

**Augusta State University**  
**College of Education—Department of Teacher Education**  
**MGED 3213 – The Middle School as Organization**  
**Spring 2007**

Hours: 3 Semester Hours

Prerequisites: Admission to the Teacher Education Program

Assistant Professor: Dr. William Root

University Hall – Room 370

(706)729-2125

E-mail: wroot@aug.edu

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Students will examine the Middle School as an organization and elements of an effective Middle School. Middle School philosophy and the origins of the Middle School movement will be examined as the basis of the Middle School components such as teaming, flexible scheduling, interdisciplinary curriculum, parental and community involvement and educational structures built to meet student and adolescent needs.

**RESOURCE TEXT:**

Wiles, J. and Bondi, J. (2001). *The new American middle school: Educating preadolescents in an era of change*. Upper Saddle Rive, NH: Prentice Hall, Inc.

**CLASS CALENDAR:**

January 8	– February 9	Class meets on campus
February 12	– February 16	Students report to lab school
February 19	– March 9	Class meets on campus
March 12	– April 13	Students report to lab school
April 2	– April 6	Spring Break
April 16	– May 2	Class meets on campus

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES ADDRESSED:**

**Learning Outcomes**

Students will:

2. understand how students learn and develop and be able to provide developmentally appropriate learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.
5. 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.
9. be a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and actively seeks the opportunity to grow professionally.
10. foster relationships with school colleagues, parents and agencies in the larger community to support the learning and well being of all students.

### **SPECIFIC COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

Throughout the course students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Examine the historical and research-based factors influencing the development of the Middle School philosophy and analyze the basic tenets of this philosophy, comparing and contrasting Middle School to the Junior High.
- Analyze how elements of the school organization reflect this philosophy
- Analyze how elements of the school organization reflect the nature of early adolescent students and serve to address student needs.
- Critique the effectiveness of the current Middle School movement in working toward this philosophy and organization.
- Identify barriers to progress in the Middle School and develop collaborative strategies related to how they may be addressed.

### **COURSE OUTLINE:**

The Middle Grades Program is founded on the premise that instructors model the practices they espouse that students employ in an effective classroom. The course outline is designed to provide topics essential for students to attain the intended course outcomes and objectives. Specific time lines, reading assignments, and assessment dates are not included so that the instructor can model how these are determined along with students to assure that their learning needs are met and questions are addressed from a student centered and student driven perspective.

### **TOPICS:**

- I. A Middle School Philosophy
  - a. The movement to Middle School
  - b. Characteristics of a true Middle School
  - c. Student centeredness and the adolescent
  - d. Program design
- II. School Organization
  - a. Learning communities
  - b. Interdisciplinary teams
  - c. Flexible scheduling
  - d. Activity programs for adolescents
  - e. School, community and families, resource people, community groups, educational colleagues
  - f. School improvement and progress and assessment
  - g. Comprehensive guidance programs
  - h. Pro-active management of student needs (management module)
- III. Curriculum and Organized Learning
  - a. Formal programs
  - b. Core curriculum and connections
  - c. School-wide advisement programs
- IV. Instruction
  - a. Teacher preparation
  - b. Delivery systems

### **ASSESSMENT:**

Performance based standards for each assignment or 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 the student 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 or unit development, analysis of interviews and observations, self and peer evaluation, research and journal writing.

The course assessment must include evidence of student learning, reflection and self assessment in relation to the following for inclusion in a comprehensive electronic portfolio:

- Analysis of elements of a true Middle School related to adolescent needs
- Statement of Middle School philosophy in action
- Analysis of role in Middle School related to collaboration and leadership

### **FIELD EXPERIENCE COMPONENTS:**

#### **Developing Pedagogy and Content Expertise**

At the school site, the student will be assigned to an instructional team to work on Middle School pedagogy assignments and meet individual content specialization needs for lab.

#### **PEDAGOGY:**

- Include teaching small groups of students or tutoring students
- Focus on teaching skills, how decisions are made, and instructional skills
- Observe in the classroom with an instructional focus
- Include interactive observation and dialogues with teacher and students
- Focus on developing instructional strategies to meet a variety of student needs (exceptionality, diversity, and learning styles): work with these students in small groups and one on one
- Make transition to some whole class lessons

#### **CONTENT:**

- Examine content standards, courses of study, curriculum guides
- Select materials appropriate to content area(s) and middle grade students
- Examine a variety of instructional approaches related to areas of content expertise
- Examine and develop appropriate means to assess content learning congruent with instructional approaches and learner needs and development

Clinical Lab: content pedagogy course will have a lab/clinical/simulation teaching/practice to address both pedagogy and content in a formal ISL (Impacting Student Learning) demonstration

### **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, late assignments, including the making up of work missed, are to be arranged between the

student and the professor. After the equivalent of one and one half weeks of absences from a class, regardless of cause, the student may be subject to withdrawal from the class.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS.**

All written tasks will be evaluated on accuracy, completeness, clarity, depth of analysis and reflection, coherence, well-reasoned or argued positions, clarity of expression, consistent correct usage of standard English and consistent use of APA style (when appropriate).

- I. **(10%) Daily Assignments, Class Attendance, and Reflection Questions**  
The student will be asked to participate in class activities as groups and individuals to complete team or individual assignments that will be evaluated as part of this category.
- II. **(20%) Article Reviews**  
You will read four articles from the on-line journal, Middle School Promise Journal: Special Education Addressing Adolescent Needs, and write a professional review for each
- III. **(20%) Reflective Journal – School-based lab Field Experience**  
The lab setting provides an opportunity for students to observe the middle school organization and participate in content teaching and adolescent learning in the middle school setting. Your journal will address assigned focus questions based on lab observations and activities.
- IV. **(20%) Mid-term; Action Research Project Design and Annotated Bibliography**  
You will select a research issue or topic regarding middle school organizational, curriculum, instructional or assessment best practices and design an action research project to include a problem statement, literature, method of research, results of research and conclusions.
- V. **(20%) Research Journal Article**  
You will complete an authentic journal article based on your action research project for inclusion in your electronic portfolio or submission to the Collegiate Middle Level Association (CMLA) for publication.
- VI. **(10%) Final; On-line Visit, Model Middle School Analysis and Class Presentation**  
You will select two state or national Lighthouse Schools which are exemplary or model middle schools and submit a written analysis or critique relating to what extent elements of the school's organization reflect the middle school philosophy or best practices in the middle school organization.

**Weekly Schedule:**

Week 1	Middle School Philosophy, Middle School Program Criteria
Week 2	Chapter One: Rationale for a new school in the middle
Week 3	Chapter Two: Today's pre-adolescent learner
Week 4	Chapter Three: Effective Organizational Structures
Week 5	Chapter Four: Teachers for the new middle school
Week 6	Chapter Five: Organizing the middle school curriculum
Week 7	FIELD EXPERIENCE
Week 8	MID-TERM: Action Research/Inquiry Based Project
Week 9	Chapter Six: Developing instructional materials
Week 10	FIELD EXPERIENCE
Week 11	FIELD EXPERIENCE
Week 12	FIELD EXPERIENCE
Week 13	Spring Break
Week 14	FIELD EXPERIENCE
Week 15	Chapter 7: The new full-service middle school
Week 16	Chapters 8 and 9: Designing the new American middle school and Instruction in the new middle school
Week 17	COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT; Chapter 10: Evaluation of new middle school programs.