

Assessment Cycle 2020-2021

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

Reading Specialists add on certification (026)

Department: School of Education

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Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution 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 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.

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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 not met.

AC 2020-2021: Target was not met.

Analysis: 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.

Beginning in fall 2020, faculty required candidates to customize their research within an area that was of specific relevance to the improvement of their content instruction. Candidates submitted a formal proposal in which they provided a rationale for their choice of topics and explained how the research of the topic benefited their content teaching and student learning. The proposal was approved by instructor or feedback was provided to candidate as a guide for revision and resubmission. Despite these changes, in AC 2020-21, the target was not met.

Only 82% of the students, (9 out of 11), met this target. Target was 90%, however, 82% students met this benchmark.

These changes had a direct impact on a portion of the students and their ability to demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge; however, more direct instruction is needed as well as additional supports.

Decision, Action, or Recommendation:

In AC 2020-2021, the target was not met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2021-2022, faculty will require candidates to customize their research within an area that was of specific relevance to the improvement of their content instruction. Candidates submitted a formal proposal in which they provided a rationale for their choice of topics and explained how the research of the topic benefited their content teaching and student

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learning. The proposal was approved by instructor or feedback was provided to candidate as a guide for revision and resubmission.

Faculty required candidates to customize their research within an area that was of specific relevance to the improvement of their content instruction. Candidates submitted a formal proposal in which they provided a rationale for their choice of topics and explained how the research of the topic benefited their content teaching and student learning. The proposal was approved by instructor or feedback was provided to candidate as a guide for revision and resubmission. These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate depth and breadth of discipline-specific content knowledge in the subjects they teach, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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.

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 2020-2021: Target was met.

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Analysis: 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. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results 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.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2020-21, the target was met. 100% of the students met the target in AC 2020-2021. These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to apply discipline-specific content knowledge in professional practice.

Decision, Action, or Recommendation:

In AC 2020-2021, the target was met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2021-2022, faculty will include a variety of pedagogy examples and videos to ensure understanding of effective literacy strategies, support and assist students in developing an effective lesson plan that incorporates literacy strategies, provide examples of exemplar presentations for students to review.

Faculty adjusted instruction to include an interactive discussion forum, through which candidates explored resources for broader understanding of writing as an assessment process and how it could be implemented to support content learning for students. These changes will improve the student's ability to 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, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

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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.

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. 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 2020-2021: Target not met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target for SLO 3 was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, the following change were implemented to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021: Faculty added 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 should have been uploaded for inclusion in the data collections for the AC 2020-2021 report.

Despite these changes, in AC 2020-21, the target was not met as no data was collected. With limited interaction within schools, the Professional Dispositions and Characteristics form was not collected during AC 2020-2021 because of COVID 19 protocols and limitations.

Decision or Recommendation.

In AC 2020-2021, the target was not met.

Based on information gathered in AC 2019-2020 faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2021-2022, faculty will use the 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 2021-2022 report.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate the professional dispositions and characteristics of effective educators in their interactions with peers and program faculty, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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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)

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.

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 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 2020-2021: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2019-2020, the target for SLO 4 was met. In AC 2019-2020 100% of the candidates (n=8) met the benchmark with all falling in the exemplary and satisfactory

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

As a result of these changes, in AC 2020-21, the target was met. 100% of students (seven out of seven) students successfully met the target. These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to exhibit creative thinking that yields engaging ideas, processes, materials, and experiences appropriate for the discipline.

Decision or Recommendation.

In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

Faculty will improve the rubric criteria to provide specific expectations for the documentation of each activity area. Instructor feedback at bi-weekly checkpoints will also added to encourage depth of reflection throughout the semester.

These changes will improve the student's ability to 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, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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 2020-2021: Target was not met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target for SLO 5 was met. 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. 100% of the candidates met the benchmark with all 6 falling in the Target or Acceptable categories.

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

Despite these changes, in AC 2020-21, the target was not met. 86% (6 of 7) students met the target.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to make responsible decisions and problem- solve, using data to inform actions when appropriate, however, more support is needed for students.

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Decision or Recommendation.

In AC 2020-2021, the target was not met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2021-2022, faculty will continue with Zoom sessions designed to alleviate anxiety about the culminating assessment.

These changes will improve the student's ability to 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, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvements Based on Analysis of Results in AC 2019-2020. Program faculty made several decisions after examining results of data analysis from AC 2019-2020 which resulted in improved student learning and program improvement in AC 2020-2021.

SLO 1: Faculty required candidates to customize their research within an area that was of specific relevance to the improvement of their content instruction. Candidates submitted a formal proposal in which they provided a rationale for their choice of topics and explained how the research of the topic benefited their content teaching and student learning. The proposal was approved by instructor or feedback was provided to candidate as a guide for revision and resubmission.

SLO 2: Faculty adjusted instruction to include an interactive discussion forum, through which candidates explored resources for broader understanding of writing as an assessment process and how it could be implemented to support content learning for students.

SLO 3: Faculty added 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 were uploaded for inclusion in the data collections for the AC 2020-2021 report.

SLO 4: Faculty improved the rubric criteria to provide specific expectations for the documentation of each activity area. An audio supported PowerPoint was 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 was also added to encourage depth of reflection throughout the semester.

SLO 5: Faculty completed a mandatory virtual conference early in the semester to discuss the research and expectations of the course; a second mandatory virtual conference followed two weeks prior to the presentation. The personal contact may have

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alleviated anxiety about the research's culminating assessment, leading to better student understanding of the research process.

Plan of Action for Moving Forward:

Program faculty examined the evidence and results of data analysis from AC 2020-2021 and will take steps to continue to improve student learning in AC 2021-2022:

- Faculty will require candidates to customize their research within an area that was of specific relevance to the improvement of their content instruction. Candidates will submit a formal proposal in which they provided a rationale for their choice of topics and explained how the research of the topic benefited 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.
- Faculty required candidates to customize their research within an area that was of specific relevance to the improvement of their content instruction. Candidates will submit a formal proposal in which they provided a rationale for their choice of topics and explained how the research of the topic benefited 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.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate depth and breadth of discipline-specific content knowledge in the subjects they teach, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

- Faculty will adjust instruction to include an interactive discussion forum, through which candidates explored resources for broader understanding of writing as an assessment process and how it could be implemented to support content learning for students. These changes will improve the student's ability to 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, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.
- 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.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate the professional dispositions and characteristics of effective educators in their interactions with peers and program faculty, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

- 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 added to encourage depth of reflection throughout the semester. These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate their leadership abilities

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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, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

- 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.

These changes will improve the student's ability to 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, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.