

Assessment Plan
College of Education
Department of Special and Early Education
B. S. in Early Childhood Studies
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1. Introduction

The Department of Special and Early Education (SEED) is a relatively new department in the College of Education at Northern Illinois University. It was formed as a result of the College of Education restructuring that began in the 2010-2011 academic year. Prior to being in SEED, the B.S. Early Childhood Studies program was part of the Department of Teaching and Learning (TLRN). SEED currently houses graduate and undergraduate programs in early childhood and special education.

The Bachelors' program in Early Childhood Studies at NIU is an interdisciplinary program with two options or program pathways. Both options include a common set of core requirements (61-64 semester credit hours) which lead candidates to mastery of the standards for early childhood professionals. Both options are designed to meet the guidelines for the preparation of educators as outlined by the Illinois State Board of Education, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and the NIU Office of Educator Licensure and Preparation. Analysis of the alignment between Illinois guidelines and NAEYC standards indicates similarity in expected outcomes. In addition, all teacher preparation programs in Illinois must meet additional requirements for the inclusion of special education coursework, and the NIU Office of Educator Licensure and Preparation requires the cultivation of specific dispositions for teaching as described in the NIU Conceptual Framework.

At the institutional level, the Bachelors' program in Early Childhood Studies is jointly administered by the Department of Special and Early Education in the College of Education and the School of Family, Consumer, and Nutrition Sciences in the College of Health and Human Sciences through the Early Childhood Studies Steering Committee. The committee includes administrators, faculty, advisors, and students. For admission to the junior year, candidates must have a Grade Point Average of 2.50 or higher (on a 4.0 scale), three letters of recommendation, experience working with young children, and a high quality writing sample. The Early Childhood Studies program is designed to meet the high demand for teachers, especially in public school settings including Illinois pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and elementary school grades 1-3 in urban and rural areas in Illinois. Candidates selecting the emphasis housed in the College of Education also take a four course sequence that prepares them to teach children with special needs in preschool classrooms. Candidates are prepared to work with diverse populations and engage in the creation of family-school community partnerships. Program alumni frequently pursue an additional endorsement in teaching children learning English as a Second Language.

Several factors place the assessment plan in context. One of the most immediate and pressing factors deals with changes in teacher licensure. At the time of this writing, we have submitted a new program to officials at the State that corresponds with new early childhood licensure. The new licensure prepares candidates to work with children up to and including 2nd grade (rather than 3rd grade). Therefore, we have revised courses, developed new courses, revised assessments, and developed new assessments to reflect this new licensure grade level. Course syllabi, clinicals, and student teaching experiences must also reflect this new licensure.

Second, during the 2013 and 2104 academic years, the SEED Acting Department Chair requested that faculty revise and update courses to meet new Illinois Professional Teaching standards. Faculty spent a year revising courses, updating syllabi, updating assessments, and resequencing courses to meet the new standards.

Third, the role and responsibilities of early childhood educators continue to change. Many of our program curricular and assessment changes reflect the many roles and responsibilities assumed by early educators. For example, early educators are responsible for assessing children, planning and delivering instruction, collaborating with others, working closely with parents, and working closely with those in community agencies. Our courses and assessment plan have continuously been updated to reflect these and other critical teacher expectations, as recommended by members of our accrediting agencies.

Another factor influencing our curriculum and assessment plan is the accountability movement in higher education. Candidates must now take and pass a number of assessments to gain entry into the program, to continue in the program, and to successfully exit the program. For example, for program entry, candidates must take and pass the Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP), ACT, or SAT, have at least a 2.50 GPA, and meet disposition assessments. To continue in the program, candidates must demonstrate mastery of specific state and national standards, maintain a 2.5 GPA, and pass disposition assessments. To be recommended for licensure, candidates must pass the edTPA, pass several state licensure tests, and meet disposition assessments. Many of these assessments are now part of our overall assessment plan.

Additional factors contributing to the way we prepare teacher educators and assess their knowledge, skills, and dispositions include on-going changes in teacher preparation, such as revised and updated standards offered by our accrediting agencies, competition from on-line universities, lower enrolments in teacher preparation programs nation-wide, and declining resources from the state. Consequently, the early education faculty, special education clinical coordinator, and advisors meet regularly to plan and evaluate program initiatives, evaluate programmatic assessment activities, discuss issues related to clinical and advising practices, and review student concerns and the effectiveness of the dispositions process. These regular meetings provide a regular forum to discuss formative (and summative) assessment results and make program changes, accordingly.

The program is also guided by an external Professional Advisory Board (PAC). Members of this committee include early educators, leaders from early education agencies, community members, and early education administrators from the surrounding region, graduates from the program who are working in the field, adjunct faculty, and clinical supervisors. Regular meetings of the PAC provide an opportunity for faculty to present and obtain feedback on new initiatives and learn about potential changes in district policies and practices. They also provide a forum for discussing program goals and objectives, program strengths, areas for improvement, and partnerships among the Early Childhood program, school districts, and cooperatives.

Information gained from faculty meetings and PAC meetings is essential to the planning and assessment cycles of the program. As a result, faculty engage in critical thinking about program planning and future directions, course offerings and rotation of courses, changes to the field and student teaching.

The Early Education program provides a broad range of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions for candidates preparing to become exemplary early education teachers. Faculty have carefully designed and coordinated field experiences and course work based on policies, standards, and frameworks of the university, the College of Education, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), teacher preparation standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) for early childhood teacher preparation, and the Northern Illinois Conceptual Framework for Teacher Education.

2. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Learning Outcomes

The program is designed to prepare personnel for professional roles serving children from birth through eight years of age and their families. This program includes the concepts, competencies, and skills required by teachers, child care workers, and other professionals involved in the education and care of young children.

Graduates of the interdisciplinary program in early childhood studies will be able to:

1. Apply and integrate concepts of the developmental processes of children including their physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development in describing their learning and planning effective instruction
2. Use content knowledge, learning standards, and other resources to implement meaningful curriculum for young children (**new goal**)
3. Observe and assess children in early childhood settings and apply this information to program planning and implementation
4. Apply the skills and theoretical knowledge necessary to plan for and work effectively with young children with diverse developmental characteristics and backgrounds, their families, and their communities in a variety of educational settings
5. Recognize and display professional dispositions and behaviors commensurate with professionals in the field of early education (**new goal**)
6. Reflect upon their program by indicating their level of satisfaction and level of preparation within the program (**new goal**)

Methods:

The Early Childhood Studies Steering Committee oversees the analysis and use of program assessments, both internal and external. The Committee meets monthly during the academic year, and central to its work is the review of student assessment and program assessment data for program improvement.

Method	Description	Timeline	Person Responsible	Objectives Addressed
Student teaching rating scale or evaluation	Candidates are evaluated by their student teaching supervisors during their student teaching experience with a faculty-approved student teaching rating scale	During student teaching	Clinical coordinator, student teaching supervisors, cooperating teacher, program coordinator	1, 3, 4
ISBE ECS state examination	Candidates take the state exam prior to student teaching. The exam includes three sub tests	Prior to student teaching	Program coordinator	2, 5
Student Surveys	Candidates complete surveys during student teaching, and various officials survey candidates, alumni, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors	During student teaching	Program coordinator, University officials from Assessment office	6
Cooperating Teacher and Supervisor Survey	Cooperating teachers and university supervisors take survey assessing student teacher preparation.	During student teaching	Program coordinator, University officials from Assessment office	6
Science Investigation	Candidates select a science topic, plan and teach one science lesson that is inquiry-based, meaningful, and challenging for the students. The candidates must use appropriate approaches, effective instructional strategies, and tools that positively influence students' learning. In addition, candidate must provide a coherent analysis of the assessment data collected during	During SEEC 343	Corse professor	3

	implementation and describe how it will be useful in supporting children’s learning.			
Classroom Assessment: ed TPA	Candidates complete the edTPA performance-based assessment	During student teaching	Program coordinator	1
Classroom Assessment: Unit plan	Candidates prepare a thematic unit plan to develop important understandings, skills, and core concepts that are aligned to a developmentally appropriate theme/central focus for a given grade level. The thematic plan, includes 3-5 successive lesson plans that are multidisciplinary, connecting learning experiences to other disciplines	During SEEC 403 (during 2 nd professional semester)	Course professor, Program Coordinator	1, 2, 4
Classroom Assessment: Team Curriculum	Candidates work in small teams to plan a week of preprimary curriculum around a question or “big idea.” The plan must have intellectual integrity, appropriate and effective methods, appropriate and effective assessment procedures, adaptations for children with various special needs, respect for diverse cultures, and the potential to be developed and extended	During SEEC 430 (during 1 st professional semester)	Course professor, Program Coordinator	4
Classroom Assessment: Clinical Portfolio	The portfolio assignment is designed to develop mastery using a variety of data-collection techniques, including observation of children, matching children’s instructional and developmental needs to various instructional methods and making curricular and instructional decisions for a class, and for individual children, based on performance data.	During SEEC 430 (during 1 st professional semester)	Course professor, Program Coordinator	1, 3
Dispositions	Faculty assess all candidates on their dispositions using a faculty-approved disposition rating scale	In all classes and clinicals	Course instructors, Professors, Student teaching supervisors, cooperating teachers	5

3. Program-by-Baccalaureate Student Learning Outcomes Matrix

Program Student Learning Outcome	Baccalaureate Student Learning Outcomes							
	A. Global inter-connections and inter-dependencies	B. Intercultural competencies	C. Analyze human life and natural world inter-connections	D. Critical, creative, and independent thought	E. Communicate clearly and effectively	F. Collaborate with others	G. Quantitative and qualitative reasoning	H. Apply knowledge/skills creatively
Apply concepts of child's developmental processes			M				M	
Use content knowledge, learning standards, and other resources (new goal)				S	S	M	M	S
Observe and assess children				S	M	S	M	
Plan instruction for and effectively teach children		S			S	S	M	S
Display professional dispositions					S	S		
Reflect upon program				M				
Overall		M		M	S	S	M	S

An optional, but highly encouraged curriculum map begins on the next page.

4. Curriculum Map

Course	Apply concepts of child developmental processes	Use content knowledge, learning standards, and other resources	Observe and assess children	Plan instruction for and effectively teach children	Display professional dispositions	Reflect upon program
SESE 240	B				B	
SEEC 282	B	B	B	B	B	
SEEC 300	B	B	B	B	B	
SEEC 401	B				B	
SEEC 430	B	B	B	B	B	
LTLA 305X	B				B	
SESE 423	B	B	B		B	
SEEC 403	D	B	D	D	D	
SEEC 425	D				D	
SESE 424	D	D		D	D	
LTLA 361	D	D		D	D	
LTIC 301		D		D	D	
FCNS 331	D	D		D	D	
SEEC 382	D	D	D	D	P	
SEEC 340	D	D	D	D	P	
SEEC 343	D	D	D	D	P	
SESE 426		D			P	
LTRE 309	D	D			P	
SEEC 484A/B	P	P	P	P	P	P

UAP Academic Program Assessment Plan and Status Report Rubric-Checklist

5. Assessment Methods

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement ^a	Program-Level Target ^b	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
Student teaching evaluation	Cooperating teachers and university supervisors complete the student teaching rating scale for each student teacher. We use the final scores for the assessment	A candidate will earn a score of at least 30 of 39 points on the student teaching rating scale.	80% of candidates will pass Student Teaching by earning at least 75% of the total points on the student teaching rating scale.	Every spring semester	Clinical coordinator, student teaching supervisors, cooperating teacher, program coordinator	1, 3, 4
State test	Candidates take the state test during the latter part of their program but before student teaching.	<p>A candidate will pass each of the three sections of the state test (SLO 2).</p> <p>A candidate will earn a score of at least 240 on the Diversity, Collaboration, and Professionalism subtest on the state test (SLO 5).</p>	<p>80% of candidates will pass each section three sections of the state test (SLO 2).</p> <p>80% of candidates will earn a score of 240 (or higher) on the Diversity, Collaboration, and Professionalism within the Early Childhood Program subtest on the state test (SLO 5).</p>	Every semester	Program Coordinator	2, 5

UAP Academic Program Assessment Plan and Status Report Rubric-Checklist

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement ^a	Program-Level Target ^b	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
Student Surveys	Student teachers take surveys assessing their satisfaction and preparation for their positions.	A candidate will indicate 80% satisfaction and 80% preparation on the survey.	80% of candidates will indicate that they are satisfied or very satisfied and prepared or very prepared	Student teaching	Program coordinator, University officials from Assessment office	6
Cooperating Teacher and Supervisor Survey	Cooperating teachers and university supervisors take survey assessing student teacher preparation.	Each rater will indicate that their candidate was prepared or well-prepared with 80% or more of program components.	80% of cooperating teachers and supervisors will indicate that candidates are prepared or well-prepared with 80% of the components.	Student teaching	Program coordinator, University officials from Assessment office	6

UAP Academic Program Assessment Plan and Status Report Rubric-Checklist

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement ^a	Program-Level Target ^b	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
Science Investigation	Candidates select a science topic, plan and teach one science lesson that is inquiry-based, meaningful, and challenging for the students. The candidates must use appropriate approaches, effective instructional strategies, and tools that positively influence students' learning. In addition, candidate must provide a coherent analysis of the assessment data collected during implementation and describe how it will be useful in supporting children's learning.	Each candidate will earn a score of at least 80% on this project.	80% of candidates will pass the Science Investigation by earning at least 80% of the total points on the rubric.	During course; offered once a year	Course professor	3
edTPA	Candidates complete the edTPA performance-based assessment.	A candidate will earn a score of 3 or higher on two criteria, "Planning for the Whole Child" and "Planning to Support Varied Learning Needs."	80% of candidates will earn a score of 3 or higher on two criteria, "Planning for the Whole Child" and "Planning to Support Varied Learning Needs."	Student teaching	Program coordinator	1

UAP Academic Program Assessment Plan and Status Report Rubric-Checklist

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement ^a	Program-Level Target ^b	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
Unit plan	Candidates prepare a thematic unit plan to develop important understandings, skills, and core concepts that are aligned to a developmentally appropriate theme/central focus for a given grade level. The thematic plan, includes 3-5 successive lesson plans that are multidisciplinary, connecting learning experiences to other disciplines.	A candidate will earn at least 80% of the overall points on the rubric (SLO 1). A candidate will meet or exceed criteria, “Learning Outcomes” (SLO 2) and “Family Involvement Plan” of the unit plan (SLO 4).	80% of the candidates will earn at least 80% of the overall points on the rubric (SLO 1). 80% of candidates will meet or exceed criteria, “Learning Outcomes” (SLO 2) and “Family Involvement Plan” of the unit plan (SLO 4).	End of course	Course professor, Program coordinator	1, 2, 4
Team curriculum	Candidates work in small teams to plan a week of preprimary curriculum around a question or “big idea.” The plan must have intellectual integrity, appropriate and effective methods, appropriate and effective assessment procedures, adaptations for children with various special needs, respect for diverse cultures, and the potential to be developed and extended.	A candidate will earn at least 80% of the overall points on the rubric.	80% of the candidates will earn at least 80% of the overall points on the rubric.	End of course	Course professor, Program coordinator	4

UAP Academic Program Assessment Plan and Status Report Rubric-Checklist

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement ^a	Program-Level Target ^b	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
Clinical portfolio	The portfolio assignment is designed to develop mastery using a variety of data-collection techniques, including observation of children, matching children’s instructional and developmental needs to various instructional methods and making curricular and instructional decisions for a class, and for individual children, based on performance data.	A candidate will earn a Satisfactory on all components of the project.	80% of candidates will earn a Satisfactory on all components of the project.	End of course	Course professor, Program coordinator	1, 3
Disposition rating scale	Faculty use a faculty-approved dispositions rating form every semester to assess candidate dispositions.	A candidate will earn a score of 1 on every items on the program disposition rating scale.	95% of candidates will earn a score of 1 on every items on the program disposition rating scale.	Every semester	Course instructors, Professors, Student teaching supervisors, cooperating teachers	5
<p><i>Note.</i> ^a Student-level target is the score or performance an individual student must demonstrate to say the student met the student learning outcome. ^b Program-level target is the percent of all students that must demonstrate they meet the student learning outcome.</p>						

UAP Academic Program Assessment Plan and Status Report Rubric-Checklist

Assessment Methods-by-Outcomes Matrix

Assessment Method	Apply concepts of children's developmental processes	Integrate knowledge of diverse society	Observe and assess children	Plan instruction for and effectively teach children	Display professional dispositions	Reflect upon the program
Student teaching evaluation	S, D		S, D	S, D		
State test		S, I			S, I	
Surveys						S, I
Science Investigation			F, D			
edTPA	S, D					
Unit Plan	F, D	F, D		F, D		
Team Curriculum			F, I	F, I		
Clinical Portfolio	F, D		F, D			
Dispositions Assessment in early courses					F, D	
Dispositions Assessment in later courses					S, D	