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Fourth Edition

Teaching in the Middle School

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Dedication

To my wife, Marianne, for her support and encouragement, and to middle school educators everywhere who diligently teach and nurture young adolescents

MLM

To my husband, Glenn, for his patience and understanding, and to all of the adults who make a difference in the lives of young adolescents

KTB

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Preface

Paul S. George (2010) cites six guiding principles for the middle school paradigm:

- A commitment to developmentally appropriate education;
- A curriculum guided by standards but based on the needs and interests of young adolescents and their teachers;
- "meaningful, close, and long-term relationships between and among" (p. 50) young adolescents and educators;
- advisory groups, interdisciplinary teams, flexible schedules, and "other strategies for making big schools feel smaller and more effective" (p 50);
- "trust among educators as a core requirement for continuous school improvement" (p. 50); and
- infusing "freedom, democracy, empowerment, equity, optimism, teamwork, shared decision making, parental involvement, local control, celebration of diversity, management of complexity and ambiguity, tolerance, and humane and reasonable assessment strategies" (p. 50) into each school.

It is to these principles that we will turn again and again in this book as we attempt to help you understand young adolescents and implement effective middle school practices.

Our challenge in writing and revising this book was to find a way to take all of the information about young adolescents and middle schools and translate it into a 10-chapter book. We also wanted to balance the practical and the theoretical, for it is our belief that a mixture of the two is necessary. Thus, in this book, we wanted to provide both preservice and in-service teachers with basic information about young adolescents, ages 10 to 15. We also wanted to provide a solid core of essential knowledge about middle schools, including information about young adolescent development, middle school organization, core and exploratory curricula, middle school instructional strategies, and essential middle school concepts. Our aim was to emphasize young adolescents' diversity (developmental, cultural, gender, and sexual orientation) and the importance of these differences reflected in educational experiences and guidance efforts. In determining what effective middle schools and teachers do, we used respected documents such as *This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents* (NMSA, 2010) (the official position paper of the National Middle School Association) and the classic *Great Transitions: Preparing Adolescents for a New Century* (CCAD, 1996). Last, we wanted a strong research base and a focus on teaching methods, strategies, materials, resources, and technology that would be linked to the standards of the NMSA.

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This book is the result of our work. It is our hope that through our scenarios, case studies, and anecdotes we have captured the practical essence of young adolescents and middle schools. We also hope that our narrative, explanations of research, references, and recommended readings present both the philosophical and the pedagogical foundations of middle school education.

New to This Edition

Readers often want to know what is different in a new edition—what additions, deletions, and general changes have been made. Here we point out a number of changes and additions, all designed to help readers as they learn about middle schools and teach young adolescents regardless of the school organization.

- This edition presents more information on the topics of
  - diverse learners in the middle school;
  - educating for social justice;
  - culturally responsive educational experiences;
  - diagnostic assessments of young adolescents from culturally different backgrounds;
  - the *elemiddle* school movement;
  - the hidden curriculum; and
  - backward design of instruction or the understanding of design.
- Chapter 1 includes Web sites with information on the history of middle schools as well as more examples of exemplary middle schools.
- Chapter 2 includes more information on psychosocial development and interactions among the developmental domains.
- Chapters 4 and 5 now include information on unpacking standards, intradisciplinary teaching, the multicultural curriculum framework, and Project CRISS, as well as increased text on information literacy and technology.
- Chapters 6 and 7 have been reorganized to better present information on planning and implementing instruction related to the development of young adolescents and additional information on instructional strategies.
- Chapter 9 now includes a special section on diversity and classroom management.
- Each chapter has been updated with new information and references to reflect current research.
- Each case study now includes two or three questions to encourage student reflection.
- The Theory into Practice and Diversity Perspectives features in each chapter have been completely changed.
- All chapters include suggested readings from 2009 and 2010.
- Internet links have been verified, updated, and expanded.

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Rationale for *Teaching in the Middle School*

As we revised *Teaching in the Middle School*, our overarching goal (albeit lofty, we admit) was to improve the lives and educational experiences of young adolescents. Reflecting this, our specific objectives were to (a) tell readers about middle schools today—what they are and what they can become; (b) describe young adolescents and their developmental period; (c) identify essential middle school concepts that have potential for this age group; and (d) identify educational experiences that are developmentally responsive for young adolescents.

We are realistic enough to know that even if we are able to achieve our objectives, this book alone will not be sufficient to change middle schools. We believe that classroom teachers will be the key reformers of middle school education and that the ultimate success of middle school reforms will depend on these teachers—people whom we highly respect and who work daily to improve the lives and educational experiences of young adolescents. Thus, we wrote this book with middle school classroom teachers in mind.

Organization of This Book

This book is divided into four parts.

Part I Understanding Middle Schools and Young Adolescents—Chapters 1, 2, 3

Part II Developing the Curriculum and Organizing the School—Chapters 4 and 5

Part III Planning, Implementing, Assessing, and Managing Instruction—Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9

Part IV Working with External Communities—Chapter 10 and Epilogue

Chapter 1 looks at middle schools today and provides an overview of middle school concepts and teaching, and Chapter 2 examines young adolescents, their development, and related issues. Chapter 3 explores ways that both teachers and professionally trained guidance counselors can provide all young adolescents with developmentally responsive guidance experiences. Chapters 4 and 5 examine the core curriculum and the integrated and exploratory curriculum. Planning appropriate and interdisciplinary instruction is the topic of Chapter 6. In Chapter 7, we explore implementing instruction and the selection and use of methods and materials. Chapter 8 focuses on assessment, a topic of increasing importance to all schools. Chapter 9 looks at positive middle school environments and effective classroom management procedures. The final chapter, Chapter 10, examines the relationships between schools and communities and suggests ways to involve parents in middle schools. Last, the Epilogue presents some challenges and possibilities for middle schools and suggests what they might become when teachers are committed to young adolescents and effective middle school practices.

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Special Features and Pedagogical Aids

As educators read this book, we want them to be able to visualize what happens in real middle schools. Although we wished to be practical, we also wanted to include pertinent research, and we wanted a book that will be up-to-date. To do all that, we have included several special features that we think will help readers understand the realities of teaching in a middle school.

Diversity Perspectives

In this feature, we use examples to reflect our nation's cultural diversity and our increasing recognition of gender differences. Thus, each Diversity Perspective looks at a particular topic that is discussed in the chapter and considers how middle school educators can be culturally and gender-responsive.

Theory into Practice

Our students always want to know about the real world. Although researchers often offer perceptive findings, we find that they do not always explain how to implement them. TIP takes concepts found in each chapter and provides practical classroom or school examples, indicates how to use research findings in a school setting, or offers a checklist for evaluating the existence of a concept in a middle school. Each TIP has at least one reference that we used to develop it.

Anecdotal Accounts

In our many years of teaching and working with middle schools, we have had a variety of experiences and accumulated a number of stories. Although we have changed the names of the participants, we have tried to integrate these stories throughout the text. We wanted to feel that readers were looking over our shoulders and listening to actual middle school teachers, middle school students, college students, and parents.

Chapter Objectives

To provide an overview and to help focus reading, we have provided objectives at the beginning of each chapter. Readers can also use this advance organizer, or outline, as a study or review guide.

Scenarios

Each chapter starts with a scenario that prepares students for the topics that will be discussed. In the scenario, we try to describe real-life conversations and events that middle school educators might encounter and to pose problems that often arise. Encourage readers to react to the scenario before they read the chapter and then revisit it when they finish the chapter.

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Case Studies

In each chapter, a case study examines the topics being discussed and shows how middle school teachers responded. Sometimes these case studies are a continuation of the situation found in the opening scenario. At other times, they present a new problem. We ask readers to consider how they might react to the situation and whether they agree with the responses found in the case study.

Keeping Current with Technology

We are constantly adding to our knowledge of middle schools, and it is impossible to put everything into one book. With our technology feature, readers can use the resources of the Internet to access additional information related specifically to the topics discussed in each chapter.

Developing Your Portfolio

Building a professional portfolio is one way that emerging middle school educators can document and reflect on their growth and professional development as well as demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and dispositions as educators of young adolescents. At the end of each chapter, we include some of the performance standards from the NMSA and provide suggestions for evidence related to the topics discussed in each chapter that individuals might place in their portfolios to demonstrate competence in meeting that standard.

Glossary

Specialized terms related to young adolescent development, middle school concepts, and the education profession in general can be somewhat confusing. Therefore, a glossary is included at the end of this book.

Supplements

Instructors may download the following helpful resources from our password-protected Instructor Resource Center. If you are already registered, log in at www.pearsonhighered .com/irc or go here to request access, which will be granted after Pearson verifies you are an instructor.

Instructor Manual / Test Bank

The authors have written an instructor manual with test questions to maximize instructor's use of their book. It contains chapter overviews, key terms, teaching suggestions, articles and internet resources, multiple choice, sentence completion and essay questions for each chapter.

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Powerpoint (R) Slides

These basic chapter outlines have been prepared as a starting point for you to customize a presentation for your course.

Acknowledgments

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