MGE 385
Middle Grades Teaching Strategies
Spring 2009

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Course Description
This course is a component of the professional educator program allowing students to explore and demonstrate effective middle grades teaching strategies related to curriculum design and instruction- a particular emphasis will be placed in on addressing diverse learner needs and interdisciplinary planning.

Rationale
The Western Kentucky University middle grades teacher education program is designed to prepare pre-service teachers who will demonstrate skills needed to match instruction with the individual needs of early adolescent learners. Specifically, undergraduates will be expected to demonstrate critical performances involving lesson planning, Kentucky Teacher Standards (KTIP) self-evaluation, interdisciplinary planning, responding to the needs of diverse learners and classroom management.

Pre-requisites
CRIMINAL CHECK, TB TEST and a health screening are required to work in the schools. Additional information is available in TPH 408. Field experiences in the public schools and/or other appropriate settings away from campus are required in this course. Students are responsible for arranging transportation to designated sites as well as their own liability insurance coverage.

Required Texts


Copies of Core Content, Programs of Study and National Standards for specific disciplines must be obtained for reference. Go to the Kentucky Department of Education website: www.kyschools.net

**Other readings will be either provided in class or distributed via email or Blackboard.**
Course Goals
As a result of this course, students will…

Know
- A variety of instructional strategies and models such as jigsaw, Trimind, tiered lessons, stations, entry points, learning contracts, problem-based learning, compacting, etc.
- Instructional strategies are the tools that help students uncover the meaning of the material.
- Lesson planning begins with the students first, and then the standards and learning goals second.
- Differentiated instruction means to respond to learner’s needs guided by the general principles of differentiation, such as respectful tasks, flexible grouping, and ongoing assessment and adjustment.
- Teachers can differentiate content, process and products according to students’ readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles.

Understand
- Adolescent learners have unique characteristics and needs that require consideration when planning curriculum and instruction.
- Adjusting curricular content, processes and products in response to students’ readiness levels, interests and learning profiles promotes meaningful learning.
- Student diversity adds to the richness of the classroom community.
- Effective teaching requires proactive, thoughtful planning.

Be able to do…
- Cooperatively create an interdisciplinary unit for middle grades students using a conceptual framework.
- Present interdisciplinary unit in a coherent manner.
- Plan an authentic lesson (with goals, objectives, and assessment) addressing the unique characteristics and needs for adolescent learners.
- Teach a lesson using an instructional strategy presented in class.
- Reflect on learning experiences, discussions, and readings in a blog.
- Actively engage in discussions regarding theory and practice of middle grade education.
- Energetically connect with a middle grades classroom community.

Course Alignment with NCATE/EPSB Requirements

| Kentucky Teacher Standards Assessed: | Standard 1: The Teacher Demonstrates Applied Content Knowledge
| | Standard 2: The Teacher Designs and Plans Instruction
| | Standard 6: The Teacher Demonstrates the Implementation of Technology
| | Standard 8: The Teacher Collaborates with Colleagues/Parents/Others
| National Middle School Standards Addressed: | Middle level teacher candidates understand:
| | the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to young adolescent development, and they provide
opportunities that support student development and learning.

- the major concepts, principles, theories, and research underlying the philosophical foundations of developmentally responsive middle level programs and schools, and they work successfully within these organizational components.

- the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to middle level curriculum and assessment, and they use this knowledge in their practice.

- and use the central concepts, tools of inquiry, standards, and structures of content in their chosen teaching fields, and they create meaningful learning experiences that develop all young adolescents’ competence in subject matter and skills.

- use the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to effective instruction and assessment, and they employ a variety of strategies for a developmentally appropriate climate to meet the varying abilities and learning styles of all young adolescents.

| EPSB Themes/Code of Ethics Addressed | Diversity, Assessment, & Closing the Achievement Gap. |

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**Communication**

- **Email**

  Email is an extremely convenient way to communicate. Email is usually checked daily during the week before 5:00 PM. Weekend emails are usually read on Monday. Expect a response within 24 hours of your email being read. Students are also expected to read instructor emails daily during the week and respond within 24 hours.

  Emails to the instructor should include: your name, the course and email topic on the subject line. Remember the limitations of email. Urgent needs deserve a phone call. Special requests and questions needing a lengthy reply (such as “What was covered in class today?” or “How do I conduct the data analysis on my post assessment?”) are beyond the scope of email and need an office appointment or phone call.

- **Blackboard**

  This course will use Blackboard as a form of communication. Students will be responsible for printing the posted materials and bringing them to class. Students will upload assignments on Blackboard unless otherwise indicated. Grades for assignments will be posted privately on Blackboard. Students are expected to check the Blackboard site frequently in order to stay updated on the class.

- **Cell Phones, Computers and other Electronic Devices**

  Cell phones, pagers and other electronic devices must be turned off and put away during class. They interfere with the connectivity of the interactive video conferencing. Computer use is limited to specifically class-related tasks such as note-taking. See the instructor in advance if special accommodations are necessary. Any use of a cell phone or
other electronic devices during tests and quizzes without the instructor’s prior permission will be considered cheating.

- Course Assignments & Expectations
  Failure to complete any of the following assignments will result in a failing grade.

- Evaluation and Grade Assignment
  Grading in MGE 385 is based on a point system. There is a maximum of 500 points possible for this course. Total points accumulated determine final grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation - class participation during class discussions and activities</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Experience - at least 20 hours in a diverse middle school classroom total - 15 hours in academic setting &amp; 5 in extracurricular</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategies Application - taught to peers or field experience class</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authentic Planning &amp; Assessment for Early Adolescent Learners - taught to field experience class</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary Unit - in a small interdisciplinary group using a macro-concept</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Interdisciplinary Unit Presentation - a power point presentation that highlights unit</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflective Blog - reflection from middle grades field experiences in an on-line journal format</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Interview - a one-on-one interview of middle grades field placement teacher</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article Analyses - analyses of the relevance and significance of identified articles pertaining to issues related to teaching middle grades and adolescent development.</td>
<td>25</td>
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**Total Points** 500

460-500 points = A  410-459 points = B  360-409 points = C  310-359 points = D  Below 310 = F

- Guidelines for all assignments
  ✓ Student’s name, date, campus, and course mnemonic should appear on top right of first page and student’s last name in the footer of subsequent pages.
  ✓ Submission must be typed, size 12 font, Times New Roman or Georgia font
  ✓ Submissions that are not neat and professional will not be accepted.
  ✓ Grade deductions up to 10% will be made for distracting grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.
  ✓ Late submissions are subject to a 10% penalty per day (including weekends), unless there are great extenuating circumstances. In which the instructor must be notified by an email for documentation.
  ✓ Keep electronic copies of all assignments. In the event that an assignment is misplaced, proof of student work rests with the existence of the student’s electronic copy.
  ✓ Work submitted from another course is not accepted.
  ✓ Assignments will be uploaded on Blackboard by midnight of the due date unless otherwise indicated.
  ✓ Assignments must be saved and labeled with the student’s name, assignment title and date (e.g. Capper, Learning Goals, 1-20).
An honor statement will be included at the bottom of the assignment: "On my honor, I pledge that I have neither given nor received help on this assignment."

- **Strategies Application**
  Students will either teach this lesson to the students in their diverse field placement or to a group of peers.

  The Strategies Application assignment requires students to:
  - Justify the use of the particular strategy.
  - Create a “big idea” which includes a conceptual framework and principle.
  - Articulate the learning objectives.
  - Identify students’ diverse needs (i.e. readiness levels, interests, and learning profile).
  - Describe what proactive plans were made to address student diversity.
  - Explain how student understanding will be assessed.
  - Reflect on what adjustments were made in response to the students.
  - It is preferred that the Teaching Application be taught to the students’ field placement classes, but if not possible, it can be taught to a group of peers.
  - The lesson must be recorded and burned to a CD if not observed by the instructor/facilitator or presented in class.
  - The rubric with the expectations will be provided.

- **Reflective Blog**
  Students will use a blog as a forum to reflect on readings and class discussions. They will also respond to field experiences through the use of provided Observation Protocol. The instructor will read the blogs periodically throughout the semester.

- **Teacher Interview**
  The purpose of this assignment is to provide an opportunity to discuss the teaching profession on a deeper level. Students will interview their field placement teachers. Potential questions will be suggested with an emphasis on how they respond to student diversity. After the interview, students will then organize the content into a narrative piece to tell their teacher’s story (will become an entry on their blogs).

- **Article Analyses**
  The purpose of the Article Analyses is to provide an opportunity to read and analyze a variety of articles that focus on a particular area of interest within middle school teaching and learning. Students will summarize and analyze (format will be provided) 5 articles and share findings.

- **Critical Student Performances**
  Two critical performances are included in this course. All critical performances must be uploaded on the electronic portfolio. A final grade will not be submitted if the critical performances are not uploaded on the EPS by the due date. To register on the Electronic Portfolio, go to [http://edtech2.wku.edu/portfolio/](http://edtech2.wku.edu/portfolio/)

  - Authentic Planning & Assessment for Early Adolescent Learners
    Students will generate a lesson plan involving authentic learning tasks, appropriate assessment criteria, and a rubric to authentically assess selected tasks. This lesson plan
will reflect a response to students’ diverse needs. Students will teach this lesson to the
students in their diverse field placement

- **Interdisciplinary Thematic Unit Design**
  Interdisciplinary groups will generate a complete integrated interdisciplinary thematic unit of
  study for middle school students.

- **Participation**
  Because this is an interactive television course, participation is a highly important to the
  success of the class. Participation will be graded based on involvement in class activities
  (making attendance necessary). Points will be awarded for class participation
  periodically. Points earned from exit cards and other class activities cannot be made up.
  Students are expected to avoid seats that exceed the periphery of the camera shot. There
  are no makeup days, including those for inclement weather.

- **Field Experience**
  - Students will spend at least 15 hours observing and participating in middle
    grades classroom (academically focused) and at least 5 hours in
    extracurricular or non-academic activities.
  - The field placement office in Tate Page Hall will arrange student
    observations in the Warren County or Bowling Green Public Schools for
    students who are enrolled on the main campus.
  - Students are expected to be in diverse placements and preferably in
    subject areas of interest.
  - Students are expected to contact their field placement classroom teacher
    the day before each visit.
  - At the close of the semester, students will turn in a Field Placement log
    that contains the classroom teacher’s signature as proof of each visit.
  - Students will use the Observation Protocol in their placement and respond
    on their blogs after each visit.
  - Students will collect all paperwork and handouts that are distributed to
    middle school students while they are in out in their field placement.

   - **Academic Dishonesty**
     Academic dishonesty is taken very seriously and will not be tolerated. Any student
     committing such acts risk severe disciplinary measures. Please refer to your University
     Handbook for more specifics. Students are expected to include an honor statement at the
     bottom of each assignment to be turned for a grade: "On my honor, I pledge that I have
     neither given nor received help on this assignment."

   - **Disability accommodation**
     Candidates with disabilities who require accommodations for this course must contact the
     Office of Student Disabilities Service, Room 445 Potter Hall- (270) 745-5004. A letter
     from OFSDS must accompany any accommodation.

   *The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as deemed necessary.*