

Revisions to the Early Childhood Elementary and Middle Level Educations Programs

Since 2007, the Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, and Middle Level Education has annually reviewed multiple data sources regarding pre-service candidates. Examples of these data sources include: Unit Assessments, Program Assessments, Survey data from our graduates and their supervisors, and our Advisory Committee. Our data revealed that our pre- service candidates are successful in understanding and delivering content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and are able to exemplify excellent dispositions in the teaching profession. Faculty analysis of assessment results also indicate that although our students meet required standards, today's classrooms demand greater expertise in the following areas: diversity, differentiation and technology.

Additionally, all teacher education programs in the State of Illinois are being required to redesign their program to include the new Illinois Professional Teaching Standards and new licensure requirements. Additionally, K-12 classrooms are moving to a new set of standards (Common Core) and assessments (PARCC). These changes will require pre-service candidates to have greater expertise in Literacy, Assessment and working with students with diverse learning needs.

A new course was developed ELE 1050-Introduction to Teaching as a Profession, designed to enhance the transition, integration and retention of freshmen and transfer students who wish to pursue a career in Early Childhood, Elementary and Middle Level education. Students will be introduced to the EC/ELE/MLE program, with particular emphasis on the specific skill sets and dispositions necessary for success in the major.

This revised program consists of three C.O.R.E. field experiences. This C.O.R.E. is a scaffolding of integrated coursework which includes: Content-Knowledge, Outreach, Reflection, and Evaluation. An additional field experience was added in this revised program to assist pre-service candidates in becoming adept at collaborating with school personnel, family and community. The three C.O.R.E 's, in addition to student teaching are intended to offer pre-service candidates four consecutive semesters of working with children in a variety of settings. Pre-service candidates will log more than 180 hours

observing and working with children in educational environments prior to their student teaching semester.

All students are now being required to take an additional literacy course, ELE 4280-Content Area Reading. The current ELE 3350 Language Arts in the Elementary and Middle School has been increased from 2 credit hours to 3 credit hours because students and faculty have recognized the challenges of adequately addressing listening, speaking, writing, viewing, and visually representing within the current 2 credit hour format. The revised proposal will also allow for extra emphasis on writing across the content areas to align with Common Core State Standards and assist students in meeting the revised Illinois Professional Teaching Standards.

A new course ELE 4890- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students/English Language Learners: Instructional Methods was developed to assist pre-service teachers to accommodate the needs of Cultural Diverse and English Language Learners.

Increasing field experience hours and writing requirements/reflection, adding content to the courses to reflect current national- and state-level reform mandates, and providing more explicit instruction and hands-on experience for our candidates in learning to use assessment data to inform pedagogical decisions are major components of these revisions. This program redesign is an effort to adjust curriculum to better prepare teacher candidates for student teaching and subsequent success in their future careers as educators.