

**Augusta State University  
College of Education  
Teacher Education Department  
Fall 2006**

**MGED 3112 – The Middle School Classroom: Environment, Curriculum and Practices**

**Hours: 3 Semester Hours**

**Prerequisites: Admission to the Teacher Education Program**

**Assistant Professor: Dr. William Root  
370 University Hall  
(706) 729-2125**

**Office hours: T/Th: 1:00 – 4:00pm  
Wed: 1:00 – 5:00pm  
M/F: by appointment only**

**e-mail wroot@aug.edu**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Students will examine the elements of an effective Middle Grades classroom including the classroom environment, a Middle School approach to implementing a student centered interdisciplinary curriculum, a middle school pedagogy and best practices. Meeting students' individual needs, including those of special needs students is embedded in the course.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES ADDRESSED:**

**Learning Outcomes**

Students will:

- Understand how students differ in their approaches to learning and be able to create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.
- Understand and use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage the learner's development of critical and creative thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
- Use an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.
- Use knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and information technology techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
- Plan instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, the learners, the community and curriculum goals.
- Understand and use authentic assessment to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social and physical development of the learner.

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

Surr, S., Thomason, J. & Thompson, M. (1996). Teaching at the middle level: A professional's handbook. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath & Company.

**CLASS CALENDAR: Fall 2006**

August 21,	-- September 22	Classes on campus
September 25	-- September 29	Students report to lab schools
October 2	-- October 20	Classes meet on campus
October 23	-- November 17	Students report to lab schools
November 20	-- December 7	Classes meet on campus

**SPECIFIC COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

Throughout the course students will demonstrate an ability to:

1. analyze and develop strategies to create a positive, instructional learning environment which is student centered and fosters learning (Management module) (NCATE/NMSA 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 7.2; PSC II, IV, VI, VIII; NB III, VIII, IX; CF 3, 4, 5).

2. define, examine and critique various approaches to curriculum in the middle grades including traditional separate subject, interdisciplinary, and integrated approaches (NCATE/NMSA 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 5.3, 7.1, 7.2; PSC IV; NB II, VI, VII; CF 3, 4, 7).
3. develop strategies to design learning activities which involve students in the process to capitalize on internal motivation and ownership as proactive instructional classroom management (Management module) (NCATE/NMSA 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.4, 5.2, 5.3, 7.2; PSC II; NB I, III, VII; CF 3).
4. examine and design learning opportunities and strategies to address diversity and meet individual student needs, including special needs students (Special Education Module 1, 3) (NCATE/NMSA 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 5.1, 7.1, 7.2; PSC II, IV, VI, VII, VIII; NB IV, VII, VIII, IX; CF 3).
5. examine, analyze and design effective approaches to pedagogy in the middle grades ranging from planning to implementation and assessment (NCATE/NMSA 3, 4, 5, 7; PSC II, IV, V, VII; NB II, III, IV, VI, VIII, X; CF 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

### **COURSE OUTLINE:**

The course outline is designed to provide topics essential for students to attain the intended course outcomes and objectives. Additional reading assignments and assessment dates may be developed along with students to assure that their learning needs are met and questions are addressed from a student centered and student driven perspective.

### **TOPICS:**

1. The classroom environment:
  - a. Student centered
  - b. Ethos of caring: pro-active management, relationships, ownership, risk taking, trust (Management module)
  - c. Focused on learning: flexible, need focused, active
  - d. Connected to world outside of classroom
  - e. Interdependence and individual responsibility
  - f. Inclusive of students from diverse backgrounds and with special needs (Special Education module 1)
2. The curriculum:
  - a. From traditional to interdisciplinary, integrated approaches to content and the disciplines
  - b. Student driven curriculum and curriculum standards
  - c. Reading and technology and other connections
  - d. Inclusive of diversity, individuality, and special needs (Special Education module 1)
3. The pedagogy:
  - a. Philosophy and beliefs: constructivist and student centered approaches, engaged and democratic pedagogy (Management module)
  - b. Culturally responsive instruction
  - c. Inquiry based, use of thinking skills, and creativity focused
  - d. Involving school community; parental involvement, families, resource people
  - e. Technology and accessing information
  - f. Addressing individual differences learning styles, exceptionalities, intervention and extension (Special Education modules 1 & 3)
  - g. Cooperative/and active learning
  - h. Interactive/process oriented
  - i. Performance based/authentic and other forms of assessment
  - j. Interdisciplinary teaming; flexible grouping and scheduling

### **ASSESSMENT:**

Performance based standards for each assignment and activity will be determined and explained prior to each assignment. Students will work toward successful attainment of all standards. Assignments which do not meet all standards will be graded returned with specific improvements to be made as built in intervention. The assessment is designed to require use of higher level thinking skills and to provide authentic opportunities for students to demonstrate learning, as inherent to sound middle grades practice. Assessment of the course objectives may include but is not limited to methods such as: simulation, debate,

research, micro-teaching, reflective teaching, lesson/unit development, analysis of interviews and observations, self and peer evaluation. The course assessment must include evidence of student learning, reflection and self assessment in relation to the following for inclusion in a comprehensive portfolio:

- Pedagogical knowledge (knowledge of interdisciplinary / integrated instruction assessment strategies, developing thinking skills, student centered, planning( (CF 4, 6, 8)
- Content knowledge-specific to concentration (CF 7)
- Meeting student needs / intervention (special needs included) (CF 3)
- Knowledge of effective classroom management / developing a positive learning environment (CF 5)

### **FIELD EXPERIENCE COMPONENTS: (NCATE/NMSA 8.1, 8.2)**

Block I: Exploration of Self and Middle School: The field component of this block is designed to cause the student to evaluate self as a middle grades teacher. Students will examine the multiple roles of a middle grades teacher, partnership roles within the greater school community, a variety of contexts of middle grades teaching, and an examination of the characteristics of adolescents in multiple school settings. Areas to be examined include:

- Self as a middle grades teacher
- Student characteristics
- The middle school environment
- Home and community contexts
- Overview of middle school methods

Students will engage in the following experiences:

- A. Variety of observations in schools looking at the teacher role, student characteristics and relationships dealing with interpersonal and environmental issues
  - Observations in a variety of school settings/grade levels/content areas
  - Observations should be focused on elements being studied in block: student teacher roles/relationship, rapport, environment, management, student developmental characteristics, instructional approaches, curriculum (how being taught and defined)
  - Make transition to instruction with small groups looking at these concepts
- B. Various aspects of students' lives beyond the classroom/placed in various school role and or community settings
  - Shadow principal, nurse, counselor, observe school setting
  - Include a mini experience in a community organization (1 – 2 weeks) to see the context/social issues of the students
  - Work on identifying own strengths/preferences/self evaluation as teacher

Potential assessments: observation journal, interview and shadowing write ups, presentation of case analysis/studies, presentation of discoveries about roles in middle school study, rubrics for each focused observation, self study/self evaluation as a Middle Grades Teacher.

### **CLASS ATTENDANCE:**

Students are to maintain regular attendance to attain maximum success in the pursuit of studies. It may be necessary for the student to be absent from scheduled classes or labs for personal reasons. On such occasions, all matters related to student absences, including the making up of work missed, are to be arranged between the student and the professor. Failure to turn in an assignment on the due date will result in a five-point deduction for each class day the assignment is late. After the equivalent of one and one half weeks of absences from a class, regardless of cause, the student is subject to being withdrawn from the class at the discretion of the professor.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Each assignment will be awarded the identified number of points. All written tasks will be evaluated on accuracy, completeness, clarity, depth of analysis and reflection, coherence, clarity of expression, consistent, correct usage of standard English and consistent use of APA style (when appropriate). All assignments should be typed, double-spaced and in black ink. All assignments should be presented with student name, title of assignment, date due and course number identification in UPPER RIGHT HAND CORNER on the first page of the text (No formal cover/title page is needed).

Assignments are as follows:

**ISL (Impacting Student Learning) Formatted Lesson Plans: (2 X 50 pts. = 100 points)**

You will develop a lesson plan for each of your concentration areas incorporating the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) and reflecting effective criteria: educational objectives, content, teaching strategies, innovation, assessment and overall quality (DUE 10/17/06).

**Interdisciplinary Lesson Plan: 100 points**

You will design and develop a thematic interdisciplinary lesson plan based on the National Council of Social Studies Ten Thematic Strands combining your two concentration areas (DUE 11/30/06).

**Class Presentation: 50 points**

You will choose an instructional strategy topic and lead a class discussion/presentation developed in response to the essential question found in Module 5: Middle School Instructional Strategies (Schurr, Thomason, & Thompson, pp. 177 – 180).

**Mid-term Assessment 50 points (10/12/06)**

**Reflective Journal: 100 points**

Your reflective journal will address focused questions assigned by the professor based on lab observations and activities. You will be asked to reflect upon the effectiveness of your teaching and learning in the lab setting during the lab experience (dual submission with MGED 3111 DUE 11/21/06).

**School-based Lab Experience:**

The lab setting provides an opportunity for you to observe and participate in content instruction with young adolescents in the middle school classroom setting. The final evaluation will be based on your lab teacher's evaluations. You must submit The Lab Evaluation: Professional Qualities Form and The Lab Evaluation: Performance Assessment Form (dual submission with MGED 3111 DUE 11/21/06).

**MGED 3112: School based Lab Experience Rating Scale and Course Point Grade Distribution:**

4	Exemplary	A	360 – 400
3	Proficient-shows competence	B	340 – 359
2	In Progress-approaching com.	C	319 – 339
1	Unsatisfactory-not competent	D	284 – 318
		F	283 – Below

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**GRADE DISTRIBUTION:**

ISL Formatted Lesson Plans (2 X 50 pts. = 100 points)	100 _____
Interdisciplinary Lesson Plan	100 _____
Class Presentation: Instructional Strategy	50 _____
Mid-term Assessment	50 _____
Reflective Journal	100 _____

**TOPICS FOR READING AND DISCUSSION:**

Schurr, S., Thomason, J. & Tompson, M. (1996). Teaching at the middle level: A professional's handbook. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath & Company.

<b><u>Dates:</u></b>	<b><u>Topics:</u></b>
8/22 – 8/24	1. Overview: Course and Middle School Concept/Philosophy <i>This We Believe</i> . National Middle School Association Conceptual Framework Principles (pp. 1-31)
8/29 – 8/31	2. Middle School Program Components (pp. 65-113)
9/05 – 9/07	3. Constructivist Learning Theory Middle School Curriculum (pp. 117-146)
9/12 – 9/14	4. Outcome-Based Curriculum Learning Units (pp. 147-175)
9/19 – 9/21	5. Impacting Student Learning Georgia Performance Standards Lesson Planning Instruction
9/25 – 9/29	6. Field Experience Labs
10/03 – 10/05	7. Instructional Strategies: Lecture Alternatives, case study, games and simulations, role play, cooperative learning, learning stations (pp. 181-213)
10/10 – 10/12	8. Instructional Strategies: creative thinking, critical thinking, investigation task cards, multiple intelligences, interdisciplinary instruction, problem-based learning (pp. 214-261)
	<b>MID-TERM</b>
10/17 – 10/19	9. <b>ISL Formatted Lesson Plans DUE</b> Instructional Strategies: investigation task cards, multiple intelligences, interdisciplinary instruction, contracts and learning packets, graphic organizers, reports. (pp. 262-297)
10/23 – 10/27	10. <b>Field Experience Labs</b>
10/30 – 11/03	11. <b>Field Experience Labs</b>
11/06 – 11/10	12. <b>Field Experience Labs</b>
11/13 – 11/17	13. <b>Field Experience Labs</b>
11/21 – 11/23	14. Lab Reflections and findings <b>Reflective Journals DUE</b> <b>School-based Lab Experience Reports DUE</b> <b>Thanksgiving</b>
11/28 – 11/30	15. <b>Interdisciplinary Thematic Units DUE</b> Presentations: Student-led <b>Instructional Strategy topics</b>
12/05 – 12/07	16. Assessment: authentic, product, portfolio, performance, observation, standardized tests, grading (pp. 331-424)

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**GRADE DISTRIBUTION:**

1.	ISL Formatted Lesson Plans	(2 X 50 pts. = 100 points)	100 _____
2.	Interdisciplinary Lesson Plan		100 _____
3.	Class Presentation of Instructional Strategy		50 _____
4.	Mid-Term Assessment		50 _____
5.	Reflective Journal		100 _____

**GRADING SCALE:**

A	360 – 400
B	340 – 359
C	319 – 339
D	284 – 318
F	283 – Below

**FIELD EXPERIENCE LAB (Rating)** \_\_\_\_\_

4	Exemplary Level
3	Proficient Level
2	In Progress Level
1	Unsatisfactory Level