure 3.1 (Indirect/Dispositions)

Measure 3.1. (Indirect/Dispositions) SLO 3 is assessed through the ***Professional Dispositions and Characteristics Scale in Advanced Programs (PDC)*** Likert scale. Criteria for this assessment align with state and content standards, avoid bias/ambiguous language, and state items in actionable terms. The measure of professional dispositions and characteristics of program candidates is based on a compilation of each candidate's professional demeanor during coursework, communication interchanges, and field experiences throughout the program. The assessment is completed by instructors in EDCI 5110, an early course in the program, and by the major professor, who guides the candidate's research in EDUC 5850 at the end of the program.

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The PDC instrument allows faculty to evaluate attributes recognized as professional dispositions & characteristics of practicing teachers at the graduate level. Faculty created the dispositional evaluation based on agreed-upon best practices and constructs outlined in InTASC standards. The revised assessment, designed for online programs, was first administered in AC 2017-2018 cycle for C & I candidates. 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 Created Assessments, resulting in “below sufficient,” “sufficient,” “above sufficient,” and “not applicable” ratings. Benchmark for this assessment is a Sufficient rating. The goal is for at least 90% of the candidates to meet benchmark.

The rubric was revised in 2019 to more accurately assess candidates who engage exclusively through the online format.

### Findings:

- AC 2019-2020: Target was met.
- AC 2018-2019: Target was met.

**Analysis:** In AC 2018-2019 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results, the following changes were implemented in AC 2019-2020 to drive improvement: Faculty learned the “intent” of the terminology in the assessment, regarding online student evaluation and the format was updated to better assess online graduate students. New faculty, who were held responsible for evaluating this assessment, received training on the rubric. As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was met.

In AC 2019-2020 (n=25), data show an aggregate mean of 2.839/3.00 for the two sets of students—EDCI 5110 (n=19) and EDUC 5850 (n=6). Early program evaluations were completed at the end of EDCI resulting in mean scores ranging between 2.421 and 3.00 with an aggregate mean of 2.867/3.00. The second iteration of the assessment was completed on candidates who were at the end of their programs. They scored an aggregate mean of 2.88/3.00. Faculty scored candidates as “not applicable” in only 4 categories as opposed to 13 “not applicable” area ratings in 2018 showing positive results of the fine tuning of the assessment to meet needs of online delivery. Resulting data from the use of this assessment in AC 2019-2020, indicate that improvements were noted, and the target was met. 96% of the candidates met the benchmark with 20 scoring in the ranges of “above sufficient,” 4 in “sufficient,” and 1 in “below sufficient.” Challenges included assuring accuracy of work and academic, research-based writing. Strong areas included Self-Reflection of practice for positive change, Commitment to issues of diversity, and Professional ethics.

As a result of this change, SLO 3 was met for AC 2019-2020.

**Decision:** Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, the following change will be implemented to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021: Faculty will add a requirement

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for candidates to self-evaluate their Professional Dispositions and Characteristics at the conclusion of both EDCI 5110 and EDUC 5850. The candidates' self-evaluation scores will be uploaded for inclusion in the data collections for the AC 2020-2021 report.

### SLO 4

Course Map: *EDCI 5140 Clinical Internship in C & I*

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)	C & I MED graduate candidates demonstrate their leadership abilities to recognize, analyze, and solve school-wide/district-wide problems and plan strategically for school and instructional improvement in their disciplines with the goal of improving student learning.

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

Measure: 4.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills) SLO 4 is assessed through the 10-part *Intern Portfolio of Leadership Experiences* and scored with a criteria-based rubric; ratings depend on the quality of rationales for categorizing an experience and the rich description of each experience as it relates to student learning in each candidate's chosen area of program emphasis. The work is a collection of a candidate's evidence of school-wide or district-wide strategic planning and various leadership-related opportunities that have occurred during the academic year in which EDCI 5140 is taken. Evidence of the level of participation is required for each entry in the portfolio, including three levels of participation—observer, participant, leader.

Experiences suitable for inclusion enhance candidates' understanding for recognizing, analyzing, solving school-wide/district-wide problems, and planning strategically for school and instructional improvement in their disciplines with the end goal of improving student learning. Activities include attendance and involvement in administrative meetings or trainings regarding strategic planning, school vision, community or school problems/issues, school technology acquisition/funding, literacy program administration, and curriculum improvement. In AC 2017-2018 revisions of this assessment were made by faculty to include rationales for candidates to explain their experiences overall and how each activity met the requirements for leadership and participation over observation and how the activity fit into the list of required activity descriptions of leadership involvement at their schools.

Because the criteria for this assessment are directly based on state and content standards, this instrument is a valid measure of leadership skills and knowledge acquired by candidates in their end-of-program practicum course. Analysis was conducted using the CAEP Evaluation Framework for levels of quality when rating

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assessments, resulting in “developing,” “sufficient,” or “exemplary” ratings. Benchmark for this assessment was “sufficient” with at least 90% of candidates scoring benchmark.

### Findings:

- AC 2019-2020: Target was met.
- AC 2018-2019: Target was met.

**Analysis:** In AC 2018-2019 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results the following change was implemented in AC 2019-2020 to drive improvement: Faculty instituted a new assessment area, requiring candidates to provide a strong, reflective correlation between each of the portfolio leadership experiences and how each of the 10 experiences directly support student learning in their placements. As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was met.

In AC 2019-2020 100% of the candidates (n=8) met the benchmark with all falling in the exemplary and satisfactory categories. Average scores were 92.5%. Data show an aggregate mean of 2.812 of 3.00. Weak areas included documentation descriptions that were lacking in quality or missing entirely. Five of the eight candidates made 100% on the assessment.

As a result of this change, SLO 4 was met for AC2019-2020.

**Decisions:** Based on the analysis of these AC 2019-2020 results the following change will be implemented in AC 2020-2021 for continued improvement: Faculty will improve the rubric criteria to provide specific expectations for the documentation of each activity area. An audio supported PowerPoint will be added to explain the expectations for each category of the portfolio with suggestions for activities. Instructor feedback at bi-weekly checkpoints will also be added to encourage depth of reflection throughout the semester.

### SLO 5

#### Course Map:

#### *EDUC 5850 Action Research for School Improvement*

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Make responsible decisions and problem- solve, using data to inform actions when appropriate (SPA #5)	C & I MED candidates demonstrate their proficiency in the planning and execution of action research and data analyses, designed to measure curriculum knowledge and instructional approaches that directly affect student learning in their content areas.

#### Measure 5.1 (Direct – Knowledge, Skills)

The SLO 5 goal is assessed through the ***C & I Portfolio Defense Presentation***, a performance-based evaluation of action research and a direct approach to the

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measurement of candidates' knowledge and skills in the program. The work for this assessment is accomplished over two semesters toward the end of the program. Initiated in EDUC 5010, the research and presentation components are completed in EDUC 5850 when the work is defended to faculty. The defense also includes a presentation of the work and includes important "takeaways" from EDCI 5020 (curriculum) and EDCI 5030 (instruction) course learnings. Passing this defense is a condition of graduation, and successful results are formally submitted to the Graduate School as program completion. Program faculty collaborated to redesign the end-of-program performance-based assessment in 2010 and have completed multiple revisions to the rubric since then to ensure it reliably measures six areas of classroom-based action research and four areas of program curricular knowledge and instructional design skills. Overall, the work provides evidence that candidates know how to plan and execute research that is relevant to practice in their disciplines and has positive impact on student content learning.

Instrument validity was established by aligning items to state and content standards, 2) avoiding bias and ambiguous language, and 3) stating items in actionable terms on the rubric. Analyses of criteria are conducted using the CAEP Evaluation Framework with ratings of Unacceptable, Acceptable, and Target.

Benchmark for this assessment is Acceptable with a 2.5 mean. The goal is for at least 90% of the students to meet the benchmark.

### Findings:

- AC 2019-2020: Target was met.
- AC 2018-2019: Target was met.

**Analysis:** In AC 2018-2019 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results the following change was implemented in AC 2019-2020 to drive improvement: Candidates were required to upload the summarized PowerPoint presentation of their work for peer review in an interactive discussion forum. Each candidate received two peer reviews one week prior to the assessment presentation which allowed time to revise presentations before presenting for faculty committee scoring.

In AC 2019-2020 a small cohort of candidates (n=6), enrolled in EDUC 5850, were evaluated on the revised rubric for this assessment, scoring an aggregate mean of 2.695/3.00 with a range of 2.50/3.00. Lowest scores included meeting criteria for comparing research studies, drawing conclusions from the research, and making recommendations for future studies. High scores included the ability to identify the research problem for their own work and the ability to articulate how learning in their MED programs has positively impacted their instructional practices. 100% of the candidates met the benchmark with all 6 falling in the Target or Acceptable categories.

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As a result of this change, SLO 5 was met for AC2019-2020.

**Decisions:** Based on the analysis of these AC 2019-2020 results the following change will be implemented in AC 2020-2021 for continued improvement: Faculty will complete a mandatory Zoom conference early in the semester to discuss the research and expectations of the course; a second mandatory Zoom conference will follow two weeks prior to the presentation. The personal contact may alleviate anxiety about the research's culminating assessment, leading to better student understanding of the research process.

### Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvements Based on Analysis of Results in AC 2019-2020

**SLO 1:** Faculty provided more direct instruction, prior to the assignment through an interactive discussion board. The topics for the discussion included explanations for using criteria to distinguish reliable research and how the application of instructional strategies, supported by valid research, strengthen teaching practices and, in turn, increase content learning.

**SLO 2:** Faculty instituted a discussion forum in which candidates uploaded their models and offered rationales with evidence from approved texts and/or research studies to specifically support reflective conclusions. Peer feedback encouraged revisions to works prior to final upload for instructor scoring.

**SLO 3:** Faculty were informed of the "intent" of the terminology in the assessment, regarding online student evaluation. Any new faculty, held responsible for evaluating this assessment, received training on the rubric.

**SLO 4:** Faculty instituted a new assessment area for the rubric, requiring candidates to provide a strong, reflective correlation between each of the portfolio leadership experiences and how each of the 10 experiences directly support student learning in their placements.

**SLO 5:** Faculty asked each candidate to upload the summarized PowerPoint presentation of their work for peer review in an interactive discussion forum. Each candidate received two peer reviews one week prior to the assessment presentation which allowed time to revise presentations before presenting for faculty committee scoring.

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### Plan of Action Moving Forward in AC 2020-2021: Based on Analysis of Results:

**SLO 1:** Faculty will require candidates to customize their research within an area that is of specific relevance to the improvement of their content instruction. Candidates will submit a formal proposal in which they provide a rationale for their choice of topics and explain how the research of the topic will benefit their content teaching and student learning. The proposal will be approved by instructor or feedback will be provided to candidate as a guide for revision and resubmission.

**SLO 2:** Faculty will adjust instruction to include an interactive discussion forum, through which candidates will explore resources for broader understanding of writing as an assessment process and how it can be implemented to support content learning for students

**SLO 3:** Faculty will add a requirement for candidates to self-evaluate their Professional Dispositions and Characteristics at the conclusion of both EDCI 5110 and EDUC 5850. The candidates' self-evaluation scores will be uploaded for inclusion in the data collections for the AC 2020-2021 report.

**SLO 4:** Faculty will improve the rubric criteria to provide specific expectations for the documentation of each activity area. An audio supported PowerPoint will be added to the class resources to explain the expectations for each category of the portfolio with suggestions for activities. Instructor feedback at bi-weekly checkpoints will also be added to encourage depth of reflection throughout the semester.

**SLO 5:** Faculty will complete a mandatory virtual conference early in the semester to discuss the research and expectations of the course; a second mandatory virtual conference will follow two weeks prior to the presentation. The personal contact may alleviate anxiety about the research's culminating assessment, leading to better student understanding of the research process.