

A. MSIT 3320 Introduction to Teaching at the Middle Level

(1-11-06)

B. Catalog Description:

This course is an introductory course in middle level education. It will provide an overview of the characteristics of a middle school program as compared to the traditional junior high program. Alternative assessment strategies will be examined as well as components of scheduling, curriculum design, and strategies for working with a uniquely diverse population.

C. Purpose:

This course is designed to give an overview of the philosophy, organizational patterns, and curricula of exemplary middle schools with emphasis upon teaching methods appropriate for use with students in late childhood and early adolescence. Candidates will be expected to engage in a variety of personal explorations that will enable them to make considered decisions about their potential as middle level educators and to develop an understanding of the unique cognitive, behavioral, and affective needs of middle level students. It will assist candidates in understanding the foundations of development and articulation of middle school curriculum, including “core” curriculum, exploratory classes, advisement programs, and co-curricular programs. It will emphasize the development and implementation of interdisciplinary thematic units and lessons relevant to the young adolescent learner, including accommodation strategies for diversity. All activities and assignments are intended to foster the growth of candidates as reflective decision-makers.

D. Required Texts:

Powell, S. D. (2005) *Introduction to middle school*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

National Middle School Association. (2003). *This we believe: Successful schools for young adolescents*. Columbus, OH: Author.

E. UCA Teacher Preparation Program Summary and Goals:

The education programs at the University of Central Arkansas establish and maintain rigorous standards for teacher candidates’ knowledge and performance to ensure that all students achieve state-adopted learner outcomes. Working from a solid content background, teacher candidates demonstrate proficient and flexible use of different ways of teaching to engage actively all students in learning. Teacher candidates are well versed in the characteristics of students of different ages, abilities, and cultural backgrounds. They are skilled in integrating technology into instruction and creating environments in which all students can be successful and want to learn. Teacher candidates know when and how to assess learning through various forms of traditional and authentic assessments. They are well prepared for successful careers in teaching and are expected to act in a professional manner in all circumstances with students, colleagues, parents/guardians, and community members. As professional educators, teacher candidates value collaboration and seek opportunities to work with other professionals and community members to improve the educational experiences for students. As such, the following goals are our main focus:

1. The teacher candidate designs and organizes instruction and assessment procedures for all students based upon a thorough knowledge of subject matter, pedagogy, and students.

2. The teacher candidate uses appropriate, effective classroom practices, procedures, and pedagogies to create and manage a productive learning environment.
3. The teacher candidate demonstrates strong communication skills, employs effective teaching strategies and methodologies, integrates technology into instruction, and uses a variety of assessment measures to impact student learning.
4. The teacher candidate engages in professional development, demonstrates ethical conduct in working with all constituencies (students, colleagues, parents/guardians, and community members), and reflects upon instruction and student learning to assess teaching effectiveness.

How does “Introduction to the Middle Level” address the PEU’s Conceptual Framework vision of preparing *Educators as Reflective Decision-Makers*?

This course is designed to give candidates the opportunity to observe, investigate, and evaluate best practices for late childhood and early adolescent learners. As candidates engage in authentic activities, they will reflect on and make decisions about how they can be effective in the classroom. They will be required to evaluate how they interact with other candidates as they plan curriculum, schedules, and activities that would be appropriate to the middle school setting. They will examine case studies in order to have a basis for determining alternatives applicable to middle level teaching

F. Use of Technology:

Candidates will be expected to use technology in a variety of ways. They will be expected to use electronic sources in obtaining information about middle level issues. They will be expected to integrate technology in developing lesson plans and other assignments. They will be expected to use technology in presenting projects and in communication among themselves and with the instructor.

G. Diversity:

Emphasis will be placed on developing a middle level program that accommodates various learning styles and multiple intelligences. For example, candidates will examine student-centered instructional practices such as project-centered learning, discovery and inquiry strategies, peer coaching, and cooperative learning. Candidates will design a curriculum that incorporates sequenced learning from concrete examples to abstract examples, emphasizes collaboration rather than competition, investigates service learning projects, and allows for multilevel instruction.

H. Course Goals and Objectives:

1. **Candidates will explore the philosophy behind the growth and function of middle level education and be able to identify evidence of quality middle level education. (Domain A) .**
 - Candidates will compare the middle school concept with the traditional junior high concept.
 - Candidates will be able to identify the major components associated with middle level education.

- 2. Candidates will examine the developmental characteristics of students in late childhood and early adolescence and the impact those characteristics have on learning and teaching in the middle school. (Domain A, B, C).**
 - Candidates will understand basic principles of student motivation and its impact on teaching and learning in the middle level.
 - Candidates will develop an understanding of and appreciation for designing educational programs that meet the needs of diverse learners.

- 3. Candidates will apply knowledge about the philosophy, development, and characteristics of a sound middle level program in development of middle level curriculum. (Domain A, C)**
 - Candidates will identify and use the elements of curriculum design.
 - Candidates will develop an understanding of how to integrate the curriculum.
 - Candidates will understand the need for adequate planning for instruction and the various ways in which planning takes place.
 - Candidates will develop an understanding of how a flexible block schedule works.
 - Candidates will develop an understanding of alternative forms of assessment including portfolios and rubrics/scoring guides.

- 4. Candidates will identify evidence of quality middle level teaching (Domain A, B, C,D)**
 - Candidates will be knowledgeable of characteristics of effective middle level teachers.
 - Candidates will be able to identify components of effective instruction as measured on the Pathwise/TPOA instruments.

- 5. Candidates will design a professional development plan that will enhance their abilities to be effective middle level teachers. (Domain D)**
 - Candidates will continue to develop technological skills necessary to create and implement effective learning events in a middle level classroom
 - Candidates will continue to develop effective communication skills, critical and creative thinking abilities, and other skills crucial to reflective decision making.
 - Candidates will identify intellectual, social, ethical, and personal attributes of reflective decision-makers in professional settings.
 - Candidates will demonstrate commitment to lifelong professional development and general learning.
 - Candidates will develop practical abilities to implement the skills, techniques, and strategies associated with student learning and effective leadership
 - Candidates will identify components of effective team work.
 - Candidates will explore avenues that foster collaborative efforts with clientele within institutions and in the community through commitment to active citizenship in the service of a vision of the public good.

I. Course Outline:

- 1. Today's Middle Level School (Course Goal I)**
 - A. Organizational Structure
 - B. Evolution of the Middle School Concept
 - C. Key Characteristics

- D. School Within a School
- E. Connections with the Community

2. The Middle Level Student (Course Goals II, III)

- A. Physical Development
- B. Social Concerns
- C. Academic Progress Considerations
 - a. Learning Styles
 - b. Brain Research
 - c. Multiple Intelligences

- D. Psychological/Emotional Development

3. Instructional Strategies (Course Goals II, III, IV)

- A. Components of Effective Instruction (Pathwise TPOA)
- B. Addressing Diversity
- C. Using Technology
- D. Planning for Instruction
- E. Developing Curriculum
- F. Questioning Techniques
- G. Critical Thinking and Real-World Problem-Solving for Meaningful Learning
- H. Teacher Talk, Demonstrations, Inquiry, and Games
- I. Interdisciplinary Units

4. Assessment at the Middle Level (Course Goal III)

- A. Diagnostic Assessment
- B. Authentic Assessment
- C. Cooperative Group Assessment
- D. Assessment Tools
 - a. Portfolios
 - b. Checklists
 - c. Questionnaires
 - d. Rubrics
 - e. Tests
- E. Reporting Achievement

5. Developing Professionally (Course Goal V)

- A. Reflective Decision-making
- B. Collaborating with Peers and Other Stakeholders
- C. Professional Portfolios
- D. UCA Teacher Education Program
- E. Participation in Professional Organizations
- F. Professional Development Plans

J. Field Experience Requirements:

A minimum of 10 hours of field experience is required in this course. Candidates will be required to observe in a middle level setting and may be required to interview a middle level student and a middle level teacher and submit reflective papers about each of their experiences.

K. Course Outcomes and Evaluation:

Candidates will be evaluated through a variety of instruments. There will be two tests consisting of both objective items and essay questions. Additionally, candidates will be assessed through field experience reflective papers, individual student assignments, group assignments, and presentations. Rubrics will be used in assessment of written assignments and presentations and will be distributed to candidates at the time an assignment is made. Grading Scale: A: 94-100; B: 84-93; C: 74-83; D: 64-73; F: 63 or less

Attendance Policy:

Candidates are expected to attend all class meetings and field experiences. In case of illness or emergency, the candidate is responsible for notifying the instructor of the class as well as any cooperating public school personnel. Candidates will be expected to complete missed work. Make-up exams will be scheduled at the discretion of the instructor. Candidates will be expected to dress, speak, and act in a professional manner at all times.

Five percentage points will be deducted from the final grade for each absence starting with the second absence. Three instances of being tardy equals one absence.

L. Student Handbook Policies:

Candidates are expected to follow the policies regarding academic dishonesty, sexual harassment, and academic issues as outlined in the current *UCA Student Handbook*. Candidates should familiarize themselves with all policies listed in the Handbook.

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's work, ideas, or expressions as your own whether you do so intentionally or as a result of careless documentation. It is a serious violation and carries severe penalties – failure on the assignment or in the course.

The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act, please contact the UCA Office of Disability Services at 450-3135.

M. Bibliography:

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- Fogarty, R. (1997). *Brain compatible classrooms*. Arlington Heights, IL: Skylight Training and Publishing, Inc.
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- Schurr, S. (1999). *Authentic assessment: Using product, performance, and portfolio measures from A to Z*. Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association.
- Williamson, R. D. (1998). *Scheduling middle level schools: Tools for improved student achievement*. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Field Mentor Diversity Information and Class Profile Undergraduate Form

Undergraduate Candidates are required to complete this form and enter this information into your Candidate Account Manager (CAM) account for each course with a field component. This information is for data purposes only. Complete the data that applies to your particular field assignment.

Program or Major _____
Candidate's Name _____ UCA ID _____
Course Prefix, Number and Name _____
Field Mentor _____ School/Setting _____
Grade(s)/Age(s) _____ Subject(s) _____ Date _____

Mentor Diversity Information

Race:	Gender:
<input type="checkbox"/> African American or Black non-Hispanic	<input type="checkbox"/> Male
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander	<input type="checkbox"/> Female
<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic	
<input type="checkbox"/> Native American, Inuit, Aleut	
<input type="checkbox"/> White, non-Hispanic	

Class Profile

The answers require actual numbers in each category.

1. How many students are in the class/setting? (Provide the information for either a single student/small group/class – whatever applies to the field setting.)
 male
 female

2. What is the age range of students? _____

3. Approximately how many students are in each of the following **language** categories?
 English language proficient
 Limited English proficient

4. Approximately how many students have the following **exceptionalities**?
 visual impairment
 hearing impairment
 developmental disability
 emotional or behavior disability
 gifted
 learning disability
 physical disability
 ADD/ADHD
 other (please specify) _____

5. With respect to the following categories, how would you describe your students?
 African American or Black non-Hispanic
 Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander
 Mexican American or Chicano
 Native American, Inuit, Aleut
 Puerto Rican
 Other Hispanic
 White, non-Hispanic
 Mixed Race
 other (please specify) _____