A. Catalog Entry

EDME 409. The Middle School Learner
Three hours lecture.

Prerequisites: Admission to Teacher Education Program and a minimum 2.5 GPA.

EDME 409. The purpose of this course is to help the prospective middle level teacher develop in-depth knowledge and understanding of early adolescents as students. The developmental characteristics and needs of early adolescents provide a framework for examining the diversity of students in regard to their abilities and cultural background. Implications are drawn for developing appropriate learning environments to foster development.

B. Detailed Description of Content of Course

1. Development of the early adolescent
   (a) Physical
   (b) Emotional
   (c) Social
   (d) Cognitive

2. Exceptional students
   (a) Recognizing their needs
   (b) Reflecting on self as exceptional

3. Factors placing early adolescents at-risk
   (a) Individual factors
   (b) Familial factors
   (c) Societal factors

4. Impact of school structures on students
   (a) Middle school concept
   (b) Traditional concept

5. Impact of grouping on students
   (a) Teachers grouping practices

6. Ethical responsibilities of teachers to students
7. Alternative educational responses

(a) Providing students with equity in the classroom
(b) Providing students with opportunities in the classroom

C. Detailed Description of Conduct of Course

Prior to beginning the field component, pre-service teachers will reflect on their own early adolescent development and schooling. From their personal perceptions, they will develop a framework for learning about middle level students. As pre-service teachers identify the developmental characteristics and needs of early adolescents, they will also develop descriptions of students from reading early adolescent literature, analyzing case studies and conducting field observations. Each pre-service teacher will do a shadow study of a sixth, seventh, or eighth grade student. During the field placement, opportunities will be provided for pre-service teachers to observe and/or assist students with special needs. For example, physically or mentally handicapped, non-English speaking students and the academically at-risk. An important component of the course involves examining at-risk behaviors and discussing approaches to intervention. Discussion groups are scheduled with guidance counselors, teachers and special education faculty at the school placement site. A synthesis of research on tracking or ability grouping is used to raise questions about appropriate, alternative ways of working with students of diverse abilities, interests, needs, and backgrounds.

D. Goals and Objectives of the Course

The goals and objectives of this class address:

- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education Standards
  1c. Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills for Teacher Candidates

- National Middle School Association Standards (1-7)

- Virginia Department of Education – Program Standards 8VAC-20-540-120 Middle School 6-8

Having successfully completed this course, the student will be able to:

(1) Demonstrate knowledge of the physical, emotional, and cognitive development of students between the ages of 10 and 15.
NCATE 1.c  NMSA 1-7  VDOE 8VAC-20-540-120 (1.a, e, f)

(2) Produce descriptive demographical data regarding early adolescents and their lives.
NCATE 1 c  NMSA 1-7  VDOE 8VAC-20-540-120 (1.a, e, f)

(3) Utilize information about individual, familial, and societal factors which may place this age group at-risk.
NCATE 1. c,  NMSA 1-7  VDOE 8VAC-20-540-120 (1.a, e , f)
(4) Understand the impact of school structures and grouping on students.
NCATE 1. c, NMSA 1-7 VDOE 8VAC-20-540-120 (1a, e, f)
(5) Demonstrate knowledge about the ethical responsibilities of teaching students.
NCATE 1. c, NMSA 1-7 VDOE 8VAC-20-540-120 (1a, e, f)
(6) Alternate educational responses to provide students with equity and opportunities in the classroom.
NCATE 1. c, NMSA 1-7 VDOE 8VAC-20-540-120 (1a, e, f)

E. Assessment Measures

(1) Class attendance and participation. Given the interactive nature of the class and its correlation with field experiences, students will make peer evaluations in regard to attendance and contributions to the group.

(2) Writing Tasks. Students will keep written reflections on their experiences and/or readings. These will be evaluated in terms of their promptness, relevance, and inquiry nature.

(3) Case Study Analyses. Written responses to selected case studies will be required. These will be evaluated on the inclusion and appropriate use of knowledge about early adolescents. Key NCATE Assessment # 2 – Assessment System and Unit Evaluations

(4) Shadow Study. Students will make observations of an early adolescent and submit written reflections about this data. Key NCATE Assessment # 4 - Diversity

(5) Tests. Written tests will be used to examine students' understanding of concepts.

F. Other Course Information

(1) Assignments are differentiated for graduate students who are seeking certification and using this course as a part of their graduate program.

G. Approval and Subsequent Reviews

Previous history unavailable

Date Action Reviewed By
August 14, 2006 Reviewed Dr. Elizabeth D. Dore, Coordinator
November 10, 2008 Reviewed Dr. Elizabeth D. Dore, Coordinator