

AC 2025 – 2026 Assessment

Doctor of Adult Learning and Development (925)

Division: Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development

Department: School of Education

Prepared by: Christy Hornsby

Date: May 18, 2026

Approved by: Dr. Mary Edith Stacy

Date: May 26, 2026

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 best practice. Further, all graduates learn to value and work with diverse populations and to incorporate technologies that enrich learning and professional endeavors.

Adult Learning and Development Program Mission Statement: The Adult Learning and Development Program offers a Doctor of Education degree for students who intend to pursue or advance their careers in the professional practice of adult learning or post-secondary leadership at the community college level. The Doctor of Education is a practitioner degree program that prepares students for the practice of adult learning and leadership across the following domains: teaching and learning, curriculum and instructional design, workforce development, program management and planning, organizational change, and community college leadership.

AC 2025 – 2026 Assessment

Methodology:

The assessment process for the program is as follows:

1. Data from assessments provide results on student knowledge, skills, and dispositions as appropriate for professional education programs.
2. Annually, program faculty and stakeholders review data to make data-driven, curricular decisions.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1: Demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge.

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge.	Demonstrate an understanding of contemporary issues in adult learning.

Course Map: *EDAL 7000 The Discipline of Adult Learning and Development.*

Measure 1.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills)

SLO 1 is assessed through a *Final Research Paper in EDAL 7000 The Discipline of Adult Learning and Development*. This assignment measures student understanding and/or mastery of the following course objectives:

- Describe the field of adult learning through historical and contemporary foundations.
- Develop a broad knowledge of the research, theory, and practice needed to understand adult learning and its place in society.
- Understand the key philosophical and theoretical frameworks of adult learning.
- Articulate contemporary adult education concerns including globalization, technology, social justice, and social change.
- Understand the organizations and practices that support adult learning in a variety of contexts.
- Demonstrate an understanding of politics, ethics, and policies surrounding adult learning.
- Demonstrate skills in critical thinking, writing, presenting, and technology.

The Final Research Paper assessment is evaluated using a rubric that evaluates students' understanding of the course objectives through their ability to demonstrate the following components:

1. Introduction
2. Body of Paper
3. Conclusion

AC 2025 – 2026 Assessment

4. Clarity and Writing
5. APA Style

Benchmark: The goal for benchmark performance on this assessment is that 80% of students score 80% or higher on the research paper.

Finding: Target was Met.

Analysis:

In AC 2024-20245, the target was met. Based on analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty addressed the lowest scored components of the research paper assessment by making sure that throughout the course progression, faculty ensured extra resources were available in the Moodle shell as well as offering a virtual meeting once a month to address questions and enhance resources. Secondly, faculty redesigned the rubric for this measure to ensure mastery levels of course objectives are measured and identifiable. This enabled faculty to make meaningful changes to ensure that future cycles drive improvement. As a result of these changes, the target was met for AC 2025-2026. With a total of 17 students, 83% scored at or above the benchmark.

Decision:

In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2025-2026 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2026-2027, faculty will address the lowest scored components of the research paper assessment by offering extra student support and guidance via web-ex on a weekly basis. During these sessions students will be given access to resources targeting specific components scored on the assessment to help students grasp a clear understanding of the expectation on the assessment. These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 2: Apply discipline-specific content knowledge in professional practice

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Apply discipline-specific content knowledge in professional practice	Work as scholar-practitioners by applying current research and theory to real-world practice across a variety of settings

Course Map: *EDUC 7170 Applied Principles of Adult Learning or Organizational Leadership.*

Measure: 2.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills)

SLO 2 is assessed by the final project: Strategic Research Planning in *EDUC 7170 Applied Principles of Adult Learning or Organizational Leadership*. This assessment requires students to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the following course

AC 2025 – 2026 Assessment

objectives:

- Explore the application of adult learning or organizational leadership theory and practice in one among many segments.
- Apply research-based activities such as designing and/or implementing leadership or learning programs or activities, community services, workforce development programs, or assisting in adult learning management and/or policy decision in a real-world/workplace setting in order to:
 - Solve a problem of practice,
 - Expand or improve adult learning programs or experiences,
 - Improve the administrative process,
 - Improve the student/learner experience in an organization,
 - Affect other positive organizational or workplace change,
 - Prepare for an action research project in close collaboration with committee chair.

Understanding of the above course objectives is documented through the student's ability to complete the following assessment criteria:

1. Locate practicum sites or activities and identify site liaison.
2. Communicate the activities, setting, and significant personnel related to the practicum to the university practicum instructor, ensuring appropriate approval at specific points throughout the process.
3. In conjunction with instructor and supervisor, develop a practicum plan as evidenced by a written practicum proposal.
4. Submit a personal narrative of expectations for the practicum, which will be posted as. "The Statement of the Practicum." It will include, at a minimum: a) Identification of practicum site: location, supervisor/liaison, address, phone, email, etc. objectives of practicum: nature of activity, audience or setting, estimated time in preparation and execution; and b) schedule for completion: intermediate and terminal report.

The Strategic Research Planning assignment is evaluated using a rubric which scores student performance based on the following components:

1. Reflection on Activities
2. Accomplishments
3. Challenges and Obstacles
4. Plan for Next Steps
5. Writing Quality

Benchmark: The goal for benchmark performance on this assessment is that students' individual percentage scores will result in a mean percentage score of 80% or higher.

Finding: Target was met.

AC 2025 – 2026 Assessment

Analysis:

In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Upon analyzing the data from AC 2024-2025, faculty made the following enhancements in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty held live office chats to offer additional assistance or guidance along with supplying additional grammatical resources on Moodle. Additionally, faculty modified instructional guidance to emphasize the importance of following all assignment requirements. These changes improved the student's ability to work as scholar-practitioners by applying current research and theory to real-world practice across a variety of settings, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward. As a result of these changes, the target was met for AC 2025-2026.

Analysis of the AC 2025 – 2026 assessment data indicate the target was met with 100% of students scoring 80% or higher. Nineteen students scored above 80% overall on the rubric. Students scored the highest in the area of reflection on activities, accomplishments, and challenges and obstacles which relates to their ability to demonstrate they can work as scholarly practitioners by applying research and working closely with a dissertation chair. Additionally, students are learning to solve a problem of practice as well as improve their adult learning experiences. Students scored the lowest in the component of writing quality.

Decision:

In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2025-2026 data, faculty will make the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to continue to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2026-2027, faculty will supply additional grammatical resources on Moodle, although they will increase resources to include exemplars demonstrating proper use of scholarly academic vocabulary. Additionally, faculty will emphasize the importance of following all assignment requirements in weekly posts on Moodle as well as Webex sessions. Candidates in this course will also be evaluated by performance/progress on the approved dissertation prospectus or progression of dissertation proposal.

These changes will improve the student's ability to work as scholar-practitioners by applying current research and theory to real-world practice across a variety of settings, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 3: Model professional behaviors and characteristics.

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Model professional behaviors and characteristics.	Demonstrate leadership and management skills applicable to the administration of adult learning and community college programs.

Course Map: *EDUC 7170 Applied Principles of Adult Learning or Organizational Leadership*

AC 2025 – 2026 Assessment

Measure: 3.1. (Direct – Skills, Dispositions)

SLO 3 is assessed by the final project: Strategic Research Planning in *EDUC 7170 Applied Principles of Adult Learning or Organizational Leadership*. This assessment requires students to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the following course objectives:

- Explore the application of adult learning or organizational leadership theory and practice in one among many segments.
- Apply research-based activities such as designing and/or implementing leadership or learning programs or activities, community services, workforce development programs, or assisting in adult learning management and/or policy decision in a real-world/workplace setting in order to:
 - Solve a problem of practice,
 - Expand or improve adult learning programs or experiences,
 - Improve the administrative process,
 - Improve the student/learner experience in an organization,
 - Affect other positive organizational or workplace change,
 - Prepare for an action research project in close collaboration with committee chair.

Understanding of the above course objectives is documented through the student's ability to complete the following assessment criteria:

1. Locate practicum sites or activities and identify site liaison.
2. Communicate the activities, setting, and significant personnel related to the practicum to the university practicum instructor, ensuring appropriate approval at specific points throughout the process.
3. In conjunction with instructor and supervisor, develop a practicum plan as evidenced by a written practicum proposal.
4. Submit a personal narrative of expectations for the practicum, which will be posted as. "The Statement of the Practicum." It will include, at a minimum: a) Identification of practicum site: location, supervisor/liaison, address, phone, email, etc. objectives of practicum: nature of activity, audience or setting, estimated time in preparation and execution; and b) schedule for completion: intermediate and terminal report.

The Strategic Research Planning assignment is evaluated using a rubric which scores student performance based on the following components:

1. Reflection on Activities
2. Accomplishments
3. Challenges and Obstacles
4. Plan for Next Steps
5. Writing Quality

Benchmark: The goal for benchmark performance on this assessment is that 80% of students will score a minimum of 80% on the assessment.

AC 2025 – 2026 Assessment

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

For AC 2024-2025 the target was met. Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2024-2025 data, faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to continue to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2025-2026, faculty held live office chats to offer additional assistance or guidance along with supplying additional grammatical resources on Moodle. Faculty developed a new dispositional measure to more accurately assess this SLO. The new measure was finalized in Spring 2026 and will be utilized beginning Fall 2026 to ensure that student outcomes are adequately measured regarding professional behaviors. As a result of these changes, the target was met for AC 2025-2026. 100% (n=19) of students score 80% or higher on the assessment.

Decision:

In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2025-2026 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to continue to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2026-2027, faculty will utilize the newly developed dispositional measure to ensure that student outcomes are adequately measured regarding professional behaviors. Candidates in this course will also be evaluated by performance/progress on the approved dissertation prospectus or progression of dissertation proposal.

These changes will ensure students are able to demonstrate leadership and management skills applicable to the administration of adult learning and community college programs, thereby continuing to move the assessment cycle forward.

SLO 4: Exhibit creative thinking that yields engaging ideas, processes, materials, and experiences appropriate for the discipline.

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Exhibit creative thinking that yields engaging ideas, processes, materials, and experiences appropriate for the discipline.	Demonstrate knowledge of models and principals for the design, development, administration, and assessment of adult learning experiences applying relevant research-based practice and theory.

Course Map: *EDUC 7330 Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum in Post-Secondary Education*
EDUC 7420 Planning and Measuring Transformative Adult Learning Programs.

Measure: 4.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills)

SLO 4 is assessed through the Critical Issues Final Paper Assessment in *EDUC 7330 Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum in Post-Secondary Education* and through a Case Study Assessment in *EDUC 7420 Planning and Measuring Transformative Adult*

AC 2025 – 2026 Assessment

Learning Programs.

The *Critical Issues Final Paper Assessment* requires students to demonstrate understanding of the following course objectives which are addressed in EDUC 7330:

- Understand prominent theories of instruction and their application for post-secondary instructional methods, media, and effects.
- Understand the role and structure of general education and transfer education, and their implications for preparation for community and two-year colleges.
- Understand and apply current theories and practices of developmental education to enhance basic skills and literacy.
- Demonstrate the curricular design in workforce preparation and occupational education in the community college.
- Examine extending post-secondary education to the community and community education needs and programming.
- Understand interdisciplinary programming in post-secondary education.
- Understand the potential impacts of curriculum, instruction, and instructional environments on students and their learning.
- Understand the role of universal design in post-secondary curricula and instruction.
- Understand the scope and complexity of policy and decisions about curricula in post-secondary education.
- Be able to analyze and evaluate curricula and instructional practices in post-secondary at the course and program level.

The *Critical Issues Final Paper Assessment* is evaluated using a rubric which evaluates student ability to demonstrate course objectives based on the following components:

1. Academic Research (50 points)
2. Academic Writing (50 points)

The *Case Study Assessment* requires students to demonstrate understanding of the following course objectives addressed in EDUC 7420:

- Use conceptual programming models (e.g., the Interactive Model of Program Planning) as a basis for inquiry and improved professional practice.
- Relate how five important fundamental topics for planning — adult learning (especially transformational learning), cultural differences, building relationships, power and interests, and technology — to the phases of the Interactive Model of Program Planning.
- Articulate criteria for a strong program foundation, philosophical and policy base, and support structures.
- Assess program needs and interests.
- Determine program goals and objectives (as distinct from learning objectives).
- Determine appropriate program evaluation approaches.
- Employ the Interactive Model of Program Planning and associated techniques to plan/revise programs that educate adult learners.

AC 2025 – 2026 Assessment

The *Case Study Assessment* is evaluated using a rubric which evaluates student ability to demonstrate course objectives based on the following components:

1. Content
2. Format and Mechanics
3. APA Format

Benchmark: The goal for benchmark performance on both assessments is that at least 80% of the students score a minimum of 80% on each assessment.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2024-2025 data, faculty implemented the following enhancements in AC 2025-2026 to continue to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2025 – 2026, faculty developed and incorporated instructional resources into the EDUC 7330 coursework that relate to source quality for published literature reviews to increase exposure to the criteria for writing literature reviews. Additionally, for EDUC 7420, faculty improved the rubric's ability to accurately identify the level at which students are mastering the objectives of the course. As a result of these changes, the target was met for AC 2025-2026.

In AC 2025-2026, 100% (n=19) scored 80% or higher for the *Critical Issues Final Paper*, and the cumulative mean percentage score was 94%. The rubric component in which students scored the highest was academic research. The area in which students scored the lowest on the Critical Issues Final Paper was academic writing. This was evident in the required literature review. Faculty found that the biggest struggle is distinguishing their own voice from research. Regarding the *Case Study Assessment*, 100% (n=8) of the students scored above benchmark. Thus, each component of the rubric also yielded a mean of 100% of the possible points per category.

Decision:

In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2025-2026 data, faculty will implement the following enhancements in AC 2026-2027 to continue to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2026 – 2027, faculty will further develop and incorporate instructional resources into the EDUC 7330 continuing to enrich the coursework quality for published literature reviews to increase exposure to the criteria for writing literature reviews. Additionally, for EDUC 7420, faculty will improve the rubric's ability to accurately identify the level at which students are mastering the objectives of the course. The Case Study Rubric Assessment and Rubric will be redesigned during summer 2026 for use beginning Fall 2026.

These changes will improve the student's ability to exhibit creative thinking that yields engaging ideas, processes, materials, and experiences appropriate for the discipline, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

AC 2025 – 2026 Assessment

SLO 5: Make responsible decisions and problem- solve, using data to inform actions when appropriate

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Make responsible decisions and problem-solve, using data to inform actions when appropriate	Apply analysis and problem-solving skills in order to ethically evaluate the impact of programs or policies on individuals and organizations.

Course Map: *EDUC 7100, Methods for Planning and Conducting Educational Research.*

Measure: 5.1. (Direct – Knowledge, Skills)

SLO 5 is assessed with *The Research Overview Project* in *EDUC 7100, Methods for Planning and Conducting Educational Research.*

Through the *Research Overview Project* assessment, students develop, understand, and analyze a research question, and apply course content to develop a question, statement of the problem, purpose, and significance of study, feasibility, and nature of the chosen research to demonstrate mastery of the following course objectives:

- Understand the influence of key philosophical assumptions on the design of educational research.
- Understand and apply the structure of academic writing for reading and contributing to academic scholarship and publication.
- Compare and contrast quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method approaches to systematic inquiry and identify research questions appropriate for each approach.
- Identify and describe the various types of quantitative research, including examples of each type of design with conceptual and operational definitions of relevant variables.
- Develop a research scenario with a problem statement and determine an appropriate design for the situation. Identify strategies for establishing and/or strengthening the validity of the research.
- Identify and describe the strengths and weaknesses of experimental and quasi-experimental research designs.
- Identify and describe the basic characteristics of qualitative research traditions. Identify strategies for establishing and/or strengthening validity of the research.
- Identify and describe the nature of mixed method research, alternative strategies for conducting mixed method research, and the challenges that are imposed by these designs. Identify strategies for establishing and/or strengthening the validity of the research.
- Identify and describe threats to internal and external validity.

The *Research Overview Project* is measured using a rubric which evaluates student ability to demonstrate course objectives based on the following components:

AC 2025 – 2026 Assessment

1. Research Question
2. Statement of the Problem
3. Purpose and Significance of the Study
4. Nature of Research
5. Feasibility of the Study
6. References

Benchmark: The goal for benchmark performance on this assessment is that at least 80% of the students score 80% or higher on the assessment.

Finding: Target was met

Analysis:

In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2024-2025 data, faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to continue to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2025-2026, faculty developed and implemented the use of a research question template which was incorporated into the course. These changes resulted in the target being met for AC 2025-2026.

Analysis of the AC 2025-2026 results indicated a cumulative mean percentage score of 92.94% with 100% (n = 17) of students performing above the benchmark goal of 80%. According to the data, students performed the strongest in the area of researching a topic of interest. The lowest scored area on the rubric was stating a feasible research question and hypothesis. In addition to this component, students also made many errors regarding APA requirements.

Decision:

In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2025-2026 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to continue to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2026-2027, faculty will provide exemplars of both proper and improper research questions for doctoral-level research studies to support student writing of appropriate questions that could lead to the dissertation prospectus question. Faculty will develop enhanced materials and deliver additional instructional resources during graduate student seminars (Lunch and Learn Style Workshop).

These changes will improve the student's ability to make responsible decisions and problem- solve, using data to inform actions when appropriate, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvements Based on Analysis of Results.

Program faculty made several decisions after examining results of data analysis from AC 2024-2025 which resulted in improved student learning and program improvement in AC 2025-2026.

AC 2025 – 2026 Assessment

SLO 1: Faculty addressed the lowest scored components of the research paper assessment by making sure that throughout the course progression, faculty ensured extra resources were available in the Moodle shell as well as offering a virtual meeting once a month to address questions and enhance resources. Secondly, faculty redesigned the rubric for this measure to ensure mastery levels of course objectives are measured and identifiable. This enabled faculty to make meaningful changes to ensure that future cycles drive improvement.

SLO 2: Faculty held live office chats to offer additional assistance or guidance along with supplying additional grammatical resources on Moodle. Additionally, faculty modified instructional guidance to emphasize the importance of following all assignment requirements. These changes improved the student's ability to work as scholar-practitioners by applying current research and theory to real-world practice across a variety of settings,

SLO 3: Faculty held live office chats to offer additional assistance or guidance along with supplying additional grammatical resources on Moodle. Faculty developed a new dispositional measure to more accurately assess this SLO. The new measure was finalized in Spring 2026 and will be utilized beginning Fall 2026 to ensure that student outcomes are adequately measured regarding professional behaviors.

SLO 4: Faculty developed and incorporated instructional resources into the EDUC 7330 coursework that relate to source quality for published literature reviews to increase exposure to the criteria for writing literature reviews. Additionally, for EDUC 7420, faculty improved the rubric's ability to accurately identify the level at which students are mastering the objectives of the course.

SLO 5: Faculty developed and implemented the use of a research question template which was incorporated into the course.

Plan of Action for Moving Forward.

Program faculty examined the evidence and results of data analysis from AC 2025-2026 and will take steps to continue to improve student learning in AC 2026-2027:

SLO 1: Faculty will address the lowest scored components of the research paper assessment by offering extra student support and guidance via web-ex on a weekly basis. During these sessions students will be given access to resources targeting specific components scored on the assessment to help students grasp a clear understanding of the expectation on the assessment.

SLO 2: Faculty will continue supplying additional grammatical resources on Moodle, although they will increase resources to include exemplars demonstrating proper use of scholarly academic vocabulary. Additionally, faculty will emphasize the importance of following all assignment requirements in weekly posts on Moodle as well as Webex sessions. Candidates in this course will also be evaluated by performance/progress on the approved dissertation prospectus or progression of dissertation proposal.

AC 2025 – 2026 Assessment

SLO 3: Faculty will utilize the newly developed dispositional measure to ensure that student outcomes are adequately measured regarding professional behaviors. Candidates in this course will also be evaluated by performance/progress on the approved dissertation prospectus or progression of dissertation proposal.

SLO 4: Faculty will further develop and incorporate instructional resources into the EDUC 7330 continuing to enrich the coursework quality for published literature reviews to increase exposure to the criteria for writing literature reviews. Additionally, for EDUC 7420, faculty will improve the rubric's ability to accurately identify the level at which students are mastering the objectives of the course. The Case Study Rubric Assessment and Rubric will be redesigned during summer 2026 for use beginning Fall 2026.

SLO 5: Faculty will provide exemplars of both proper and improper research questions for doctoral-level research studies to support student writing of appropriate questions that could lead to the dissertation prospectus question. Faculty will develop enhanced materials and deliver additional instructional resources during graduate student seminars (Lunch and Learn Style Workshop).