



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

I find it hard to believe that the fall semester is well under way. I am still wondering where the summer went. Another blink of the eye and we will be in San Diego for AERA 2004 and my tenure as president will be completed. But back to October 2003 for a moment.

Hopefully many of you will be joining us in November in Atlanta for NMSA's 30th Annual Conference. Many of our RMLE members are presenting, and I encourage you to support them by attending their sessions. Contained in this newsletter is a brief listing of some of these presentations. Additionally, NMSA's Research Committee is sponsoring a number of sessions which should be of interest to many of you.

Our business meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 7, from 4:45-5:45PM in the Georgia World Conference Center, Room C105. Members in attendance will receive MLER pins and other special gifts. We have a full agenda of items to discuss.

As we set our sight on AERA in San Diego we also need to start thinking about the election of four council members and a Vice President and Treasurer. I ask that each of you think about the possibility of serving our group as a councilor or officer.

We have made significant strides in the past 4 years (our membership is now over 200) and it is my hope that the SIG continue to grow and flourish.

We also need to think about nominations for the Middle Level Education Research Graduate Student Award. This award carries with it a cash award of \$250.00, one-year paid membership in the SIG, and a plaque. The application of this award is available on the MLER website.

I want to make each of you aware of a new project, *The Encyclopedia of Middle Level Education*. Please visit the SIG's website for a link to the "Call for Papers." This is a great opportunity for you and your students to contribute to this important project.

Finally, so much has been happening with No Child Left Behind and accountability-related issues that I think it would be a good idea for the SIG to author a position statement on this topic. Needless to say, there are other topics that the group might be interested in addressing. If anyone is interested in becoming a member of the MLER Policy Committee, please contact me at vanfara@utk.edu or call 865.974.4985.

See you in Atlanta!

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- 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

The Encyclopedia of Middle Level Education

Tentative Publication Date: April 2005

Editors:

Vincent A. Anfara, Jr., The University of Tennessee
P. Gayle Andrews, The University of Georgia
Steven B. Mertens, University of Illinois

The Encyclopedia of Middle Level Education is designed to be a comprehensive overview of the field. This publication will include seven anchor essays (5000 words) that will cover the following topics: the history of the middle school movement; academically excellent curriculum, instruction, and assessment; developmental responsiveness in relation to young adolescents; social equity in middle grades schools; teacher and administrator preparation and professional development; middle school reform models; and future directions in relation to the movement, practices, and policy. Authorship of the anchor essays is by invitation only.

In addition to these anchor essays, the encyclopedia will contain alphabetically organized entries (short entries approximately 500 words; long entries approximately 2000 words) that address important concepts, ideas, terms, people, organizations, and seminal publications related to middle level education. A tentative listing of entries and their corresponding lengths can be found at <http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/>.

Contributors to the encyclopedia will be expected to provide enough information so that the reader can place the idea, concept, person, etc. into its proper context in the history of the middle school movement. Entries are meant to be introductory; after an overview of the essentials of the topic the reader will be guided to more extensive sources for further investigation. Where appropriate, the reader should be directed to electronic sources such as websites where additional information can be retrieved.

Advisory Board

All entries submitted to ***The Encyclopedia of Middle Level Education*** will be vetted for accuracy and completeness by an advisory board. Anyone wishing to become a member of this board should contact Vincent A. Anfara (see below for contact information). Advisory Board members will be required to submit a short application identifying areas of expertise for purposes of the review process.

Encyclopedia (continued)

Guidelines

Anyone interested in contributing to this publication should review the list of possible entries which can be found on the Middle Level Education Research SIG website at

<http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/>. Short entries may be no more than 500 words. Long entries are limited to 2000 words. All submissions should be typed, double-spaced, on standard white paper, and must conform to the requirements of the *American Psychological Association's Publication Manual* (5th edition). Five hard copies and one electronic version (Word or RTF) of the submission are required. Entries that are not currently on the official list are encouraged and will be considered for inclusion, however, contributors of entries not on the list should first check with one of the editors.

Submission Deadline

All submissions to *The Encyclopedia of Middle Level Education* are due by **July 1, 2004**. Please submit long entries to Vincent A. Anfara, Jr., short entries to Steven B. Mertens, and anchor essays to P. Gayle Andrews at the addresses listed below. Submission to the encyclopedia implies permission to publish and guarantees that the work has not been submitted for publication consideration elsewhere.

For further information, please contact:

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The official list of entries for the Encyclopedia of Middle Level Education is available at:
<http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/>

points-of-view on the SIG and its development.

Preliminary work will be completed in time to distribute a draft at the SIG Business Meeting at NMSA. Each of you is encouraged to add to our historical collection and to share your "stories" about the SIG's history. In particular we are looking for a copy of the 1999 AERA Program and your own personal "bits of history" that would contribute to understanding the history of the SIG.

Contributions can be sent to Ron Williamson, Eastern Michigan University, 304 Porter, Ypsilanti, MI 48197, or via e-mail at ron.Williamson@emich.edu.

Recent Publications by MLER SIG members

Congratulations to the following SIG members who have published a book within the past year.

Brinthaup, T.M. and Lipka, R.P., Eds. (2002). *Understanding early adolescent self and identity: Application and interventions*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

LeTendre, B.G. and Lipka, R.P. (2003). *Targeting violence in our schools: Thinking toward solutions*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

SIG HISTORY PROJECT

During the summer work began on compiling the history of the SIG on Middle Level Education Research. This included reviewing material provided by past Presidents, AERA programs, and historical documents and other material generously loaned by Dick Lipka. As with any such project early founders and current members hold varying

In Memory of Our Colleague Richard Powell 1951 – 2003

[By James Beane, Professor
Interdisciplinary Studies in Curriculum
National College of Education
Madison, Wisconsin]

The middle level community lost a great colleague and friend when Richard Powell passed away in early July. Richard had most recently been a professor at the University of Colorado-Denver and previously at Texas Tech University and the University of Nevada-Las Vegas.

Richard’s prolific research and writing covered a wide range of topics including teacher education, multicultural education and environmental education. For those of us who focus on the middle level, though, his most profound contributions were the ethnographies he carried out in schools using an integrative curriculum approach. In the long history of studies on that approach, none have involved more sensitive and illuminating interviews than the ones Richard conducted with teachers, administrators, and especially young adolescents. Out of those studies, he gleaned extraordinary observations on the theoretical aspects of integrative curriculum and the lives of progressive educators who advocate for it.

In the last few years, Richard was at work on a collection of professional autobiographies of progressive middle level educators. His own statement, which he sent as a sample, was a remarkable account of a professional search for liberating pedagogies borne of a long journey to transcend difficult personal struggles. Perhaps it was that integration of the personal and the professional that allowed Richard to see meanings others could not seem to see in the experiences of young adolescents and the urgent need for schools to be more human and humane. To understand young adolescents in that way and to care so deeply about their education is a challenge for all of us and the legacy of Richard Powell.

Richard is survived by his wife, Heather; two daughters, Stacie Powell and Corey Coldiron; and a sister, Susan Powell-Robinson. The family suggests memorials be sent to the Teacher Education Scholarship Fund established at Texas Tech University in memory of Dr. Richard Powell.



[By Rebecca Mills
VP for Student Life
University of Nevada, Las Vegas]

Richard Powell’s contributions to middle level education and research are innumerable. Richard’s interest in young adolescents, middle level learning environments, and teacher education came together in important ways to enhance our understanding of middle level

education. As a qualitative researcher, Richard sought to deepen the understanding about the perceptions of young adolescents and their classroom teachers. Richard was deeply committed to careful methodology, rich descriptions, and credible interpretations. His classroom-based research, which spanned the country from the desert southwest to the Gulf Coast and from western Texas to Indiana, resulted in dozens of published articles and conference presentations. Richard wrote and served as a reviewer for the Middle School Journal and the Research in Middle Level Education Quarterly.

He participated in the organization of the SIG and served for more than ten years as an officer in the AERA Special Interest Group for Middle Level Education and Research. As an active participant in paper sessions, roundtable discussions, and SIG meetings, Richard pushed our thinking about what could be in middle level schools and what should be in middle level research.

Position Statement on Teacher Preparation

**Oregon Middle Level Consortium and
Oregon Middle Level Association**

This position statement addresses the concerns of the Oregon Middle Level Consortium and

the Oregon Middle Level Association about the implementations of No Child Left Behind and the initial preparation of highly qualified middle level teachers.

Rationale for our position

In Oregon, members of the Oregon Middle Level Consortium (OMLC) and Oregon Middle Level Association (OMLA) work tirelessly to promote effective middle level teaching and practices through collaboration, scholarship, advocacy, and support. We agree with National Middle School Association’s (George, 2002) philosophy that a highly qualified teacher is one who knows his or her content area and how to teach that content to young adolescent learners. Our stance aligns with The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform’s (2002) policy that supports the specialized preparation of middle-grades teachers and mandatory requirements for middle-level licensure. To this end, we challenge policy makers to consider the following interconnected recommendations for preparing middle level teachers:

- Provide a context for developmentally responsive pedagogy
- Work toward a requirement of subject area competence in two or more disciplines (NMSA/NCATE guidelines)
- Offer specialized middle level programs with

integrative coursework – coursework connects to fieldwork

- Arrange extensive fieldwork in schools that serve young adolescents

Issues facing middle level teacher education

- Appropriate middle level content area tests in Oregon. To address this issue, the OMLC and OMLA call for:
 - ✓ Appropriate Middle Level Content Area Tests
 - ✓ Availability of cross-disciplinary tests (e.g. Math/Science; Language Arts/Social Studies)
- Developing a system that determines teachers’ attainment of core content knowledge (U. S. Department of Education, 2002). To address this issue, the OMLC and OMLA offer to:
 - ✓ Participate in the decision-making process in what determines the state standard for teacher competence
 - ✓ Select alternative assessments

References

George, P. (2002). *No child left behind. Implications for middle level leaders.* Westerville, OH: National Middle School Association.

National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. (2002). *Policy statement: Teacher preparation, licensure, and recruitment* (Issue 2). Author.

U. S. Department of Education. (2002). *Improving teacher quality state grants. Title II, Part A, non-regulatory draft guidance.* [Title II Part A Draft Guidance with Questions and Answers.] Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/AIDP/epdp.html>

NOMINATIONS

NEEDED

for

MLER SIG

- ✓ 4 Council Members
- ✓ Treasurer
- ✓ Vice President

Please nominate
Your Colleague/s
or
Yourself

✉ Send, or

☎ FAX, or

@ Email

Nominations

to

Vince Anfara

Going Paperless

Thanks to our Webmaster, Micki Caskey, MLER SIG maintains a wonderful, up-to-date website. In addition to the Newsletter, the pages are filled with information about ...

- ✓ SIG Constitutions and ByLaws
- ✓ Conferences & meetings
- ✓ Graduate Award
- ✓ Call for Proposals
- ✓ Membership
- ✓ Position Announcements
- ✓ Publications
- ✓ Related Web Sites

With this issue, we say goodbye to the paper format in which the Newsletter has been produced. Beginning with our next issue (January 2004), copies will be sent to members electronically through the membership listserv. Issues will continue to be available on our website at <http://www.rmle.pdx.edu>

Workshops are due **November 21, 2003.**

(Selections to be made by January, 2004)

- ✓ Proposals for 75-minute Concurrent Sessions are due **January 16, 2004.** (Selections to be made by April, 2004)

In addition to many of you submitting proposals, 45 SIG members volunteered to review the proposals this year. Reviewing proposals is time consuming, but it is valuable in assuring that we examine each proposal fairly in order to choose the most salient ones for AERA presentations.

Please encourage graduate students to apply for the MLER Graduate Student Award!

Application Available

<http://www.rmle.pdx.edu>

Deadline January 15, 2004

According to AERA, our official membership count is 162, which allows us to have 4 paper sessions and 13 paper discussions (formerly known as roundtables). This is the largest number of sessions the MLER SIG has had in many years. We have a Business meeting scheduled for San Diego as well. Depending on the outcome of the reviews, we may hold a symposium at the Business meeting.

A Report from the
Program-
Chair/President-Elect
Kimberly J. Hartman, Ph.D.

I appreciate the work you do. Your proposal submissions, reviews, and membership serve to make the SIG strong and to make the job of the Program-Chair/President-Elect more manageable. Thank you for all the help you provide.

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS
NMSA's 31st Annual Conference
Minneapolis, Minnesota
4-6 November 2004

The *Call for Presentations* has been issued for NMSA's 31st Annual Conference to be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, November 4-6, 2004.

- ✓ Proposals for 3-hour and 6-hour

The MLER SIG is shining this year! We had 38 proposals submitted to the Middle Level Education Research SIG. Thirty-one proposals were submitted for paper presentations and seven proposals were submitted for symposia. Among the topics included in the proposals were: Accountability, Reform, *Turning Points*, Teacher Preparation, Leadership, Gender, Motivation, Achievement, Urban Middle Schools, Student Learning, Teaming, and Middle Level Policies.

For those of you reviewing proposals, please remember the deadline to submit your reviews is October 11. I will process the reviews immediately and will be able to announce the names of AERA 2004, MLER SIG presenters at our business meeting at NMSA in Atlanta. I look forward to seeing you in Atlanta in November and in San Diego in April.

MLER SIG Members Present at NMSA

Presenter/s	Title	Time	Location
THURSDAY			
Vincent A. Anfara, Jr. & Kathleen Roney	<i>The Developmentally Responsive Middle School Principal: An Instrument to Measure Responsiveness</i>	2:15-3:30p.m.	Georgia World Congress Center, C109
	SIG Officer and Council Meeting	6:00p.m.	Meet in Marriott Marquis, Lobby
FRIDAY			
Steve Mertens & Nancy Flowers	<i>Middle Grades Teacher Certification: Its Effect on Student Learning and Achievement</i>	8:00-9:15a.m.	Marriott Marquis, EXH-03
Sue C. Thompson & Members of NMSA Urban Issues Task Force	<i>Meeting the Challenges of Urban Middle Schools</i>	8:00-9:15a.m.	Georgia World Congress Center, C108
Candy Beal	<i>Forming A Help Yourself Club: Teaching Developmental Theories to Students to Help Them Understand Their Own Adolescence and Take Responsibility for Their Futures</i>	9:45-11:00a.m.	Marriott Marquis, EXH-01
Micki M. Caskey & Barbara Ruben	<i>Possibilities in Preparing Middle Level Practitioners</i>	9:45-11:00a.m.	Marriott Marquis, EXH-13
Karynne L.M.Kleine, Nancy Mizelle, & Leigh Hern	<i>Mentor Leading: The Backbone to Professional Teacher Preparation at Georgia College and State University</i>	9:45-11:00a.m.	Georgia World Congress Center, C208
Steve Mertens & Nancy Flowers	<i>Research That Supports High Performing Middle Grades Schools</i>	9:45-11:00a.m.	Marriott Marquis, EXH03
Sue C. Thompson & Members of NMSA Urban Issues Task Force	<i>No Child Left Behind and Its Implications for Urban Middle Schools</i>	9:45-11:00a.m.	Georgia World Congress Center, C108
Micki M. Caskey & Maureen Musser	<i>Sustaining Advocacy for Middle Level Education</i>	11:30a.m.-12:45p.m.	Marriott Marquis, EXH-13
Vincent A. Anfara, Jr. & Kathleen Roney	<i>The Development of Middle School Teacher Preparation Programs: Two Case Studies from Pennsylvania</i>	1:30-2:45p.m.	Georgia World Congress Center, C203
Sue C. Thompson, Janet C. Saito-Furukawa, Simone Dorman, & Sally Newell	<i>Building a Culture of Literacy in Urban Middle Schools</i>	3:15-4:30p.m.	Georgia World Congress Center, C108
	SIG Business Meeting	4:45-5:45p.m.	Georgia World Congress Center, C105
SATURDAY			
Joanne Arhar, Nancy Mizelle, Barbara Brodhagen, & Claudia Khourey-Bowers	<i>Professional Development and School Improvement Through Action Research (Ticketed Workshop)</i>	8:00-11:00a.m.	Georgia World Congress Center, CW3102
David Strahan	<i>Inviting Positive Classroom Discipline</i>	8:00-9:15a.m.	Georgia World Congress Center, C106
Richard Lipka & Elizabeth Pate	<i>Service Learning Projects and Portfolios: How Tos</i>	9:45-11:00a.m.	Georgia World Congress Center, C104
David Strahan	<i>Creating Communities for Learning: Energizing Instruction in an Urban Setting</i>	9:45-11:00a.m.	Georgia World Congress Center, C106