

M.A.T. Elementary Education (506 MAT)

Division: Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development

Department: School of Education

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Northwestern Mission: Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution that is committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

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.

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.

Program Mission Statement: The mission of the Northwestern State University alternate certification Elementary Education Program is to prepare educators with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to be effective in the Elementary classroom while earning teacher certification. The program prepares educators who are currently in the field to meet children's diverse needs in a variety of settings while documenting and assessing their growth over time in relation to state standards. Upon

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completion of the program, which meets the state accreditation standards, candidates are equipped to meet the many demands of the teaching profession.

Methodology:

The assessment process for the M.A.T. in Elementary Education is as follows:

1. Data from assessments tools are collected and returned to the department chair and program coordinator.
2. The program coordinator will analyze data to determine student learning and whether students have met the measurable outcomes.
3. Results from the assessment will be shared and discussed with program faculty.
4. The program coordinator, in consultation with program faculty, will review data and based on the 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: Candidates take the PRAXIS PLT in their second year of coursework, prior to their residency (EDUC 5410 Elementary *Internship in Teaching*).

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge (SPA #1, Praxis II)	Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of Developmentally Appropriate Practices relating to elementary education.

Measure 1.1. (Direct – Knowledge)

SLO 1 is assessed with the PRAXIS Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT): Grades K-6 (#5622) exam, which is nationally normed. The assessment is a computer-based standardized test, and the benchmark performance is a minimum qualifying score of 160 as required by the State of Louisiana for certification as an elementary teacher.

Quality of the assessment/evidence is assured because (1) the State of Louisiana requires this test, and (2) the test is nationally normed.

For candidates to be successful, they must achieve a qualifying score that is at least as high as the State minimum requirement of 160. The target is for 100% of candidates to achieve the minimum requirement of 160.

Findings: Target was met.

- **AC 2019 - 2020:** 100% of candidates met target
- **AC 2018 - 2019:** 100% of candidates met target

Analysis: In AC 2018 – 2019, 100% of candidates met the target. The qualifying score for the PLT Grades K-6 is 160. Candidates' scores ranged from 172 to 186, with a

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mean score of 179 (n=4). Candidates scores continue to exceed the national median score of 177. No changes were implemented in AC 2019-2020 based on the analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results.

In AC 2019 – 2020, 100% of candidates met the target. The qualifying score for the PLT Grades K-6 is 160. Candidates' scores ranged from 165 to 184, with a mean score of 174.75 (n=4). As a cohort, candidate scores did not exceed the national mean score of 177 but target was met.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Based on the analysis of the AC2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will offer PRAXIS workshops and provide candidates access to PRAXIS preparation resources in collaboration with the local city and university libraries. To drive continuous improvement, maximize student learning and to continue to improve the program, faculty will offer PRAXIS workshops in all content areas, partner with the Natchitoches Parish library and other libraries within the region to offer access to Learning Express and identify and implement alternate ways to support candidates in their course to help them be successful on the licensure tests, specifically the PRAXIS II PLT exam.

SLO 2

Course Map: *EDUC 5410 and EDUC 5411 Elementary Internship in Teaching*

Candidates performance in the classroom in the classroom is assessed while enrolled in *EDUC 5410 or EDUC 5411 Elementary Internship in Teaching*. Candidates must earn a minimum rating of 2 on the 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 Developmentally Appropriate Practices relating to Elementary curriculum, instruction and assessment.

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

SLO 2 is assessed through a Teacher Candidate Observation Form while enrolled in *EDUC 5410 or EDUC 5411 Elementary Internship in Teaching*. 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 form 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 a minimum of "2" on the rubric.

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

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Framework. 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 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 a “2” on the rubric. 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: Target was met.

- **AC 2019-2020:** 100% of candidates met target
- **AC 2018-2019:** 100% of candidates met target

Analysis: In AC 2018 -2019, candidates were evaluated using a Teacher Candidate Observation Form during the *Internship in Teaching*. 100% of candidates met the target and scored “Effective Emerging” (n = 3). Based on this evidence, faculty examined the procedures of preparing the portfolio and revised the explanation handout candidates are given to prepare for the portfolio defense. During AC 2019-2020, 100% of candidates met the target and scored “Effective Emerging” (n = 1). Candidates’ artifacts, written reflections, and oral reflections demonstrated student learning via mastery of standards. Data collected in AC 2019-2020 was reflective of one semester (Fall 2019) due to COVID 19 accommodations during Spring 2020.

Based on analysis results from the previous year (AC 2018-2019) and one semester of available data for AC 2019-2020, faculty decided to assess candidates using this instrument to measure candidate performance. Candidate scores on the form provide evidence for meeting state identified standards aligned with artifacts tied to InTASC and content standards. To maximize student learning and to continue to improve the program, faculty will examine data gleaned from candidates’ observation scores and oral reflections to determine necessary changes and find more ways to support candidates in their internship to help them be successful educators.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019 – 2020 results, faculty will further study the observation results and the instrument used. With such a small sample in fall 2019 (n=1) combined with inconclusive spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic school closures, more investigation is needed. Candidate scores on the form during the initial iteration in AC 2018-2019 and Fall 2019 provide evidence for meeting state identified standards aligned with artifacts tied to InTASC and content standards.

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Based on the analysis of the results in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, in AC 2020 – 2021, the following action will be taken to continue to assess candidates' knowledge and skills relating to elementary learning environments, curriculum, instruction and assessment. Use of the Teacher Candidate Observation Form in EDUC 5410 and EDUC 5411 will be used to assess candidate performance during the two-semester internship during the final two semesters of the program. University supervisors will be encouraged to provide formative feedback on learning environments and instruction during post-observation conferences.

SLO 3

Course Map: *EDUC 5410 Elementary Internship in Teaching*

SLO 3 is assessed through a dispositions form in *EDUC 5410 Elementary Internship in Teaching*, which is the candidates first semester of the last year.

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 *EDUC 5410 Elementary Internship in Teaching*, which is the candidates' first semester of the last year. 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 a minimum of "Sufficient".

Findings: Target was met.

- **AC 2019-2020:** 100% of candidates met target
- **AC 2018-2019:** 100% of candidates met target

Analysis: In AC 2018-2019, 100% of candidates met target and scored "Above Sufficient" on the rubric. Candidates' mean score was 4.66 (n=3). In AC 2019-2020, candidates also met target and scored "Above Sufficient" with a score of 5.00 (n=1). Program faculty reviewed the evidence to assesses student learning and based on the analysis, faculty decided to add resources relating to professionalism and motivation for teaching to support student learning, as this is a growing concern in the field of elementary education. This effort to engage in program improvement will strengthen

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candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions relating to growing as professionals who teach children in the elementary grades.

This assessment is used in the Internship Course, which is one of the last courses candidates take before graduating; therefore, faculty expect scores to be strong.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 data, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will add resources relating to professionalism and motivation for teaching to support student learning, as this is a growing concern in the field of elementary education. This effort to engage in program improvement will strengthen candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions relating to growing as professionals who teach children in the elementary grades.

Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, in 2020-2021, faculty will assess candidates' professionalism and motivation for teaching to support student learning to maintain a pattern of continuous improvement.

SLO 4

Course Map: EDUC 5411 Elementary *Internship in Teaching*

SLO 4 is assessed through a lesson plan assignment in EDUC 5411 Elementary *Internship in Teaching*, which is candidates' last 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 Elementary Education.

Measure 4.1. (Direct – Knowledge and Skills)

SLO 4 is assessed through a lesson plan assignment in EDUC 5411 Elementary *Internship in Teaching*, which is the candidates' last 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 Ration (CVR)

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

Findings: Target was met.

- **AC 2019-2020:** 100% of candidates met target
- **AC 2018-2019:** 100% of candidates met target

Analysis: In AC 2018-2019, candidates mean score was 3.43 (n=3). Candidates’ lowest scores fell into three categories, Technology, Reflection on Instruction, Integration of Critical Thinking Skills and Adaptations to Meet the Needs of All Learners.

In AC 2019-2020, data was analyzed from the Fall semester only due to pandemic school closures in the Spring semester limiting data collection. AC 2019-2020, candidate mean score was 3.0 (n=1). The candidate’s lowest scores fell into four categories, Planning for Instruction, Reflection on Instruction, Adaptations to Meet the Needs of All Learners, and Integration of Literacy Strategies.

From AC 2018-2019, program faculty added resources relating to adaptation strategies to meet the needs of learners and reflection on instruction to support student learning. Based on the results from AC 2019-2020, faculty should continue to incorporate resources in these two areas. Because the assessment and rubric are tied to InTASC standards and state standards, candidates’ artifacts demonstrated student learning via mastery of InTASC and content standards.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Based on the analysis of the results in AC 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 which was impacted by the pandemic, in 2020-2021, program faculty will add resources relating to adaptation strategies to meet the needs of learners, integration of literacy strategies, and reflecting on instruction to support student learning. In addition, faculty will incorporate resources to strengthen candidate’s ability to plan for instruction and opportunities to develop instructional plans in courses prior to the internship. 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 5480, Using Research to Improve Instructional Practice*

SLO 5 is assessed *EDUC 5480, Using Research to Improve Instructional Practice*, through a paper-in-lieu-of-thesis.

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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.	Candidates applied the educational research process through a review of literature, analysis of data, and plans to improve instructional practice with empirically supported decisions.

Measure 5.1. (Direct - Skills)

Assessment: Paper-in-lieu-of-thesis

The Graduate School required each master's level candidate to complete a paper-in-lieu-of-thesis prior to graduation. Guidelines were specified by the Graduate Council and followed a traditional format with a paper introduction section, review of related literature, and plan for a methodology.

Candidates were asked to engage in reflective teaching by evaluating their instructional communication skills, including the research variables of 1) socio-communicative orientation, including assertiveness, responsiveness, and flexibility, 2) sense of self-efficacy with instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement, 3) use of behavior alteration techniques (BATs) through the use of behavior alteration messages (BAMs), 4) use of nonverbal immediacy during instruction, and 5) ability to make content relevant to students. The assessment allowed candidates to self-evaluate their skills and use that data, along with findings from published academic studies, to inform their future instructional practices. Candidates developed specific action plans by problem-solving and making decisions about how to improve their skills on the research variables listed above.

The paper-in-lieu-of-thesis was graded using a holistic checklist rubric with five evaluative criteria and a five-point, ranking scale ranging from 0 (Missing) to 4 (Beyond Expectations). The benchmark score of 2 indicated that an evaluative criterion was minimally acceptable with the required elements from the directions present, but needed polishing. The evaluative criteria aligned with the Graduate School's requirements and included the following parts of the paper: 1) preface, 2) introduction, 3) review of related literature, 4) methodology, and 5) references. Additionally, candidates had to earn an overall letter grade of C or higher (175 out of 250 points) on the paper-in-lieu-of-thesis before it was submitted to the Graduate School to meet the graduation requirement.

For the 2019-20 academic year, the following changes were made in EDUC 5840 to improve the paper-in-lieu-of-thesis submission and evaluation process. First, candidates received two model papers that earned an A in previous semesters to view as a guide. This gave candidates opportunities to see end products that met the SLO. Second, a pre-evaluation self-checklist was added to the course for candidates to use to improve the overall quality of submissions. The self-checklist included items for checking plagiarism, following paper-in-lieu-of-thesis directions and length requirements, and checking formatting and citations guidelines. These changes were implementing to help candidates achieve the SLO as they apply the educational research process through a

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review of literature, analysis of data, and plans to improve instructional practice with empirically supported decisions.

Finding: Target was met.

- **AC 2019-2020:** 100% of candidates met target
- **AC 2018-2019:** 100% of candidates met target

Analysis: During the AC 2018-2019, 100% (n=4) candidates successfully completed EDUC 5840 and the paper in lieu of thesis. Grades for the students ranged from an A to a C for the course. Based on these results, in AC 2019-2020, faculty worked individually with candidates to complete their major research project/paper in lieu of thesis. In AC 2019-2020, four candidates completed EDUC 5840 with grades ranging from A to C.

During AC 2019-2020, rankings on evaluative criteria ranging from 1 to 4 on a scale from 0 to 4. Scores ranged from 175 to 250 total points out of 250 possible points. Candidates met the SLO because they successfully applied the educational research process through a review of literature, analysis of data, and plans to improve instructional practice with empirically supported decisions. All papers were accepted by the Graduate School and the student learning outcome (SLO) was met at 100%.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Based on the analysis of AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, the following changes will be made in EDUC 5840 to improve the paper-in-lieu-of-thesis activity. First, instructional resources will be aligned with the 7th edition of the APA manual, including readings, videos, and links to supplemental resources. Next, two discussion forums will be added to the course to help students reflect on the course readings prior to writing the paper-in-lieu-of-thesis. Lastly, candidates will be asked to provide a reference list of the published studies they intend on using prior to typing the review of literature section of the paper. The goal of these three changes will be to improve the quality of the paper-in-lieu-of-thesis each candidate submits.

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.

- Multiple PRAXIS workshops were offered to candidates, addressing all content areas. Also, the university partnered with the Natchitoches Parish Library to offer access to Learning Express, a source for PRAXIS test preparation to support candidate learning and their ability to meet SLO 1.
- Faculty added resources related to addressing demonstrating knowledge of students, managing classroom procedures, managing student behavior, organizing physical space, engaging students in learning, using questioning and discussion

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techniques and using assessment in instruction to coursework, helping them achieve SLO 2.

- Content addressing Professionalism, motivation and passion for teaching was added to Education courses to facilitate candidates' professional dispositions and enhance their ability to meet SLO 3.
- Faculty increased course content on Differentiation, Higher Order Thinking, and Instructional Planning and increased opportunities for student to practice Reflecting on Instruction 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 5480, Using Research to Improve Instructional Practice*, and sample papers and online resources were shared with candidates to support student learning and to help them achieve SLO 5.

Plan of Action Moving Forward:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, in AC 2020-2021, the following action will be taken for continuous improvement.

The SOE will focus on the implementation of plans developed in AC 2019-2020 along with the following action steps will demonstrated a continuous plan for program improvement.

In AC 2020-2021, the following action will be taken:

- Offer PRAXIS workshops and partner with the Natchitoches Parish Library to offer access to Learning Express, a source for PRAXIS test preparation to support candidate learning and their ability to meet SLO 1.
- Add videos and additional resources to Elementary coursework to provide learner support in addressing demonstrates knowledge of students, designing student assessments, establishing a culture for learning, managing student behavior, and demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness to help them meet SLO 2.
- SLO 2 will be assessed using Teacher Candidate Observation Form in EDUC 5410 and EDUC 5411 Elementary *Internship in Teaching*, which candidates take in their last year of the program. This change was made to meet CAEP demands and to align with departmental goals.
- Videos and resources relating to Professionalism and motivation will continue to be added to Education courses to facilitate candidates' professional dispositions and enhance their ability to meet SLO 3.

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- Faculty will add resources relating to planning for instruction, adaptation strategies to meet the needs of learners, integration of literacy strategies and reflecting on instruction to support student learning in Education courses to provide learner support and help them meet SLO 4.
- Faculty will develop course assignments to allow candidates opportunities to practice developing instructional plans and integrate literacy strategies in Education courses to provide learner development and support to help them meet SLO 4.
- In EDUC 5840, faculty will incorporate discussion forums to help students reflect on course readings and candidates will be required to provide a reference list of the published studies they intend on using prior to typing the review of literature section of the paper-in-lieu-of-thesis.(SLO 5)
- Faculty will increase focus on research writing and on APA 7th Edition format in courses taken prior to *EDUC 5480, Using Research to Improve Instructional Practice*, using holistic rubrics. Also, additional instructional and online resources aligned with the 7th edition of the APA manual (readings, videos, and links to supplemental resources) will be shared with candidates to support student learning and to help them achieve SLO 5.
- Moving forward, SLO 5 will be assessed with a paper-in-lieu-of-thesis in *EDUC 5480, Using Research to Improve Instructional Practice*, using holistic rubrics and P12 Student Learning Impact assessment in order to meet CAEP requirements and to align with departmental goals.