

FAQs for Partner Schools

UNG's new *Emerging Tech Teaching Academy of the Middle Grades Education Program*

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1. What is the focus of your teacher preparation program?

Our program trains middle grades education candidates for modern technology-infused classrooms. Our hope is that candidates will be equipped to prepare middle grades students for jobs that don't exist yet in an unknown future. To do so, we utilize active engagement, AI literacy, crucial ethics, and the development of human-centered skills (critical thinking, collaboration, creativity).

2. How can our school support the candidates during their student teaching?

First and foremost, talk to your candidate and their supervisor early and often about the program. If your county has AI guidelines, make sure your candidate reads them carefully. If your county does not have AI guidelines, encourage them to adhere to others like Gwinnett's Human-Centered AI Guidelines. Next, be open to new ideas! We worked with consultants to re-design the courses and borrowed from some of the most forward-thinking schools in the country. Be open to demos of some of the tools candidates worked with in their MGED courses. Consider mindful incorporation of strategies they've learned into your classrooms and encourage candidates to participate in school initiatives.

3. What is the format of the program?

The ETTA track of the Middle Grades program is fully online, allowing for flexibility in scheduling while maintaining high academic standards and rigorous coursework. We still offer a traditional in-person track of the Middle Grades program, too, so the ETTA students are not our only Middle Grades candidates.

4. How do you ensure candidates are prepared for classroom challenges?

Our curriculum includes project-based learning, real-world applications, and training in emerging technologies to expose candidates to a wide array of concepts facing modern classrooms. This is coupled with ample opportunities for reinforcement and practice in their practicum and internship field experiences. However, we recognize that these are "uncharted waters" and that issues will come up that we were not able to foresee. Our candidates are instructed to contact with their supervisor and mentor very often and be pro-active about the possibility of issues or concerns.

5. What role does AI play in the program?

AI literacy is a core component of our curriculum, teaching candidates how to use AI tools effectively and ethically in educational settings and understand their implications. However, we emphasize to our candidates that we are guests at the schools and that all activities/tools must be pre-approved by their mentor teacher.

6. Are there any myths about the ETTA programs that you would like to address?

Yes, one common myth is that the candidate will 'run wild' with all tools or teach students how to cheat with ChatGPT. That is not the case. Only tools that have been pre-approved by the school/mentor will be used in the classroom (the most common are MagicSchool and SchoolAI) and only in pre-approved lessons/activities. Also, AI ethics is reinforced in every class. The ETTA candidates will model these values in the lessons they teach.

7. How can we provide feedback about the program?

We encourage open communication and welcome feedback from partner schools. Regular discussions with program coordinators can help us improve and adapt our curriculum to better meet the needs of our candidates and schools.

8. How can we get involved with the program?

Schools can get involved by offering mentorship opportunities, collaborating on projects, and participating in discussions about the program's goals and outcomes. We would love to come to your school to do professional development as well! Just reach out to Dr. Linsky: cllinsky@ung.edu