



MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION RESEARCH
SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

The Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research

Message from the President

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

It was great seeing so many MLER SIG colleagues in Portland for NMSA. I hope that each of you had a wonderful winter holiday and have comfortably settled in the spring semester. Before we realize it we will be traveling to Chicago for AERA.

Great things have been happening with our organization. As many of you already know we have 4 paper sessions, 9 paper discussions, and a business meeting scheduled for AERA. This is the largest allotment of sessions in the history of the SIG. I want to personally thank each of you for your support of the organization and especially want to thank Kimberly Hartman for the fantastic job she has done on the 2003 program. Please see the MLER SIG schedule from Kim contained in this newsletter for more details.

Thanks are also owed to Steve Mertens, Association Councilor, who has developed an electronic membership management system for the SIG. Our membership is our lifeline in AERA, and Steve has worked long and hard on developing a database that will allow us to keep better track of our members and to communicate more effectively with each of you. Please see Steve's update in this newsletter regarding this database.

Volume Three of *The Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education* (edited by Gayle A. Davis and Vincent A. Anfara, Jr.) is currently being developed and will be released in September 2003. A very exciting list of topics and authors has been compiled. Volumes One and Two have been well received by the larger middle school

community and are being sold through NMSA's bookstore.

Kathleen Brown and Kathleen Malu need to be thanked for the fantastic job they have done on the SIG's newsletter for the past two years. This responsibility is being passed to Sue Thompson and Kathleen Roney. They will, indeed, have large shoes to fill.

Lastly, I had a conversation with Dick Lipka and Elizabeth Pate while in Portland. We are of like mind that it is important to document the history of the MLER SIG. We might want to consider creating a SIG historian as a new position in the organization. To that end, we need those of you who have served as officers in this organization to contact me with any information or documents that should be reviewed or included in the writing of this history.

Looking forward to Chicago!

March 2003 Volume 3, Issue 1

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R.S.V.P.

2003 MLER Database

Please return your data form to Joan Lindgren by March 28, 2003. Help us insure that your information is correct.



Ballot for Proposed Change to Constitution

Please cast your vote by April 15, 2003. Send ballot to Vince Anfara.

MLER SIG Officers

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

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 Program Chair (2002-2004)
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Kathleen Roney, Vice President
 (2002-2004)
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Nancy Mizelle, Treasurer (2001-2003)
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Joan Lindgren, Secretary (2002-2004)
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Sue Thompson, Editor (2003-2004)
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Website Manager

Micki M. Caskey, Portland State University
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SIG Association Council Members

Joanne Arhar (2002-2004, fall)
 Gayle A. Davis (2002-2004, fall)
 Steven Mertens (2002-2004, fall)
 Micki M. Caskey (2002-2004, spring)
 Mickey Fenzel (2002-2004, spring)
 Stephen Lucas (2002-2004, spring)
 Richard Lipka (2002-2004, spring)

Fall election takes place prior to NMSA's
 Annual Conference

Spring election takes place prior to
 AERA's Annual Meeting

AERA 2003

"Accountability for Educational Quality: Shared Responsibility" April 21 to 25, 2003 Chicago, Illinois

84th Annual Meeting of the
 American Educational Research Association

Middle Level Education

<i>Day, Time & Place</i>	<i>Details</i>
Monday, 12:00 -1:30 PM Hyatt, Columbus Hall A/B, East Tower-Gold Level	Paper Session: Rhetoric Versus Reality in Middle Level Education
Tuesday, 12:25-1:55 PM Hyatt, Comiskey, West Tower-Bronze Level	Paper Session: Maintaining Successful Middle Schools
Tuesday, 2:15-2:55 PM Hyatt, Grand Ballroom B, East Tower - Gold Level	Paper Discussion: Middle Level Teacher Development
Wednesday, 12:25-1:55 PM Sheraton, Erie, Level 2	Paper Session: Comprehensive Transformation of Middle Schools
Wednesday, 3:05-3:45 PM Hyatt, Grand Ballroom F, East Tower - Gold Level	Paper Discussion: Middle Level SIG
Thursday, 2:15-3:45 PM Sheraton, Parlor C, Level 3	Paper Session: Middle Level Teacher Development
Thursday, 6:15-7:15 PM Sheraton, Ontario, Level 2	Business Meeting
Thursday, 7:15-8:15 PM Sheraton, Ontario, Level 2	Symposium: Perspectives on Middle Level Student Achievement

Update on the Membership Database

By Steve Mertens, University of Illinois

Last fall during the SIG Business meeting at the National Middle School Association (NMSA) conference in Portland, Oregon, we previewed the electronic membership database that we intend to use to better monitor and track the SIG's membership. The membership database, in Microsoft Access format, was developed as a response to the need of the SIG to be able to more accurately track membership for several reasons. The database will enable us to notify individuals in advance that their AERA SIG memberships are due to expire and remind them to renew. We will also know the status of our membership, at any given time, without relying solely on AERA to provide that information. Remember that our membership is critical in determining the number of sessions (papers, roundtables, etc.) we are allotted for the annual conference each year.

The database has many other potential uses. It can be used to generate mailing labels (for the newsletter and other mailings), form letters, a membership directory, etc. In the future we hope to link the database to the website so that some of the information contained in the database would be accessible through the web. For example, member names and research interests could be listed to assist website visitors in locating research contacts.

By now you have received a separate mailing from the SIG asking you to update your membership information for the database. A membership information form was included in the mailing, which lists the information currently contained in the SIG database for you. The database contains member names, mailing addresses, university/company, phone and fax numbers, e-mail addresses, and affiliations and research interests. We are asking you to review the form,

update your information, and return it to Joan Lindgren by March 28, 2003 so that we can update the database before the April AERA meeting in Chicago.

We anticipate that the database will be a tremendous asset in assisting the SIG in managing its membership information and keeping it current. We are relying on you to update your membership information and return it as soon as possible so that we will have the most current and complete information on the MLER SIG membership.

MLER Elects Kathleen Roney SIG Vice President

We are pleased to announce that Kathleen Roney has accepted the position of Vice President of MLER SIG. Kathy brings over twenty-five years of experience in schooling to this position. Upon establishing a middle school in a culturally diverse neighborhood on the lower East side of Manhattan, Kathy served as its first Principal. Prior to that, she gained experience in schooling as a secondary school and middle level teacher, and director of major school programs. During the first five years of her tenure at Rosemont College she served as a member of the President's senior staff. In August 2001 Kathy joined the faculty at Rosemont College as Assistant Professor in Graduate Studies and Director of the Middle Level Education program. Kathy completed her doctoral studies in Educational Administration at Temple University, Philadelphia, where she continues to serve in an adjunct capacity. Her research interests include qualities associated with effective middle level teachers and administrators, leadership theories, and qualitative methodology.

Call for Appendix Material

The Preparation and Professional Development of Middle Level Teachers and Administrators

Edited by Gayle A. Davis & Vincent A. Anfara, Jr.

The Editors of Volume Three of *The Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education* are currently searching for material that will be included in an "extended" appendix to this volume. As noted in the tentative title, Volume Three will focus on the preparation and professional development of middle level teachers and administrators.

We are looking for:

- Exemplary syllabi
- Program descriptions (both professional development and preparation programs)
- Assessment instruments/evaluation forms utilized in measuring program effectiveness
- Outstanding field-based assignments

While the above list is limited to 4 examples, we are open to a wide variety of materials. Those who submit documents and artifacts for publication will be listed as contributing authors to the "Appendix." All submissions **must** contain a 500-word maximum contextual description to help put the document in its proper context for readers. For example, if you submit an exemplary syllabus: (1) Is this course part of a state-recognized certification program or an add-on endorsement? ; (2) Where does this course "fit" in the sequence of courses?; (3) How many students are involved in the program?

All submissions should conform to APA (5th edition). Please send two hard copies and one copy on disk (Word or Rich Text file) and include complete contact information for the contributing author(s).

Submit documents to:
Vincent A. Anfara, Jr.
The University of Tennessee
College of Education
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Knoxville, TN 37996
Work: 865-974-4985
E-mail: vanfara@utk.edu

MLER SIG Website News

www.middlelevel.pdx.edu

By Micki M. Caskey, Portland State
University, caskeym@pdx.edu

Our website is a great source of middle level information and lists everything from conferences to research interests. A close look at the website reveals recent changes.

The *Conferences and Meetings* identifies upcoming MLER-SIG events such as NMSA's Symposium on Middle Level Teacher Preparation in Charlotte and AERA's Annual Meeting in Chicago. To look ahead, check out the "Future AERA Meetings" and "Future NMSA Conferences." To look back and reflect upon the past, visit the photographs from the Portland SIG meeting or view the archives from 2001-2002. The hyperlinks make it possible to see where we've been and where we're going! Plus, a call for proposals has been posted for the NMSA Research Poster Session (June 1st deadline).

A new web page has been created for the *Graduate Student Award*. In addition to the award application, soon the recipient of the Graduate Student Award will be highlighted. Stay tuned to find out who wins this award!

Also, check out the *Publications* web page. There are book announcements and abstracts from paper sessions as well as calls for publication. Currently, there is a "Call for Appendix Materials"

posted for *The Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education, Volume 3* (April 4th deadline).

To stay up-to-date and informed, be sure to review the pages devoted to *Constitution & Bylaws, Officers, Position Announcements, and Research Interests*. Of course, remember to invite prospective members to tour the MLER-SIG website and stop at the *Membership* web page.

The future of the MLER-SIG website depends on shared vision and input from the membership. So, please submit position announcements, calls for publications, book announcements, and your ideas!

Proposed Revisions to Constitution and By- Laws

By Vincent A. Anfara, Jr., President

Last year revisions were made to the SIG's Constitution and By-Laws that focused mainly on Article IV, Elected Officers. These changes, which were approved by a vote of SIG membership, now require SIG Officers to be members of both the SIG and AERA. Additionally, some inconsistencies and grammar throughout the document were corrected.

As we continue to grow as an organization and as AERA changes some of its operating procedures, it has become necessary to propose revisions to Article VI, Duties of Officers. At NMSA in Portland (November 2002) the Officers and Association Council discussed the need for revisions to this section of the constitution. A couple of examples will hopefully highlight the need for these revisions. First, the electronic proposal management system that AERA has implemented has made it increasingly more difficult for the Vice President to assist in the establishment of the annual program at

AERA. For the past four or five years, in practice, the President-Elect/Program Chair assumed sole responsibility for this task. The result of this is an elected officer with little or no duties and responsibilities. Second, our organization is being more frequently asked to collaborate with other organizations (NMSA, MLRON, SRCD) that are focused on middle level issues.

Therefore, I ask that you review Article VI as it is currently written (see SIG's website for a copy of the Constitution and By-Laws). Please review the proposed Article VI as it is written below. A ballot is enclosed in this newsletter for your vote and feedback.



Proposed Article VI. Duties of Officers

Section 1.

The President shall: (1) ensure that all correspondence with AERA is efficiently processed; (2) represent the SIG's interests to AERA; (3) preside at all meetings of the SIG and establish agendas for these meetings in consultation with SIG Officers and Executive Committee members; (4) appoint, in consultation with the Executive Committee, all standing and ad hoc committees and their chairholders; (5) act as liaison to other national and international organizations involved with middle level education issues; and (6) provide leadership appropriate for the SIG's continued growth and development.

Section 2.

The President-Elect/Program Chair shall: (1) act as the President in the

President's absence; (2) chair the Program Committee (comprised of proposal reviewers, session chairs, and discussants); and (3) manage all correspondence with AERA in the establishment of the annual program.

If there is a host or co-sponsoring organization, the program chairholder of that organization shall be an ex-officio voting member of the Program Committee.

Section 3.

The Vice President shall: (1) coordinate communication among SIG members by co-editing the SIG's newsletter; and (2) assist the President and President-Elect/Program Chair in areas identified by the Executive Committee.

Section 4.

The Immediate Past President shall: (1) serve as chairperson of the Membership Committee, (2) shall assume other duties as assigned by the President, and (3) assist the Treasurer in maintaining the SIG's membership database.

Section 5.

The Treasurer shall: (1) manage the SIG's finances; (2) process membership applications that are not processed through AERA; (3) manage the SIG's membership database; and (4) provide a financial report to the general membership at our biannual meetings.

Section 6.

The Secretary shall: (1) record the minutes of all meetings and disseminate these minutes to the general membership in a timely fashion; (2) conduct all elections; and (3) coordinate the mailing of the SIG's newsletters and other correspondence.

Section 7.

The Editor(s) of the newsletter and the Web Manager will be ex-officio, non-voting members of the Executive Committee. The Editor(s) of the newsletter shall publish a minimum of three newsletters annually. The Web Manager shall: (1) keep the SIG's website updated; and (2) provide the general membership with easy

electronic access to information regarding SIG-sponsored activities.

Minutes of the MLER SIG

NMSA
Portland, Oregon
1 November 2002
5:00-6:00PM

By Joan Lindgren, Florida Atlantic University

Vince Anfara welcomed all to the business meeting of the SIG and opened the meeting with the introduction of the SIG officers, newsletter editors, webmaster, and council members. This was followed by the introduction of Sue Swain, who welcomed the SIG members to the 29th Annual Conference of NMSA. Sue spoke of the need for NMSA and our group to build on research findings as a lead for action. She announced to the members in attendance of the coordination of two awards by NMSA and NASSP. The first is the action research award for practitioners in the field, and the second is the middle-level dissertation award that NASSP has supported for quite a few years. Recipients of the dissertation award will be recognized at NMSA in Atlanta in 2003. Further details about this will be available on the website in January. Sue Swain also informed the SIG that the RMLE online link on NMSA's website received the most number of hits and she called for more research in the realm of middle schools. She thanked the group for its research efforts to date.

Reports of Officers

President-elect/Program Chair Kim Hartman received and processed proposals for AERA 2003. Those who were accepted for presentation were announced. We will have four paper sessions and nine paper discussions at AERA this spring. The business meeting at AERA will include a symposium on middle level student

achievement. A complete listing of presentations will be published in the next newsletter. Letters will be sent to chairs, discussants, and reviewers. The Tiger System of AERA review process had some kinks but mostly it worked satisfactorily.

Webmaster Micki Caskey announced that the SIG's website now includes middle level job postings at several universities. The new constitution of MLER is on the website.

Treasurer Nancy Mizelle reported a balance of \$1973.28 in April 2001 and a balance of \$2002.58 on October 28, 2002.

Secretary Joan Lindgren reported that the election for Vice President was declared null and void by the executive council for reasons of equity in the election process. A new ballot will be sent out in November with a new return date of December 13, 2002.

President Vince Anfara noted that we are among the 10 largest SIGs in AERA, and that we have around 150-160 members. The growth in our membership allows MLER SIG to have more papers and roundtables sessions at the AERA conference.

Other announcements

Sue Thompson volunteered to co-edit the SIG's newsletter. The newly elected Vice President will be her co-editor. The present co-editors, Kathleen Maul and Kathleen Brown, will work with Sue on the upcoming issues. Both Kathleen's were applauded for their work on the newsletter.

Vince Anfara noted that there are two volumes of the *Handbook on Middle Level Education* currently in print. The third volume will focus on teacher and administrator preparation.

Steve Mertens reported on the tracking of membership. He informed us that with a protector password individuals may update their research interests and other information on line. It was decided that Nancy Mizelle, Treasurer,

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would manage the membership database.

Barbara Whinery discussed the idea of the conference within a conference, an idea that has been under consideration for some time. It was determined that a pre-conference could be arranged at NMSA in Atlanta 2003. Vince Anfa and Gayle Davis will investigate the necessary arrangements.

A reminder was given regarding the nominations for the SIG's Graduate Student Award. Review of nominations by the officers and executive council must be completed by January 15, 2003. At this point AERA has not officially sanctioned this award due to a concern about a proliferation of AERA sanctioned awards. AERA will notify us if they are willing to sanction our SIG's award, and suggested that we move ahead with out award anyway.

Online Journal

David Hough reported that the third issue of the RMLE online journal is now underway. The online journal has an acceptance rate of 40%. There will be a poster session at the Atlanta conference on research for new researchers.

MLRON

Gayle Davis reported that the research group MLRON has scaled back somewhat on the scope of its ambitions. Communication has been lacking and they have decided to take smaller steps in the future. The three groups that comprise MLRON are advertising in each other's newsletters. Gayle noted that the research sessions at this year's NMSA were very well attended and that more and more people are focused on research.

New Business

The SIG Officers and Council voted on the purchase of a portable display unit to showcase the SIG. The unit can be taken to research and regional conferences.

There is a need for a Logo for the SIG to be put on the website, Newsletter, and the display unit.

Janet McDaniel reported on NMSA's Professional Preparation Committee and an upcoming symposium on middle level teacher preparation February 7-8, 2003 in Charlotte, NC. All are invited to attend. Information flyers were distributed by NMSA.

CALL For PROPOSALS

“ADDRESSING THE AGENDA”

NMSA RESEARCH POSTER
SESSION
Atlanta, Georgia
6-8 November 2003

By David Hough, Editor RMLE Online

The NMSA Research Committee invites all interested beginning researchers and scholars to submit proposals to present poster session papers to the 30th Annual NMSA Conference. We especially encourage graduate students, beginning researchers, and/or assistant professors to submit. The top ten proposals as determined by the Research Committee will be accepted for presentation. The top five papers as determined by the Research Committee may be published in *Research in Middle Level Education On-line*.

Papers will necessarily vary in length, but most should range from 15 to 25 pages (4,000 to 8,000 words). Format should follow APA, 5th edition guidelines. A separate cover page with the following information must accompany the paper: title of paper; all Research Agenda issues, topics, and questions addressed by the study; an abstract of 250 words or fewer; name, job title, institutional affiliation, address, phone number of the lead author (and all co-authors).

The lead author or a co-author must attend the NMSA conference, present

the paper in poster format during a one-hour session, provide 200 copies of the paper for free distribution throughout the conference, and make any subsequent editorial changes upon request by the editor, *RMLE On-line*, necessary to prepare the paper for any subsequent publication, if selected. Each lead author / presenter whose proposal is accepted for presentation must complete a final draft of the paper and provide a copy to the session chair before September 1, 2003. For presentation on the poster, pages chosen by the presenter for display should be printed in a font large enough to be easily read from a distance of two feet and should include charts, graphs, and figures as appropriate to display information graphically.

Proposal Submission

To submit a proposal to present, please send the cover page information requested, per the 2nd paragraph above of this “call” to the NMSA Research Poster Session.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION

Submission Proposal Checklist

- ___ Cover Page that includes:
- ___ Title of paper
- ___ Abstract no longer than 250 words
- ___ Identification of all *NMSA 21st Century Research Agenda* issues, topics, and questions addressed by the researcher
- ___ Any new questions formulated per *NMSA 21st Century Research Agenda* issues and/or topics
- ___ Names, job titles, organizational/institutional affiliations, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of all authors with the lead author designated.

Time Line

- * June 1, 2003 – deadline to submit proposals
- * September 1, 2003 – deadline for final draft of paper
- * November 6, 2003 – presentation to NMSA 30th Annual Conference

Agreements

- * At least one author/co-author will present the paper during the scheduled session
- * Presenter(s) will provide 200 copies of the paper for free distribution at the NMSA Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia.
- * Posters will remain on display throughout the duration of the conference
- * Lead author will make editorial changes as necessary to prepare paper for publication in *RMLE On-line* if selected
- * Presenters will set-up and remove their own posters

Contact:

Dr. David Hough, NMSA Poster Session Chair
 Southwest Missouri State University
 205 E. St. Louis Street, Suite 203
 Springfield, MO 65806
 Phone: (417) 836-5254; VOICE: (417) 836-8853; FAX: (417) 836-8881;
 e-mail: DavidHough@smsu.edu

[Notification of receipt of your submission will be made immediately; notification of disposition of proposals will be made within two months.]
 Deadline for proposal submissions is June 1, 2003.

Call for Proposals Forthcoming Research in Middle Level Education

By Nancy Mizelle, Georgia College & State University

The NMSA Research Committee, in collaboration with the AERA MLER SIG and NaPOMLE, is once again sponsoring the "Forthcoming Research in Middle Level Education" roundtable session to be held at the 2003 NMSA Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia,

November 6-8, 2003. We encourage all Master's or Doctoral candidates who have recently concluded or are in the process of completing an exemplary research study in middle level education to submit a proposal to participate in this session. The top eight proposals as selected by the reviewers will be accepted for presentation.

Proposal Submission

Please send the following information to the Forthcoming Research Session Chair (contact information below) by June 1, 2003: name, institution, recommending faculty's name, address, email (current and summer), research title, expected date for completion of research, brief description of the study (3-5 pages that includes, but is not limited to, your research question, related research, design, and findings – to –date).

Please know that you will receive notification immediately upon receipt of your proposal; you will then be informed of proposal acceptance by July 1, 2003. If there are other questions or concerns do not hesitate to contact me.

Forthcoming Research Session Chair:
 Dr. Nancy B. Mizelle
 CBX 071
 Georgia College & State University
 Milledgeville, GA 31061
 478/445-5479
nmizelle@gcsu.edu

Southeastern Association of Educational Studies 8th Annual Conference

By Candy Beal, NC State

Study #1:

Does Teaching Cognitive, Social, Emotional, Physical and Moral Development Theories to Early

Adolescents Affect Student Behavior at School and Home?

Graduate student/educators taught various development theories (Charity James, Lawrence Kohlberg, Carol Gilligan, Jan Piaget, Erik Erikson, James Garbarino) to their middle grades students (one theory per class). After the theories were thoroughly discussed, students kept a weeklong journal of their interactions at home and at school. At the end of the week, students evaluated the data to determine if a better understanding of their growth and development might have changed their behavior or empowered them to act differently.

Plans for establishing a *Help Yourself Yourself Club* were discussed. This is the first of a series of studies that will eventually branch out to include parents, and facilities at other middle schools.

Study #2:

How Does a Curriculum Integration Project Facilitated in a Technology Enhanced Environment Provide Greater Teaching and Learning Satisfaction and More Positive Assessment Results for Middle School Educators and Students?

North Carolina's *Sixth Grades Go to Russia* is a curriculum integration research project undertaken in 2001-2002 by a research team from NC State. It involved 5,000 students and 50 teachers. Project data that speak to teaching and learning approaches that support multiple intelligences, real time global interaction focused on student generated questions and issues, change in self concept based on success achieved in an interactive, hands-on project and empowerment of both teacher and student for learning in a technology enhanced environment was evaluated. Qualitative data were shared that suggest how middle graders learn best and point up the need for professionals to offer on-going teacher support for innovative teaching and learning. Both teacher and student teaching and learning roles were examined in detail.

**Ballot for Proposed Change to Article VI
of the
MLER SIG Constitution**

_____ I accept the proposed changes to the Middle Level Education
Research SIG's Constitution and Bylaws.

_____ I reject the proposed changes to the Middle Level Education SIG's
Constitution and Bylaws.

Name: _____

To cast your vote please contact **Vincent A. Anfara, Jr.** in one of the following ways:

- Email to vanfara@utk.edu
- U.S. mail to

Vincent A. Anfara, Jr.
The University of Tennessee
College of Education
A321 Claxton Addition
Knoxville, TN 37996

- FAX to 865/974-6146

N. B. Results of the vote on the proposed changes to the SIG's Constitution will be announced over the SIG's listserv and at the business meeting in Chicago.