

**EDMS 7030: *The Middle School*
Summer 2009**

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The University of Georgia

**College of Education
Conceptual Framework**

The College of Education prepares exemplary, reflective professionals to serve a diverse global community; it achieves that end through teaching, scholarship, outreach, and partnership at the local, national, and international levels.

EDMS 7030 Course Description: In this graduate course, we will examine the concept of an appropriate and developmentally responsive education for young adolescents 10-15 years of age. This course is based on National Middle School Association's standards for master's students relevant to the investigation and examination of young adolescents and middle grades schools.

Essential Questions: What does it mean to be a middle grades teacher?

- Who are young adolescents and why does it matter?
- What are the components of exemplary middle grades programs?
- How might the middle grades concept inform and be informed by teachers' practice?

Required Readings

Jackson, A.W. & Davis, G.A. (2000). *Turning points 2000: Educating adolescents in the 21st century*. Teachers College Press: New York.

Journal articles/readings posted by class participants and instructor.

Course Requirements

Participation (Due: Ongoing)	60 points
Ideal Young Adolescent School project (Due: July 29, 5:00p.m.)	30 points
Action Plan (Due: July 29, 5:00p.m.)	<u>10 points</u>
TOTAL	100 points

Grading Scale

A	93+	C+	77-79
A-	90-92	C	74-76
B+	87-89	C-	70-73
B	84-86	F	0-69
B-	80-83		

Course Expectations

Participation: A majority of this course is offered online using *eLearning Commons* (www.elc.uga.edu). Because we will meet online and face-to-face, this course is considered a blended course format. The participation portion of the course is worth **60 of the 100** points possible. Those 60 points are divided evenly among the 8 weeks of the course, i.e., 7.5 points per week. Participation is heavily weighted because the most important element of our learning environment is the discussion through *eLearning Commons* and in face-to-face meetings. If difficulties arise with accessing or using *eLearning Commons*, call the EITS help desk at (706) 542-3106.

EDMS 7030 is an 8-week course. Most of the sessions will be online via *eLearning Commons*. However, EDMS 7030 will also meet face-to-face on Wednesday, June 10, 4:00-6:00 p.m.; July 29, 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. and on Thursday, July 30, 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., the day of the final exam. During the online class meetings, the number of weekly hours required for this course will be met through:

- Posting the major reflection (once a week)
- Posting a minimum of one extended discussion entry based on the major reflections posted by others for the week as found in the Discussions button.

The *eLearning Commons* site contains the course syllabus, course materials, communications features, etc. During online weekly class sessions, check *eLearning Commons* daily for emails, announcements, and other class information. On the weeks that we meet virtually, there will be a “probe” or “prompt” presented to the entire group in which each person is to post weekly ONE in-depth reflection and then at least one interactive response, adding to the discussion generated through and with the group.

The weekly probes on the *eLearning Commons* Discussions will be based on the readings; it is an expectation that you will comment and reflect deeply on the readings and respond to the probe (prompt) about the reading. If your knowledge of the reading is not apparent, full credit will not be awarded. The expectation is that each person will post at least one deep reflection and a minimum of one (1) detailed response/reflection using *eLearning* discussions each week. (That number does not include such brief comments as “Yes, I agree or No, I disagree.”).

I will post the probe/prompt by 7:00 a.m. on Monday. To make this medium an effective learning tool, you must post your personal deep reflection by Wednesday, 11:00 midnight server time. This posting time will allow others to read and to reflect on your reflection during the remainder of the week. The interactive response posting time will close on Sunday at 12:00 midnight.

Note: The schedule for posting your response to the probe/prompt and interactive response will be different for the first week of the course. Details will be explained in the on-campus class meeting on June 10.

You must make a meaningful contribution to the conversations and back up ideas with scholarly information from the course readings and/or draw from other related readings from

your own efforts or from your own experiences. That is, often colleagues will draw insights from other materials they are reading, share interesting reading materials, submit a PDF or URL for classmates to follow, etc. *I also ask that you end each post by signing your name (e.g., Jane Doe).*

Here are some ways in which you can contribute to the discussion:

- Offer ideas or resources for people to examine. Learning communities share resources.
- Ask challenging questions—to depersonalize, frame the question rhetorically.
- Articulate, explain, and support positions on ideas. Draw from the readings of the course.
- Add by giving explanations and examples of your ideas. Draw from your own experiences.
- Re-evaluate by revisiting previous postings or ideas.
- Make connections across topics, connecting the dots—to synthesize is one of the highest order thinking skills.
- Integrate the ideas of others by discussing and expanding the ideas posted. This could be enlightening especially at the end of a post period.
- Now what? Based on prior discussions ask the next question.

Use the time that we would normally be meeting face-to-face to frame your deep reflection/analysis of the reading(s) for the week. Check *eLearning* every day to read and reflect on the posts of others. It is counter-productive to wait until the weekend to start posting reflections, reactions, and/or insights about the discussion among your classmates.

Although I read each discussion point and reflection numerous times throughout the week and throughout the duration of the course, I am inclined not to “break in” on the discussion, so that students have the freedom and authority to conduct their own discussions.

Ideal School for Young Adolescents and Action Plan: Details about these two assignments will be provided via *eLearning Commons*.

Submitting Assignments

Any time you submit a paper or project, here is how to name the file to be submitted electronically via *eLearning Commons*.

- Save the document as a Microsoft Word document (1997-2003). No other word processing files will be accepted or opened.
- The name of the document is very important. Hence, follow this formula: Your Last name, First Name, Assignment Name, and Date to look like this:
 - Thompson. Kathy. Ideal YA School.6-10-09
 - Thompson. Kathy. Action Plan.6-10-09
- Always insert page numbers as “footer.”
- Include a cover page for your papers/projects. Include your name, the name of the course and course number, instructor name, term, year, date, and your email address).

Late Assignments: Assignments turned in after the due date and time will be docked one letter grade. Assignments will be docked another letter grade for each additional day the assignment is late.

Other Course Expectations and Policies

Academic Honesty: The University of Georgia's policies on academic honesty (http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honesty/academic_honesty.htm) are strictly enforced in this class. Please familiarize yourself with these policies.

Students with Disabilities Who Require Accommodations: Students requesting classroom accommodations should first provide UGA's Disability Resource Center [<http://www.dissvcs.uga.edu>] with all necessary documentation and then schedule an appointment to speak with me. If accommodations are needed but are not covered through the Disability Resource Center, schedule an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss the circumstances.

Cell Phones: Please be sure to have your cell phone turned off during on-campus class meetings. If you need to keep your cell phone on for emergency purposes, please be sure to keep it on a *silent* or *vibrate* setting. Text messaging is not appropriate during class.

Laptop Computers: If you wish to use a laptop during on-campus class meetings, please limit that usage to activities related directly to that day's class, e.g., taking notes. Appropriate laptop use **does not include** instant or text messaging; using social networks (e.g., Facebook, MySpace); or accessing web sites unrelated to the activities of that day's class.



NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
...devoted to improving the educational experiences of young adolescents

National Middle School Association Middle Level Teacher Preparation Standards for EDMS 7030

We will work toward meeting several of the National Middle School Association's standards for master's level candidates in this course.

NOTE: The following definition is used for the term "all young adolescents" throughout this standards document: *The middle level standards interpret "all young adolescents" to be inclusive, comprising students of diverse ethnicity, race, language, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, regional or geographic origin, and those with exceptional learning needs.*

Standard 1. Young Adolescent Development

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to young adolescent development, and they apply that knowledge in their practice.

Knowledge

Middle level masters candidates:

1. Comprehensively understand the major concepts, principles, theories, and research of young adolescent development B intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and moral B and their interrelationships.
2. Have practical professional knowledge of health and sexuality issues of young adolescents.
3. Comprehend that the development of all young adolescents occurs within the context of classrooms, families, peer groups, communities and society.
4. Understand the range of individual differences of young adolescents and evaluate their effects on teaching and learning.
6. Comprehend the implications of young adolescent development for school organization and components of successful middle level programs and schools.
7. Are knowledgeable about how the media portrays young adolescents and comprehend the implications of these portraits.

Standard 2. Middle Level Philosophy and School Organization

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, and research underlying the philosophical foundations and organizational components of highly effective middle level schools, and they apply that knowledge in their practice.

Knowledge

Middle level masters candidates:

1. Have a comprehensive understanding of the philosophical foundations of developmentally responsive middle level programs and schools.
2. Have practiced professional knowledge about historical and contemporary models of schooling for young adolescents and the advantages and disadvantages of these models.
3. Comprehend the rationale and characteristic components of developmentally responsive middle level schools.
4. Distinguish best practices for the education of young adolescents in a variety of school organizational settings (e.g., K-8, 5-8, 7-12 organizational plans).
5. Understand that the team process is the most effective strategy for school improvement and student learning.
6. Understand that flexible scheduling provides the best context for teachers to meet the needs of all young adolescents.

Standard 3. Middle Level Curriculum and Assessment

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to middle level curriculum and assessment, and they apply that knowledge in the practice.

Knowledge

Middle level masters candidates:

1. Understand that middle level curriculum should be relevant, inviting, challenging, integrative, and exploratory.
3. Understand the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge and how to explore and make connections among subject areas and life situations.
9. Know how to develop, implement, and assess advisory and other student advocacy programs that attend to the developmental needs and interest of young adolescents.

Standard 5. Middle Level Instruction and Assessment

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to effective middle level instruction and assessment, and they apply a variety of effective strategies to meet the varying abilities, interests, and learning styles of all young adolescents.

Knowledge

Middle level masters candidates:

6. Understand how to motivate all young adolescents and facilitate their learning through the use of a wide variety of developmentally responsive materials and resources (e.g., technological resources, manipulative materials)
7. Know how to establish and maintain a fair, effective, and developmentally responsive classroom environment.

Standard 6. Family and Community Involvement

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to working collaboratively with family and community members, and they provide leadership in helping all stakeholders offer high quality learning opportunities for all young adolescents.

Knowledge

Middle level masters candidates:

1. Understand the implications of the variety of family structures for effective teaching and learning.
2. Have a comprehensive understanding of ways prior learning, differing experiences, and family and cultural backgrounds influence the learning of all young adolescents.
5. Understand that middle level schools are organizations within a larger community context and are aware of the implications of these relationships for effective teaching and learning.
8. Understand the importance of following school district policies and protocol regarding interagency partnerships and collaboratives.

Standard 7. Middle Level Professional Roles

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to their professional roles in middle level education, and they apply that knowledge in their practice.

Knowledge

Middle level masters candidates:

1. Understand their role as middle level education professionals.
2. Understand the importance of their influence on all young adolescents.
3. Understand their responsibility for upholding high professional standards (e.g., school, community).
4. Understand the interrelationships and interdependencies among various professionals that serve young adolescents (e.g., school counselors, social service workers, home-school coordinators).
5. Understand advisory/advocate theories, skills, and curriculum.
6. Have a comprehensive understanding of teaming/collaborative theories and processes.
8. Understand the need for continual reflection on young adolescent development, the instructional process, and professional relationships.
9. Are knowledgeable about the skills of research/data based decision making.

Belief Statements about Diversity for the EDMS Undergraduate and Graduate Programs

Beliefs about Students

- All students can learn.
- All children deserve respect and caring.
- The similarities and differences among students should be honored.

Beliefs about Appropriate Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

- Children's experiences in and out of school should be a foundation for curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Teachers should adapt their practices based on the diverse needs and characteristics of students.
- Teachers should utilize a variety of curriculum resources to meet diverse students' needs.
- Teachers should utilize a variety of teaching and learning strategies to meet diverse students' needs.
- Teachers should utilize a variety of assessment strategies to meet diverse students' needs.

Beliefs about Teachers and Teacher Candidates

- Teachers and teacher candidates should continually examine their beliefs about diversity based on research and school practice.
- Teachers and teacher candidates should continually examine their attitudes and assumptions about diversity.
- Teachers and teacher candidates should help their students value diversity.

Beliefs about Family and Community

- Teachers should know the communities from which their students come and use those communities as a resource for curriculum and instruction.
- Teachers should engage their students in learning about and taking action to improve their communities.

- Teachers should engage families of diverse students in classroom and school activities.

Beliefs about Field Experiences

- Teacher candidates should interact with students from diverse backgrounds in diverse settings.