

College of Education
Special and Early Education (SEED)
M. S. Special Education
Masters of Science (B. S.)
Summer, 2016
Greg Conderman, Chair

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. Special Education 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 M. S. Special Education program has two separate and distinct areas of emphasis. One program is the Learning-Behavior Specialist-1 (LBS-1) program which prepares teacher education candidates to become licensed special educators in all disability areas (except the sensory areas of visual and hearing impairments) in grades kindergarten through grade 12. The second and considerably smaller program is the Teacher of Visually Impaired (TVI) program which prepares teachers to teach students with blindness and vision issues in grades kindergarten through 12. Both licensure programs have experienced a long and vibrant history at NIU, and both must meet Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) standards for initial teacher licensure. Therefore, both include many of the same types of assessments.

Several factors place the assessment plan in context. One deals with changes in teacher licensure. Up to and including the Spring 2003 semester, the graduate LBS-1 special education program included seven specializations: Behavior Disorders, Blind Rehabilitation, Early Childhood Special Education, Learning Disabilities, Multiply Handicapped/Deaf or Vision Impairment, Orientation and Mobility, and Visual Impairments. Leaders in the Illinois State Board of Education initiated changes in special education state certification resulting from the federal court Corey H lawsuit. Consequently, effective July 1, 2001, teacher educators revised special education certification programs across the state to reflect the state's new Learning Behavior Specialist (LBS) 1 certification that encompassed the previous high incidence and developmental disabilities focus. Therefore, candidates now graduate with teacher licensure in a broadly-based cross -categorical program certifying them to teach mild, moderate, and severe disabilities in grades K-12. Teacher educators across the state of Illinois made significant curricular and assessment changes to prepare special educators for this new licensure. These changes did not affect the vision program. Furthermore, faculty continue make periodic updates to the curriculum and assessment methods to meet CEC standards associated with teaching students with mild and severe disabilities.

Second, during the 2013 and 2104 academic years, the SEED Acting Department Chair requested that special education faculty revise the program 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. This past year---2015--- was the first full year of implementation of this new curriculum. Faculty are now analyzing the first year of data based on this new curriculum.

Third, the role and responsibilities of special educators continue to change. Many of our program curricular and assessment changes reflect the many roles and responsibilities assumed by K-12 special educators. For example, special educators are responsible for assessing children, planning and delivering instruction, co-teaching and collaborating with others, working closely with parents, developing transition plans for adolescents with disabilities, using various forms of assistive technologies, developing behavioral interventions, displaying professional behaviors, 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 3.0 GPA, pass a safety tutorial test, have a negative TB test, pass a background check, and meet disposition assessments. To continue in the program, candidates must demonstrate mastery of specific state and national standards, maintain a 3.0 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 special education faculty, special education clinical coordinator, and advisors meet monthly throughout the semester 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 special education teachers, principals, and special 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 Special Education 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 Special Education program provides a broad range of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions for candidates preparing to become exemplary special 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), and our national organization, Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

Goals of the undergraduate Special Education programs are based on:

Illinois Professional Teacher Standards

Illinois Core Language Arts Standards for All Teachers

Illinois Core Technology Standards for All Teachers

Illinois Content Standards in Specialization Areas (LBS I, Vision)

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Content Standards and Knowledge and Skill Sets Essential for All Special Educators at the initial preparation level

NCATE/CAEP Standards

NIU Conceptual Framework

Association for Education and Rehabilitation of Blind and Visually Impaired

2. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Student Learning Outcomes:

According to our most recent assessment plan, the following are our student learning outcomes.

1. Recognize historical, legal, and philosophical foundations of special education and write a well-developed personalized philosophy of special education based on historical, legal, civil rights, and research in the special education field. (recognition assessed on state test; personalized philosophy based on philosophy paper)
2. Recognize components of and write lesson plans, unit plans, instructional plans, and transition plans for students with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities based on individual student needs and characteristics. (recognition assessed on the state test; writing the plan based on authentic artifacts)
3. Recognize components of and write an individualized behavior plan for a student with challenging behavior (recognition based on state test; writing the plan based on authentic artifact)
4. Describe and demonstrate at least 3 assistive technologies to use with students with disabilities based on their unique needs and characteristics (describe based on written reflection; demonstrate based on performance assessment)
5. Correctly administer, score, and interpret scores from a standardized achievement test (skills assessed on state test and assessment project)
6. Display appropriate collaborative and professional behaviors/dispositions in NIU classes, early clinicals, and student teaching (assessed through dispositions checks and student teaching evaluation)
7. Describe their own individual and NIU special education program strengths and areas for future improvement and receive at least 80% of “satisfactory” ratings regarding their knowledge and use of standards as noted by PAC committee members, employers, cooperating teachers, and student teaching supervisors (assessed through various surveys)
8. Write a research paper/action research project on a timely topic or issue in special education with recent (since 2005) citations that also describes specific implications for practice (assessed through research paper and research proposal)

3. Curriculum Map

Course	Program Student Learning Outcomes							Write research paper
	Recognize foundations and write philosophy	Recognize and write various types of lesson plans	Recognize parts of and write behavior plans	Describe and demonstrate assistive technologies	Administer test and interpret scores	Display professionalism	Describe one's strengths and areas for growth	
SESE 540	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
SESE 559	B	D			D	D		
SESE 600	B	D			D	D		
SESE 601	D	D		D	D	D		
SESE 602	D	D		D	D	D		
SESE 603	D	D	P		D	D		
SESE 604	D	D	D	P	D	D		
SESE 605	D					D	D	D
SESE 606	D	P	D		D	D		
SESE 607	P					P	D	D
SESE 608	B	B				B	B	
SESE 609/610	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
SESE 792	P					P		P
ETR 534	D				P	D		
<i>Note.</i> Course supports the outcome at the B=beginning, D=developing, or P=proficient level.								

Note: Even though the courses are numbered and listed here sequentially, their numbers do not necessarily indicate the program sequence or developmental sequence of our curriculum

UAP Academic Program Assessment Plan and Status Report Rubric-Checklist

4. Assessment Methods

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement ^a	Program-Level Target ^b	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
Philosophy of education paper	Candidates write a philosophy of education paper that integrates historical, ethical, human rights, and research from the field of special education	A candidate will earn 80% of the points on the philosophy paper rubric	80% of candidates will earn 80% of the points on the philosophy paper rubric	Toward the beginning of the program	Course professor	1
State test	Candidates take the state test that includes a subtest on Foundations of Special Education	A candidate will pass the Foundations subtest on the state test by earning a score of 240 or more	80% of candidates will pass the Foundations subtest on the state test	Toward the end of the program but before student teaching	Assessment 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
Lesson plans, instructional plans, co-taught lesson plans, transition plans, and edTPA plans State test	Candidates will write detailed lesson plans, instructional plans, co-taught lesson plans, transition plans, and edTPA plans for students with vision issues as well as those with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities based on unique individual student needs and characteristics	A candidate will earn at least 80% of the total points on each lesson plan with no more than (2) “does not meet” score on any given rubric item	80% of all candidates will earn at least 80% of the total points on the various lesson plan rubrics noted above	Throughout program; every semester	Professor of each course	2
	Candidate take the state test that includes a subtest on instructional planning	A candidate will pass the Instructional Planning subtest on the state test	80% of the candidates will pass the subtest	Toward the end of the program but before student teaching	Assessment Coordinator	2

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
Behavior plans	Candidates develop an individualized behavior plan for a student who has challenging behavior. They gather observational data, develop and implement a behavior plan, and assess the effectiveness of that plan while in their clinical setting.	A candidate will earn at least 80% of the total points on the behavior plan assignment with no more than (2) “does not meet” scores on the rubric	80% of all candidates will earn at least 80% of the points on the behavior plan assignment with no more than 2 “does not meet” scores on the rubric	Toward the middle of the program	Professor of course	3
State test	Candidates take the state test that includes a subtest on behavior and behavior plans	A candidate will pass the Managing the Learning Environment subtest on the state test	80% of the candidates will pass the managing the Learning Environment subtest on the state test	Toward the end of the program but before student teaching	Assessment Coordinator	3

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
Assistive technology reflections	Candidates learn about various assistive technologies by navigating through various learning modules. They demonstrate mastery of those technologies and write reflections of how they could use each in their future classroom setting.	A candidate will earn at least 80% of the total points on the rubric item requiring use and reflection of specified technologies	80% of all candidates will earn at least 80% of the total points on the reflection rubric	Toward the end of their program	Professor of course	4
Assistive technology performance-based check-outs		A candidate will earn at least 80% of the point son the demonstration rubric	80% of candidates will earn 80% of total points on the demonstration rubric	Same as above	Same as above	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
Assessment project (administering and scoring standardized test) and interpreting results	Candidates administer a formal, standardized test to an elementary student, score the test, and write an assessment report with interpretations for programming.	A candidate will earn at least 80% of the total points on the rubrics with no more than (1) “does not meet” score on the rubric	80% of all candidates will earn at least 80% of the total points on the assessment project rubric with no more than 2 “does not meet” scores.	Toward the beginning of the program	Professor of course	5
State test	Candidates take the state test that includes a subtest on assessment	A candidate will pass the Assessment subtest on the state test	80% of the candidates will pass the Assessment subtest on the state test	Toward the end of the program but before student teaching	Assessment Coordinator	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
Dispositions assessment rating	Candidates are assessed on their dispositions by professors, cooperating teachers, and instructors using a faculty-approved rating assessment form and the student teaching form	A candidate will earn a score of “1” (which represents satisfactory) on all categories of each rating on the Dispositions rating scale	95% of all candidates will earn 100% of the points on the disposition rating scale	In every course, clinical, and student teaching; every semester	Professor or Instructor of course; Assessment Coordinator	6
Disposition assessment in student teaching		A candidate will earn a score of 3 or 4 on each item on the dispositions section of the student teaching evaluation form	85% of candidates will earn a score of 3 or 4 on each item on the dispositions section of the student teaching evaluation form	Student teaching	Cooperating teachers; University supervisors; Assessment Coordinator	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
Surveys from candidates	Candidates answer questions from surveys requesting information about their satisfaction with various program components and their preparation for their future jobs	<p>A candidate will earn a score of “meets standards” on all rows on the survey rubric which assesses whether or not they sufficiently described one professional strength and one professional area for improvement as related to their future careers as special educators</p> <p>A candidate will earn a score of “meets standards” on all rows on the survey rubric which assesses their level of satisfaction with various program components.</p> <p>A candidate will earn a score of “meets standards” on all rows on the survey rubric which assesses their level of preparedness for their future position</p>	<p>(90%) of candidates will write at least one strength and one skill they could improve (as related to their future positions as special educators)</p> <p>(90%) of student teaching candidates will indicate that they were satisfied with at least 80% of the undergraduate special education program components noted on the survey (such as advising, the curriculum, clinical experiences, student teaching, etc)</p> <p>(90%) of student teaching candidates will indicate that they were prepared for at least 80% of the program standards such as assessment, instruction, collaboration, IEP development, and classroom management</p>	During student teaching	Assessment Coordinator	7

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
Surveys from employers, PAC members, cooperating teachers, supervisors, alumni	Other individuals answer questions about candidates regarding their skill level and preparation for beginning a career as a special educator	<p>The supervisor’s candidate will earn a score of “meets standards” on all rows on the survey rubric assessing the level of perceived preparedness of the candidate</p> <p>The employer’s candidate will earn a score of “meets standards” on all rows on the survey rubric assessing their level of preparedness for their entry position as a special educator</p> <p>The PAC member’s candidate will earn a score of “meets standards” on all rows on the survey rubric assessing their level of preparedness for their entry position as a special educator</p>	<p>90% of the responding student teaching supervisors and cooperating teachers will note that 80% of the candidates are prepared or well prepared in at least 80% of the standards</p> <p>90% of the responding employers will note that candidates are prepared or well prepared in 80% of the standards</p> <p>90% of the PAC members will indicate that candidates are prepared or well prepared in 80% of the standards</p>	During student teaching; 1-3-5 years after graduation; during annual PAC meetings	Assessment Coordinator	7

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
Research paper	Candidates write research papers in several classes. For purposes here, we are targeting a research paper in the Collaboration course	A candidate will earn 80% of the points on the research paper rubric	80% of the candidates will earn 80% of the points on the research paper rubric	Toward the middle of the program	Course professor	8
Research proposal paper	AND a research proposal in the special education research class	A candidate will earn 80% of the points on the research proposal rubric	80% of the candidate will earn 80% of the points on the research proposal rubric	At the conclusion of the program	Course professor	8

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
First Year Composition Assignment	Students are assigned a writing task in which they are to: (1) question the rhetorical appeal of written discourse; (2) invent, articulate, and understand their own ideas in the context of others; (3) use research to clarify and support positions; (4) demonstrate an awareness of the audience; (5) demonstrate control of genre and disciplinary conventions; and (6) demonstrate control over syntax and mechanics.	A student will receive a score of Meets (3) or better on each of the six performance criteria on the rubric.	85% of all students will meet the student-level target (i.e., receive a score of Meets (3) or better on each of the each of the six performance criteria on the rubric).	During the last week of Spring semester	Course instructor	1, 3, 4
Insert name of assessment method	Insert a brief description in enough detail for an outside reader to get a picture of the assessment. Attach all instruments, surveys, performance assessment directions and rubrics.					

Assessment Methods-by-Outcomes Matrix

UAP Academic Program Assessment Plan and Status Report Rubric-Checklist

Assessment Method	Program Student Learning Outcome							8. Write research papers
	1. Recognize foundations of special ed and write philosophy	2. Recognize parts of and write and teach lesson plans	3. Recognize parts of and write and implement behavior plan	4. Describe and demonstrate assistive technologies	5. Correctly administer, score, and interpret scores from test	6. Display professional dispositions	7. Describe person and program strengths and areas for future growth	
Lesson plans (and edTPA written plans) written in early courses		F, D			F, D			
Assistive technology check outs and reflections in early courses				F, D				
Lesson plans (and edTPA written plans) written in late courses		S, D			S, D			
Behavior plan			S, D					
Assistive technology check outs and reflections in late courses				S, D				
Disposition Rating Scale in early courses						F, D		
Disposition Rating Scale in later courses						S, D		
edTPA final project conducted during student teaching		S, D						

UAP Academic Program Assessment Plan and Status Report Rubric-Checklist

Assessment Method	Program Student Learning Outcome							8. Write research papers
	1. Recognize foundations of special ed and write philosophy	2. Recognize parts of and write and teach lesson plans	3. Recognize parts of and write and implement behavior plan	4. Describe and demonstrate assistive technologies	5. Correctly administer, score, and interpret scores from test	6. Display professional dispositions	7. Describe person and program strengths and areas for future growth	
Philosophy paper	F, D							
Student teaching evaluation		S, D			S, D	S, D		
State certification test	S, I	S, I	S, I		S, I			
Student teaching surveys and course reflections/surveys							S, I	
Employer Surveys, including PAC feedback						S, I	S, I	
Follow-up Alumni surveys							S, I	
Research paper								F, D
Research project								S, D
<i>Note.</i> F=formative assessment, S=summative assessment, D=direct assessment, and I=indirect assessment. See the paragraph above for an explanation of each type of assessment.								