

AERA SIG MLER

October, 2002
Volume 2, Issue 3

Inside This Issue

Message from the President	p. 1
MLER SIG Officers	p. 2
Discussion of a Conference within a Conference	p. 2
Update on the MLER Website	p. 2
Message from SIG President- Elect and Program Chair	p. 3
AERA 2002 Abstracts	p. 3
Watch for this Publication	p. 3
Call for Manuscripts	p. 4
Highlights of NMSA Portland	p. 4
Sharing Some Good News	p. 5
Membership Information	p. 6
Calendar of Events	p. 6

The Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research

Business Meeting at

NMSA:

AERA's Middle Level Education Research SIG

November 1, 2002,
5:00-6:00 PM

Oregon Convention
Center, B114

Message from the President

*By Vincent A. Anfara, Jr.
University of Tennessee, Knoxville*

As I write this message to you I am amazed that summer has somehow passed and the fall semester is well under way. Over the course of the summer I have been fortunate to be involved in a couple of interesting projects that involve the establishment of middle-level teacher preparation programs at Temple University and The University of New Orleans. Temple officially turned its "add-on endorsement" into a full-blown certification program (grades 6-9) and the University of New Orleans is starting its first middle-level teacher certification program (grades 4-8) this fall. It is exciting to be involved with the design and implementation of middle-level teacher preparation programs. In addition to our continued demand for teachers who are prepared to work with young adolescents, we need to focus attention on the specialized preparation of middle school administrators as well.

As the 2002-2003 school year begins we look forward to our two annual meetings: NMSA's 29th Annual Conference in Portland and AERA's 84th Annual Meeting in Chicago. These meetings give us time to renew friendships, meet new people, network, and more importantly, just have a good time. All SIG members in attendance will receive a special gift commemorating our time in Portland. These gifts will be distributed at our business meeting which has been scheduled for Friday, November 1, 2002 from 5:00-6:00PM in Room B114 of the Oregon Convention Center. Please check the program book in case there are any changes in scheduling. The SIG's business meeting will be listed in a section of the program titled, "Committee Sessions." Look under the entries for NMSA's Research Committee. A number of SIG members are presenting at NMSA and a partial listing can be found in this newsletter.

I am pleased to officially announce that we are now known as SIG: Middle Level Education Research. Over the past few years we have received a number of inquiries indicating that we could not be located under the "R's" for Research, so we are now under the "M's." RMLE has become MLER. Additionally, the proposed changes to the SIG's Constitution and Bylaws were approved by our membership. Updated versions of our constitution will be available in Portland.

I hope that many of you have had the opportunity to respond to NMSA's request for input and revisions to the position statement, *This We Believe*. Utilizing listserv communication, I will keep you informed on the progress of this important project.

Research in Middle Level Education SIG Officers

Vincent A. Anfara, Jr.,
President (2002-2004)
University of Tennessee
Vanfara@utk.edu

Kimberly J. Hartman, President-Elect and
Program Chair (2002-2004)
University of North Carolina, Charlotte
Khartman@email.uncc.edu

To be Elected: Vice President (2002-2004)

Nancy Mizelle, Treasurer (2001-2003)
Georgia College and State University
Nmizelle@mail.GCSU.EDU

Joan Lindgren, Secretary (2002-2004)
Florida Atlantic University
jlindgre@fau.edu

Barbara Whinery, Past-President (2000-2)
University of Northern Colorado
barbara.whinery@unco.edu

Newsletter Editors

Kathleen Brown, Editor, (2001-2003, spring)
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
brownk@email.unc.edu

Kathleen F. Malu, Editor, (2001-2003,
spring) William Paterson University
maluk@wpunj.edu

Website Manager

Micki Caskey, Portland State University
caskeym@pdx.edu

SIG Association Council Members

- Joanne Arhar (2002-2004, fall)
- Gayle A. Davis (2002-2004, fall)
- Steven Mertens (2002-2004, fall)
- Micki Caskey (2002-2004, spring)
- Mickey Fenzel (2002-2004, spring)
- Richard Likpa (2002-2004, spring)
- Steve Lucas (2002-2004, spring)
- Kathleen Roney (2002-2004, fall)

Fall=election takes place prior to NMSA's
Annual Conference

Spring=election takes place prior to AERA's
Annual Meeting

Membership is the lifeline of our organization. We currently have about 150 members! I challenge each Middle Level Education Research member to recruit someone new to the SIG during the 2002-2003 school year. Nancy Mizelle, SIG Treasurer, will be pleased to forward to you membership applications or new members can join when they renew their memberships with AERA.

I look forward to seeing you in Portland for NMSA. I encourage your communication regarding our SIG and welcome ideas and suggestions to build an even stronger organization dedicated to the education of young adolescents.

Discussion of a Conference within a Conference

*By Barbara Whinery, Past President,
University of Northern Colorado*

At the up coming meeting of the AERA Middle Level Education Research SIG at the National Middle School Association Conference in Portland, Oregon, I would like to discuss reactions to the "conference within a conference" proposal that was presented in the spring, 2002 newsletter. Essentially, this is a symposium type format that would be held on a biennial basis at the beginning of the AERA Annual Conference. The focus of the "conference within a conference" would be on a special topic or selected topics with invited speakers followed up by discussions with participants. The format and process have yet to be decided.

First, I would like to know if everyone is interested in the idea. Secondly, if there is an interest, then how should we move forward with plans for meeting dates, topics, presenters and format? One member has volunteered to assist with the plans. Several others are needed to form a planning committee to set the process in motion.

So I am looking forward to visiting with all of you about this idea to see what the possibilities are concerning its adoption. Thank for your interest and participation.

Update on the Middle Level Education Research Website

By Micki M. Caskey, Portland State University

Over the summer, the SIG's website was revised to reflect an array of changes. The website has been re-titled to bear the SIG's new name, Middle Level Education Research (MLER). A new website address has been requested to align with our new name, though the URL remains <http://www.rmle.pdx.edu> for the time being. The amendments to the AERA / SIG: Middle Level Education Research Constitution and Bylaws have been posted. Plus, adjustments were made to the Membership section.

A new section, Position Announcements, has been added. To date, only one position has been listed; however, this section may prove to be invaluable to members of our SIG and the Middle Level Education professional community. To advertise an opening or position announcement on the MLER website, send the information (preferably as an attachment in MS Word) to caskeym@pdx.edu.

The Publications section has been expanded as well. In addition to the abstracts from the AERA 2002 paper session, detailed book announcements have been listed. Chapter titles or brief descriptions of books have been provided along with helpful ordering information. Further, a "Call for Manuscripts" has been added to the Publications section. Certainly, our Publications section has tremendous potential for growth. To have publication information posted

expediently, please send the information electronically.

The Research Interests of Middle Level Education Researchers is a searchable database of researchers and research interests. Though some fine-tuning of this interactive component is scheduled for Fall 2002, the database is up and running.

Finally, the Conferences and Meetings section was modified. SIG events at the National Middle School Association's Annual Conference (October 31-November 2, 2002) and the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting (April 21-25, 2003) have been highlighted. What's more, previous conference information (2001-2002) has been archived for easy retrieval. Be sure to check out this section often for the dates, times, locations, and other facts about upcoming conferences and meetings.

If you have any requests or questions about the MLER website, please contact Micki Caskey, at caskeym@pdx.edu.

Chat Session for New and Emerging Middle Level Researchers at NMSA 2002!
November 1, 2002
3:15-4:30, p.m.
Oregon Convention Center, B114

A Message from SIG President-Elect and Program Chair

By Kim Hartman, University of North Carolina, Charlotte

By-Laws: I am pleased to report that many SIG members returned ballots and voted on the proposed changes to the SIG By-Laws. The votes were overwhelmingly positive and the changes to the by-laws have been made.

Vice-President Election: As you remember, Joan Lindgren was elected SIG Secretary. As part of her job as Secretary, she will be mailing each member a ballot to elect the new SIG Vice-President. We have many strong

candidates running for this position. Please cast your vote and return the ballot to Joan.

AERA Proposals: I am delighted to report that we received many proposals for AREA. I have distributed the proposals to reviewers and will get their feedback by the end of September. Each person submitting a proposal will receive a letter regarding the status of his or her proposal by the end of October. A list of AERA presenters and their presentation titles will be distributed at the SIG Business Meeting in Portland. Thanks to each of you who submitted a proposal and/or volunteered to be a reviewer.

See you in Portland!

Two Abstracts from the Paper Discussions at AERA 2002

"If I Were Thinner I'd Have it All:" Subjectivities in Middle School
By Lori Olafson, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

This paper presents findings from a research project designed to investigate adolescent girls in grades seven and eight and the ways in which they make sense of the experience of schooling. One of the themes that emerged from the data was the participants' involvement in a "struggle" for self. This paper maps out the multiplicity of identities created and re-created within a particular context, showing how one of the participants in the study, Angela, experienced the tensions of shifting, multiple selves within the middle school. Vignettes drawn from the words and experiences of Angela illustrate dramatically a concrete and compelling view of the poststructural subject.

"Nativity Schools: Follow-up Evaluation of the Success of an Alternative Middle School for Urban Minority Boys"

By L. Mickey Fenzel & Shreya Patel Hessler, Loyola College in Maryland
Because of the continued concern about the educational achievement and attainment of boys of color, new models

of middle level schooling for these boys must be considered. One such model that has met with considerable success is the Nativity model that serves boys of color from economically poor urban families. This model employs small classes in the context of an extended educational day, week, and year. The present study was designed as a local study of the graduates of one such Nativity model school to examine their educational progress during the middle and high school years and to assess their perceptions of the nature of the benefits afforded by such an educational experience and the factors that have contributed to their academic and social development. Results show clear and consistent academic gains made by the boys during their middle school and high school years, as well as social developmental benefits that have helped the students make successful transitions to high school and college. These results will be used to design a larger study of several of the middle schools in the country that are based on the Nativity model.

Watch for this Publication!

Harry Potter's World, 2002, Taylor & Francis/Routledge Edited by Elizabeth Heilman

This collection contains powerful, thought-provoking essays that provide teachers, administrators, and researchers with a variety of ways to read the popular texts of *Harry Potter*!

Kathleen F. Malu's Chapter 4 is of particular interest to MLER-ers. This chapter, *Ways of Reading Harry Potter: Multiple Narratives for Multiple Readers*, reports on a qualitative study written as a first person narrative of Malu's experiences as a teacher, researcher and mother who tried to help her middle level son enter the world of *Harry Potter*. She includes interviews with her son's neighborhood friends and classmates and frames her study within the theories of literacy and learning. This chapter—and collection—should not be missed!

Call for Manuscripts & Papers for Volume 3: The Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education, Preparation & Professional Development of Middle Level Teachers and Administrators

Edited by Gayle A. Davis and Vincent A. Anfara, Jr. Published by Information Age Publishing, Inc.

Deadline Date for Submissions: January 15, 2003

The third volume will focus on issues related to the preparation and professional development of middle level teachers and administrators. Contributors are encouraged to submit manuscripts that address preparation and professional development in relation to recruitment; characteristics of effectiveness; model programs; sources of support and/or resistance; standards; policy; funding; licensure and certification; historical perspectives; trends; district, state, and university accountability programs; comparisons of programs across countries, states, and/or districts; characteristics of middle grades students; characteristics of pre-service or practicing middle grades educators; the changing roles of teachers and administrators; etc.

The editors of this third volume of *The Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education* invite the submission of manuscripts contributing to scholarly knowledge and improved practice of middle level education. Submissions utilizing quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods--may include but are not limited to empirical investigations, conceptual and theoretical perspectives, and reviews of research and practice. Submission of a manuscript implies commitment to publish in this series. All copies should be typed, double-spaced, on standard white paper and should follow the style in the fifth

edition of the Publication Manual for the American Psychological Association. Manuscripts should be 20-30 pages in length and include a 100-word abstract. Author's information (affiliation, address, phone numbers, e-mail) should appear only on the cover page.

To submit manuscripts and for additional information, please contact:

Gayle A. Davis
The University of Georgia
College of Education
427 Aderhold
Athens, GA 30602
Work: 706-542-4244
E-mail: gdavis@coe.uga.edu
Or
Vincent A. Anfara, Jr.
The University of Tennessee
College of Education
A321 Claxton Addition
Knoxville, TN 37996
Work: 865-974-4985
E-mail: vanfara@utk.edu

Highlights of NMSA Portland

The following **Middle Level Education Research SIG** members are presenting at NMSA, Portland. (Please note that in some instances co-presenters are not listed due to their not being SIG members):

Tariq Akmal
Improving Teacher Effectiveness through Understanding Young Adolescent Needs
November 1, 2002
8:00-9:15AM
Hilton Executive Towers, Galleria III

Vincent A. Anfara, Jr., Kathleen M. Brown, and Robert J. Mahar
Developmentally Responsive Middle Level Leadership
November 2, 2002
9:45-11:00AM
Double Tree Lloyd Center, Mt. St. Helens

Joanne Arhar (co-presenting with Nancy Mizelle)
Studying Your Classroom or School: An Action Research Approach
October 31, 2002 (Pre-conference session)
9:00AM-12:00PM

Candy Beal
Curriculum Integration and High Student Achievement: Made for Each Other?
October 31, 2002
4:00-5:15PM
Doubletree Lloyd Center, Multnomah

Dave F. Brown
Leading and Learning in Urban Middle Schools (co-presenting with Sue Thompson)
November 1, 2002
1:30-2:45PM
Oregon Convention Center, C-121

Micki Caskey
Brain Basics and Beyond: How to Engage Young Adolescents
November 1, 2002
9:45-11:00AM
Hilton Executive Towers, Galleria III

Gayle A. Davis
Teaching Then and Now
October 31, 2002
4:00-5:15PM
Milton Executive Towers, Galleria I

L. Mickey Fenzel
The Relationships among Intrinsic Versus Extrinsic Orientation, Self-Worth, and School Strain among Seventh Graders
October 31, 2002
12:30-1:45PM
Oregon Convention Center, C-124

Kimberly Hartman
Keys to Classroom Success for the Alternatively Licensed Middle Level Teacher
November 2, 2002
8:00-9:15AM
Oregon Convention Center, B-116

David Hough
Addressing the Agenda Beginning Researcher Poster Session

Posters presented on October 31, 2002 at 12:30PM
Convention Center 124
On display from October 31- November 3, 2002
Oregon Convention Center Lobby

Richard Lipka and James Beane
Middle Grades: A New General Education Curriculum for the 21st Century
November 1, 2002
3:15-4:30PM
Oregon Convention Center, A-104

Janet McDaniel and Nathalie Gehrke
Courtship, Marriage, and Renewing Vows: Thirteen Years of Partnerships in Middle Level Teacher Preparation
November 2, 2002
11:30AM-12:45PM
Oregon Convention Center, B-110

Kathleen Roney
From Socrates to Solomon: One Size Does Not Fit All
November 1, 2002
11:30AM-12:45PM
The Hilton Portland, Grand Ballroom II

Sue Thompson
Challenges Facing Urban Middle Schools
November 1, 2002
9:45-11:00AM
Oregon Convention Center, A-106
Transforming Ourselves, Transforming Schools
November 1, 2002
3:15-4:30PM
Oregon Convention Center, A-106
Leading and Learning in Urban Middle Schools (co-presenting with Dave F. Brown)
November 1, 2002
1:30-2:45PM
Oregon Convention Center, C-121

Teri West (co-presenting with Patrick Montesano)
Michigan Middle Start Comprehensive School Improvement: Sustaining Reform Beyond the Grant
November 1, 2001
3:15-4:30PM
Hilton Executive Towers

Barbara Whinery
Preparing Middle Grades Teachers to Meet Accreditation Standards
November 2, 2002
9:45-11:00AM
Oregon Convention Center, C-122

Many members of the **Middle Level Education Research SIG** are also participating in the "Chat Session" sponsored by NMSA's Research Committee. These researchers include: Vincent A. Anfara, Jr., Joanne Arhar, Dave Brown, Micki Caskey, Gayle A. Davis, Kimberly J. Hartman, David Hough, Richard P. Lipka, Tom Mandeville, Janet McDaniel, Steven B. Mertens, Nancy Mizelle, Maureen Musser, Kathleen Roney, and Barbara Whinery.

Sharing Some Good News: MLMED Cohort Three Graduates & Cohort Four Begins!

By Paul D. Deering, University of Hawaii at Manoa

The M.Ed. in Secondary Education with a Middle Level Emphasis Program (MLMED) at the University of Hawaii Manoa College of Education graduated its third cohort of participants during the summer, 2002, and started its fourth. This brings the total number of MLMED graduates to nearly 100.

The MLMED is developing a solid, local knowledge base, and leadership cadre in middle level education (<http://www.hawaii.edu.mlmed/>). Until the MLMED began in 1996, there was no education program in the state that focused on early adolescents and their teachers, and the MLMED is still the only such program. MLMED participants work full-time in middle level schools, most as teachers, and complete the program in two years during evenings and summers. Besides learning how to teach and nurture early adolescents more effectively, they learn to step forward as leaders in their schools and beyond. This is particularly

important with the Hawaii Department of Education's new Middle Level Education Policy (2001) which mandates developmentally-appropriate school practice in the middle grades.

MLMED participants have taken on a remarkable degree of leadership in moving the state and even the nation forward in improving the education of early adolescents:

- 7 teaching at the college level;
- 10 Hawaii Association of Middle Schools (HAMS) Board Members;
- 6 nominees for the HAMS C.W. Stevens Educators of the Year;
- 20+ have presented at national or international conferences;
- 6+ have served as school administrators or counselors;
- Dozens have conducted presentations for colleagues and/or parents.

Other notable accomplishments of MLMED participants include:

- Dayni Kawamoto, Wilbert Lum, Tracy Oshiro, Ellen Owens, Lee Takagi, Sandie Yamada and Michelle Frisbie, MLMED Cohort One, teachers at Central Middle School, helped lead school improvement initiatives that contributed to the school being named one of Frito-Lay of Hawaii's Outstanding Public Schools for 2001-2002;
- Wanda Harris, MLMED Cohort 2 teacher, Lanikai Elementary School, won the International Cyber Fair Competition in 1999 and 2000, with her sixth grade students and technology consultant;
- Lauren Apiki for websites displaying research on local water resources;
- Carolyn Alameida, MLMED Cohort 3, teacher, Mililani Middle School, published an article on her human body curriculum. (2001): *Skeletons in your classroom. Science Scope, 25(2), 18-21.*

The MLMED faculty come from a range of UHM units and areas of expertise -- Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies, Special Education, Family Resources, the Center on the Family, and the University Lab School.

October 2002

The program models best practices from research on middle level education so that participants can benefit from them and learn to apply them:

- Supportive community of learners via a cohort structure;
- Collaborative decision making;
- Authentic assessment in the form of a standards-based portfolio;
- Cadres of educators from the same school -- as a support group and nucleus for change;
- Home-base groups of participants from the same or nearby schools, each with a faculty advisor.

All MLMED courses are taught in the early evening at our Partner School, Moanalua Middle, to make them easily accessible and to help our host school in its improvement efforts. Ongoing team-building, starting with a retreat at Camp Erdman, celebration of birthdays, births and other passages at monthly seminars, and dinner provided by students and faculty at all class sessions, further the community feeling. Quite simply, the MLMED operates as an 'ohana (Hawaiian for family or community), with all participants cared for and supported. This has contributed to the program having a 92% completion rate. In addition, the MLMED accepts up to 20% of its applicants on "academic probation" and helps them to develop the skills needed to succeed in graduate school and to excel in the workplace. This has contributed to the program having nearly one-third of its participants from groups underrepresented in the state's teaching force -- persons of Hawaiian, Filipino and other Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander ancestry. As one MLMED participant wrote in a confidential assessment: [The MLMED] helped me to advocate with confidence for the issues and programs that would be best for students in middle school. It also helped me to be more proactive and less willing to let someone else decide what was best for middle school students (PS C1, 2001; Deering & Ashford, 2002, p. 17).

As MLMED Cohort 3 graduated this summer and thirty-plus participants in Cohort 4 began the program, a tradition

of dedication to early adolescents continues. More hard-working educational leaders will be advancing to the front lines in the state's move toward effective, developmentally-appropriate schooling for early adolescents. The state's ten- to fifteen-year-olds—and all its citizens—owe these dedicated educators a big Mahalo!

Become A Member Today!

Why join the Middle Level Education Research SIG?

Membership in this organization will let you stay current on the most cutting edge research regarding middle level education. You will converse with leading researchers and professionals in the field of middle level education.

By joining you will ensure that the voices of middle level researchers and practitioners are heard within the AERA. As our membership increases we will receive additional convention timeslots and opportunities for presentations.

How Do I Join?

To join the SIG, simply contact Nancy Mizelle, SIG Treasurer, or the American Educational Research Association:

Write to: Nancy Mizelle
 School of Education
 Georgia College and State University
 Milledgeville, GA 31061
 Nmizelle@MAIL.GCSU.EDU

Or: AERA Subscription Department
 1230 17th Street, NW
 Washington, DC 20036-3078
 Fax: (202) 775-1824. Please note that you wish to join the SIG Middle Level Education Research. Dues: \$5. Also: <http://aera.net>

Mark Your Calendar ...

**NMSA
 CONFERENCE
 Portland, Oregon
 October 31-
 November 2, 2002**

**AERA ANNUAL
 CONFERENCE
 Chicago
 April 21-25**

SIG Listserv & Other Notes ...

The SIG's new listserv address is: mlier@utk.edu

If you would like to be a member of this listserv, please email Vince Anfara at vanfara@utk.edu

The listserv is a fantastic way of getting the latest information regarding our biannual meetings and SIG activities!

**SEND US YOUR NEWS!
 Please send news items to Editors**

**Kathleen M. Brown at brownk@email.unc.edu
 OR**

Kathleen F. Malu at maluk@wpunj.edu