

Message from the President

By Kimberly Hartman

Our immediate Past-President, Vincent Anfara, Jr., deserves many accolades for his four year term as MLER President and President-Elect. Under his tutelage the SIG accomplished many tasks: increased its membership to 200+, formed a strong relationship between NMSA and AERA, created a website, reinstated the Graduate Student Award, created a SIG brochure, and implemented a historian. Vince, you have made us a strong SIG that is active and highly visible at both AERA and NMSA. Thank you for your influential leadership!

With that said, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, the SIG members, for electing me as MLER President for the 2004-2006 term. I am excited to serve you in this capacity. Please feel free to contact me with your ideas, issues, requests, and general comments. I can be reached at 704.687.3209 or at khartman@email.uncc.edu.

As a SIG, we have a rather important issue facing us: AERA's decision to assess each SIG \$5 per member. As reported by Sky Huck, Chair of the SIG's Executive Committee, "The major area of expense for AERA has been renting SIG spaces at the annual meetings." In order for each SIG to have a business meeting and one paper session, AERA has had to secure a minimum of 298 rooms. Like the MLER SIG, many other SIGs have needed multiple meeting rooms, which has been costly to AERA. We learned in the early spring that AERA spent around \$175,000 a year supporting SIG activities. In past years, each of the 149

SIGs has paid a fee of \$150 to AERA, which has generated about \$22,350. AERA has to generate about \$153,000 from other sources. Therefore, AERA made the decision to assess the SIGs \$5 per member to defray some of the costs.

For MLER, this assessment translates to slightly over \$1000. Since we had been paying \$150 a year to AERA, having to pay over \$1000 was a substantial increase since our current balance is less than \$200. We have tried to keep our dues low for several years; however, with the assessment we realized that we had to increase our income. Thus, the Officers decided to increase the dues to \$10, effective July 1, giving us \$5 per member and AERA \$5 per member. While we did not like having to double the membership costs, we were left with few options.

At the SIG Open Meeting which Kathy Roney and I attended, many SIG representatives were upset with the AERA assessment. Ultimately, most SIG representatives were willing to compromise and find ways to generate the needed funds. Following that meeting, Sky Huck sent the Officers three proposals for generating money.

Proposal A

- 1) Each SIG member to pay \$7
- 2) SIGs with 128 or fewer members to pay \$150 per SIG
- 3) SIGs with 128 to 200 members to pay \$225 per SIG
- 4) SIGs with 201 or more members to pay \$300 per SIG

This plan would generate \$79,155 for AERA.

Proposal B

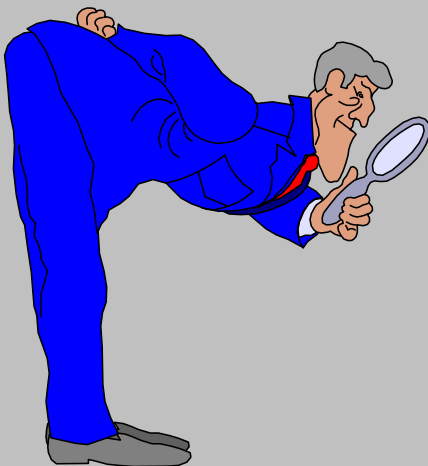
- 1) Each SIG member to pay \$5

June 2004

Volume 4, Issue 2

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Joanne Arhar (2002-2005) *

P. Gayle Andrews (2002-2005) *

Steven Mertens (2002-2005) *

Paul Deering (2004-2006)

Adrienne Dixson (2004-2006)

Richard Lipka (2004-2006)

Sandra L. Stacki (2004-2006)

[* up for election prior to AERA 2005]

- 2) SIGs with 128 or fewer members to pay \$150 per SIG
- 3) SIGs with 128 to 200 members to pay \$225 per SIG
- 4) SIGs with 201 or more members to pay \$300 per SIG

This plan would generate \$64,125 for AERA.

Proposal C

- 1) Each SIG member pay \$5 to AERA
- 2) Each SIG pay \$150 per SIG to AERA

This plan would generate \$59,925 for AERA.

The Officers of each SIG had to respond to Sky and choose one of these options by May 26. The decision making process will proceed as follows:

- June 1 Conference call among SIG Executive Committee
- June 3 Written proposal for new dues policy submitted to AERA's Central Office in DC
- June 22 Executive Board of AERA Council considers and chooses to endorse policy or not
- June 24 AERA Council considers and chooses to endorse policy or not
- June 25 Notification of SIG Officers of action taken by Council

At this point we do not know which option the majority of the SIGs chose, but as soon as the Officers are notified, we will notify MLER members. In any event, our SIG dues will have to increase in order to pay the assessment to AERA. We will keep you posted and we still anticipate the increase in dues will be effective July 1, 2004.

On a more uplifting note, I would like to personally welcome the new SIG officers:

Kathy Roney, President-elect and Program Chair

Micki Caskey, Vice- President and Webmaster
Nancy Mizelle, Treasurer
Joan Lindgren, Secretary
Sandra Stacki, Council Member
Adrienne Dixson, Council Member

Vince Anfara, Micki Caskey, and Maureen Musser have agreed to serve as editors for the MLER Newsletter.

I thank each of you as well as the returning Council members for your dedication and hard work in serving the SIG. I appreciate you.

It is an honor to serve as President of the MLER SIG. Thank you for this opportunity.

Kim

Program Chair Notes

By Kathleen Roney

Allow me to take this opportunity to share with you some notes from my files as your new Program Chair.

Election Results

The MLER Policy Brief on Middle Level Principal Preparation and Licensure (April 2004) was accepted by an overwhelming majority. It is available on our website:

http://www.rmlc.pdx.edu/Policy%20Brief_Principals.pdf

Submitting Proposals

Close to 10,000 proposals were submitted to AERA for the 2004 meeting in San Diego. This statistic was given as one response to complainants during a demonstration and training I attended of the new electronic submission and review system AERA put in place for the 2005 meeting in Montreal. We were informed that many of the problems that members encountered last year have been

addressed. One thing remains the same, all proposals must be submitted electronically using the AERA Online Proposal Submission System (link to be provided by June 1). However, we were given a few tips to pass along to our members.

- ✓ Familiarize yourself with the site prior to sitting down to submit a proposal. Directions for the *Call for Proposals* are available in two formats: a PDF document you can print out (27 pages), or as individual HTML documents you can review on line.
- ✓ Know your AERA member ID and password, and be sure to have an accurate email address. The pages will look a little different, but the process will remain the same.
- ✓ Submit early. Do not wait until the last minute. Notice that there are staggered opening and closing dates. Proposals for the SIG are due on August 3, 2004, 11:59 p.m. (Pacific Standard Time).
- ✓ It will benefit the SIG if you indicate at least three (3) session format preferences in ranked order for placement of your individual proposals. Program chairs are then able to group and assign accepted individual proposals into sessions using different session formats, taking submitters' preferences into consideration.

Our MLER SIG received many proposals last summer, allowing us to fill four paper sessions, two paper discussions, a symposium and our business meeting. It would be great if we could increase the number of proposals from which to choose for these many slots. Please consider submitting a proposal for the meeting in Montreal. Then, of course, since we will have all your great proposals, we will need reviewers. Please sign up to serve as one of our reviewers. Directions to do so are accessed through the same *Call for Proposals* section of the AERA website.

NMSA 2004

NMSA has sent out their acceptances for the conference to be held in Minneapolis. Presenters are invited to send me their presentation title, day, time and location. I will include them all in the fall '04 *Chronicle*.

AERA Business Meeting, 12 April 2004, Hyatt, Edward D, 2nd Level, 6:15-8:15p.m.

Minutes

Welcome: (Vince Anfara)

- ✓ Approximately 45 members attended the meeting
- ✓ Agendas were distributed
- ✓ Introduction of Officers Present: Vince Anfara (President); Kim Hartman (President-Elect and Program Chair); Kathy Roney (Vice President); Barb Whinery (Past-President); Sue Thompson (Newsletter Editor); Micki Caskey (Webmanager); Joanne Arhar, Gayle Davis, Micki Caskey, Mickey Fenzel, and Dick Lipka (Council Members)

Agenda:

1. **SIG Brochure** (Vince Anfara)
The new brochures have been printed and were distributed to members. It is anticipated that the brochures will be used to promote the SIG at state and national conferences, and among Boards of Education.
2. **Program Chair Report/AERA Update** (Kim Hartman)
 - ✓ The SIG received more submission for AERA '04 than ever before.

- ✓ Handouts listing SIG sessions and abstracts during AERA '04 were distributed.
- ✓ More reviewers are needed for AERA '05. Members were asked to consider serving the SIG as a reviewer.
- ✓ Deadline for proposals for AERA '05 is August 1, 2004.

Thank You was offered to **Vince Anfara** for his dedicated and creative leadership of the SIG. Among the accomplishments during his tenure, the following were mentioned:

- ✓ membership increased from 20-200
- ✓ a bridge was formed between AERA & NMSA
- ✓ introduction of the SIG website
- ✓ articulation of a strategic plan for the SIG
- ✓ reinstated the Graduate Student Award
- ✓ creation of SIG brochure
- ✓ institution of SIG Historian
- ✓ articulation of policy briefs

3. Treasurer's Report (Kathy Roney)

- ✓ \$261.66 balance in account
- ✓ Expenditures for the year included: production of newsletter, brochures, graduate student award, display board

4. SIG History Project (Ron Williamson)

- ✓ Draft dated 3/28/04 was distributed. Members were asked to review and correct. Likewise, some pieces of the history still need to be filled in and artifacts need to be collected.
- ✓ Contact Ron Williamson with updates, corrections, etc. ron.williamson@emich.edu

5. Policy Brief (Dick Lipka)

- ✓ Two policy briefs are available on SIG website: "High Stakes Testing," and "Middle Level Principal Preparation and Licensure."
- ✓ Policy briefs and needed for state legislatures, Boards of Education, policymakers, etc.

- ✓ Members were encouraged to generate additional policy briefs, i.e., succinct statements on pertinent issues (2-3 pages of text). Submissions are to be sent to Kim Hartman.

6. Graduate Student Award (Barbara Whinery)

- ✓ Jennifer Goodwin, Teachers College, Columbia University, was awarded a plaque, a check in the amount of \$250.00, and a one-year SIG membership for her paper entitled "Urban Students' Experiences with Advisory: A Case Study."

7. Newsletter and Website (Kathy Roney; Micki Caskey)

- ✓ *The Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research* is mailed in soft copy to members on the listserv, and is available on the SIG website. Members were asked to submit articles, book reviews, and other points of interest to middle level education. Kathy Roney moves into the position of Program Chair as such she will no longer edit the newsletter; Sue Thompson will continue as editor.
- ✓ Members were informed that "research interests" need to be updated on the website. A list of members was distributed for verification of research interests.

8. AERA Updates: Increase in SIG Tax (Vince Anfa)

- ✓ AERA is now taxing SIGs \$5.00 per member. Consequently, the MLER SIG dues are raised from \$5.00 to \$10.00 effective July, 2004.

9. Recognition of Officers and Council Members and Installation of New Officers and Council Members (Kathy Roney, Vince Anfa)

- ✓ Recognition of Outgoing Officers and Council Member:

- Kim Hartman, President-elect & Program Chair
- Kathy Roney, Vice President & Newsletter Editor
- Micki Caskey, Council Member & Webmanager
- Mickey Fenzel, Council Member

- ✓ Installation of New Officers
 - Kim Hartman, President
 - Kathy Roney, President-Elect & Program Chair
 - Micki Caskey, Vice President & Web Manager
 - Nancy Mizelle, Treasurer
 - Joan Lindgren, Secretary
- ✓ Installation of New Council Members
 - Sandra Stacki
 - Adrienne Dixson

10. New Business

- ✓ Call for proposals for NMSA 2004
- ✓ Contributors are needed for *Encyclopedia of Middle Level Education Research*. See SIG website for information on available entries.
- ✓ Advertisements for Volumes 3 & 4 of the Handbook series were distributed.
- ✓ Call for proposals for Preparation of Middle School Teachers symposium, February 2005 in Columbus, OH
- ✓ Position Announcement in Urban Education at UNC Charlotte
- ✓ Vince Anfa thanked members for the real friendship that he formed during his tenure as council member and officer of SIG.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:00p.m.

7:15-8:15p.m. Meeting of Database Project: Presentation by David Hough, P. Gayle Andrews, Steve Mertens, and Vince Anfa

Summer: A Time for Connection, Reflection, and Preparation

By Micki M. Caskey

Summertime often brings opportunities for connection, reflection, and preparation. We take time to connect with others: family, friends, and colleagues. We pause and reflect upon the events and accomplishments of the year. We look ahead and begin preparations for the future. This summer use the Middle Level Education Research SIG's website, www.middlelevel.pdx.edu, to support all three endeavors.

To make connections with other members of the SIG, explore the *Research Interests* section of the website. You will find an updated list of researchers and their research interests as well as their university affiliations and email addresses. If you wish to connect with SIG officers, council members, newsletter editors, or the web master, check out the *Officers* section for contact information. Plus, you can browse the *Related Web Sites* section to access important educational organizations such as the National Middle School Association (NMSA), the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform, and the American Educational Research Association (AERA). The MLER Website has more than a dozen sections to help you stay connected to the SIG during the summer months and throughout the year.

The web site is a good starting point for reflection on the SIG's events, publications, and positions. For example, the *Conferences and Meetings*

section provides archival information about the SIG's presence at recent AERA Annual Meetings and NMSA Annual Conferences. The *Graduate Student Award* section showcases the 2004 award recipient, Jennifer Goodwin, and includes an abstract of her research paper. Another possibility is the *Publications* section that lists books, newsletters, and abstracts from research papers. Take time to view The Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education series and other titles written by members of the MLER SIG. Reflect upon the SIG's recent growth as documented in *The Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research*, the SIG newsletter. Read the abstracts from the 2002, 2003, and 2004 MLER-SIG paper sessions at AERA. In addition to looking back at events and publications, review the SIG's recent position statements on selected topics in the *Policy Briefs* section.

Summer is also a time for making preparations and planning. Use the *Conferences and Meetings* section of the MLER Web Site to find the dates and locations of upcoming SIG events. Mark your calendars with the dates for the 2004, 2005, and 2006 NMSA conferences and AERA's 2005 and 2006 meetings. You can reserve time to travel to future conference locations including Minneapolis, Montreal, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Nashville, and Dallas. Also, check the *Save the Date* section for special gatherings such as NMSA's *High Quality Teachers: A Symposium on Middle Level Teacher Preparation* in Columbus, OH on February 4-5, 2005. Other sections that compel us to look ahead are *Calls for Proposals*, *Encyclopedia*, and *Position Announcements*. Remember to consult the MLER Website. Not only is web site a great place to post announcements, calls for papers, or publications, but it also serves as a valuable planning tool.

Summertime and the browsing is easy...

AERA 2004 Session Abstracts

Middle Level Teachers, Students, and Administrators

SIG - Middle Level Education
Research: Paper Session
Friday, 4/16/2004 from 12:25 p.m. -
1:55 p.m.

Marriott - Green Room, South Tower,
Third Level

(1) Kathleen Roney (University of North Carolina at Wilmington), Vincent A. Anfara, Jr. (University of Tennessee), Claudia Smarkola (Temple University), Joseph P. Ducette (Temple University)

Developmentally Responsive Leadership: A Look at the Middle School Principal

Abstract: If, indeed, educational excellence is inextricably coupled with effective school leadership, there is much to be gained from studying the experience of school leaders. Middle school principals who are serious about reforming their schools face a daunting challenge. They need to reconstruct core ideas about their role, and therefore, how they spend their time, set their priorities, seek new knowledge and skills, and situate themselves with respect to teachers and others in the educational community. This process is complicated, takes time, and requires models of good practice. Given the virtual absence of research specific to middle school leaders, this research provides us with the opportunity to learn from individuals as they live out their professional lives in schools.

(2) Stacey M. Neuharth-Pritchett (University of Georgia), Angela G. Fiske (University of Georgia)

Academic Competence of a Sample of Adolescents Retained in Grade Versus a Typically-Developing Sample

Abstract: Despite the substantial body of literature that has accumulated against the practice of retention, schools in the United States continue to advance the practice as a sound educational choice for students (Mantzicopoulos, 1997). While there is an extensive view of the contributions of individual student-related variables to the numbers of students retained, few investigations have focused on adolescents' perceptions of their academic or scholastic competence and actual data from the students' standardized test scores. This study presents data from 266 adolescents indicating that retained students have lower competence as well as academic achievement. Implications for schools are provided.

(3) Audra K. Parker (University of Georgia), Stacey M. Neuharth-Pritchett (University of Georgia)

Marginalized from School: Adolescents' Perceptions of Teachers Prior to the Transition to Middle School

Abstract: The transition from elementary school to middle school is a monumental step for young adolescents. In addition to physical, emotional, and environmental changes faced by this age group, they must also leave the nurturing, caring confines of the elementary school for larger, competitive, intimidating middle schools. Recent research has focused on the concept of school satisfaction and adolescents' ratings of their behavior and connections to school (Baker, 1998). This study presents data from fifth grade students and their perceptions of their teachers prior to their transition to sixth grade in the middle school. Data indicate that students who have less positive perceptions of their teachers have more negative outcomes on a number of social and emotional variables.

(4) Sara Davis Powell (College of Charleston)

Examining the Relationships among Knowledge, Dispositions, and Performances in Novice Middle Level Teachers

Abstract: This research seeks to verify or refute widely assumed relationships among knowledge, dispositions, and performances. Recent graduates of an elementary education program (grades 1-8) who taught middle grades (6-8) during 2002-2003 are participants responding to a 153-item survey based directly on the NMSA/NCATE Standards for Initial Preparation. The responses range from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Responses are subjected to Spearman’s rho to determine correlation coefficients for each of the three-paired relationships among knowledge, dispositions, and performances (k/d, k/p, d/p). Three related hypotheses state the correlations will be positive. The results will either confirm or call into question assumed relationships and have potential implications for teacher educators and the premises of the National Middle School Association concerning teacher preparation.

(5) Jay Feldman (Center for Collaborative Education), Monique Y. Ouimette (Center for Collaborative Education)

Balancing the Integrity of a Comprehensive School Design Model with Experimentation and Local Context

Abstract: A significant finding of studies examining the effectiveness of CSR schools is that schools that implement the design fully are more likely to show gains in student improvement. However, levels of implementation vary greatly across schools and districts, and the ability of designs to adapt to local contexts has met with mixed success. The Turning Points Middle School design developers believe that the implementation of their principles and practices must vary in local context. The

design’s use of Regional Centers is unique among middle school reform models, providing local, intensive, on-site support. This paper discusses how Regional Centers and external facilitators view their roles in middle school change, and describes local innovations in implementation to meet the TP vision.

Nicole L. Torrence - The University of Georgia (Chair)

Larry G Daniel - University of North Florida (Discussant)

Examinations of Middle Schools AERA Paper Session: Roundtable 36

Friday, 4/16/2004, 10:35 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.

Hyatt - Elizabeth Ballroom E, Second Level

(1) Paul D. Deering (University of Hawaii)

Nurturing a State-Wide Middle Level Education Movement: The Case of Hawai‘i

Abstract: Hawai‘i has taken a leap forward in the education of its early adolescents with the State Board of Education’s recent adoption of the Middle Level Education Policy (HIDOE, 2001), which draws heavily upon the recommendations of the National Middle School Association (1982,1995) and the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989, 1995). While much of the US seems to be experiencing a backlash against the middle level education movement, Hawai‘i has continued to progress, due in large part, to the nurturing of a state-wide middle level education movement. This paper will use case analysis (Merriam, 1998) to examine the growth of Hawai‘i’s middle level education movement and offer

recommendations for the further advancement of the movement within and beyond the state.

(2) Weilin Dou (International Trade University of China), Zhenguo Yuan (Ministry of Education, PRC), Shu-ling Lai (Ling Tung College), Tai-Shent Chang (Ling Tung College, Taiwan), Renmin Ye (Houston ISD)

A Cross-Cultural Study of Time Spent on Sports Activities

Abstract: This study discussed and compared the amount of time middle school students devote to playing sports after school, and the perception of how important these sports activities by students themselves, their mothers and their friends. The study represented the perceptions of subjects from sixteen different nations. It explored the differences of after school sport time between male and female students, as well as the relationships between time devoted to sport activities and students’ academic achievement. The findings from this study would be meaningful for international comparative education, student sport activities and physical educational programs.

(3) Micki M. Caskey (Portland State University)

Capturing the Journey: A Case of Preparing a Middle Level Teacher

Abstract: In response to strong evidence supporting the specialized preparation of teachers of young adolescents (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; McEwin & Dickinson, 1995; National Middle School Association, 1999), a graduate teacher education program in the Northwest United States developed a program dedicated to preparing middle level teachers. The journey of teachers in an emergent middle level program warrants examination. This case study is part of a larger study of twenty-three teachers who were specifically prepared to teach young adolescents in a middle level cohort. Components of the program were

extensive field experience, interactive coursework and cohort structure. Data sources include surveys, interviews, and written reflections. This case will reveal one teacher's perceptions of his specialized middle level preparation.

(4) Tariq T. Akmal (Washington State University), Donald E. Larsen (University of the Pacific)

Aligning State Reform with Middle School Needs: Contextualizing Accountability Pressure for School Renewal

Abstract: Despite the pressure of high stakes assessment, high-need schools can find ways to help children succeed. In the last three years, Lewis & Clark Middle School has become a school where both faculty and students have a sense of pride and purpose. In a school where 25 to 30% of the students are on IEPs, almost two-thirds are ethnic minorities, two-thirds are on free or reduced lunch, and 50 to 60% of the student population changes during the year, parental involvement soars, disciplinary actions decline, student achievement rises, and staff development flourishes. How? Unlike other schools identified as Schools Needing Improvement, LC welcomed state accountability mandates and obligations, thus illustrating how contextualizing school accountability pressure can help middle school renewal.

(5) Erika Dale Daniels (University of San Diego, San Diego State University)

Exploring Motivation and Achievement in School Contexts: Sixth Graders Talk About Middle School Experiences

Abstract: This study highlights the dearth of young adolescents' voices in current research on motivation and academic achievement. In order for teachers to create motivating learning environments, they need to understand the factors that influence students' decisions to engage or not engage in school. This study uses a collective case

study approach in order to explore the reasons sixth graders at the beginning of their middle school experiences choose either to engage or to disengage in school learning experiences. These decisions, in turn, affect their academic achievement. It is framed by sociocultural theory in order to explore how elements in the students' environment (language, gestures, interactions) influence students' motivation and identity construction.

(6) Prudence H. Cuper (Keene State College), Hiller A. Spires (North Carolina State University)

Novel Readings: Exploring the Effects of Technology-Enhanced Activities on Adolescent Literature Engagement and Social Learning

Abstract: This case study examined the effects of technology-based activities (i.e., Internet research, Web discussions, and an interactive Web site) on the interplay of five 8th grade students' socially constructed learning and cognitive text engagement with young adult literature. Findings suggest that technology-based activities can facilitate collaborative meaning making and distributed expertise while fostering group-based critical evaluation of resources; and provide a unique means of exploring personal identity, a central developmental issue during adolescence. The grounded theoretical results of this study contribute to our understanding of emerging technology applications and their potential impact on adolescent literacy using non-standardized assessments. In order to encourage greater teacher technology use, future research should include standardized assessments as well.

Issues in Middle Level Education

SIG - Middle Level Education
Research: Paper Session
Thursday, 4/15/2004, 4:05 p.m. - 6:05 p.m.
Marriott - Carlsbad, South Tower, Third Level

(1) Steve Mertens (CPRD, University of Illinois), Nancy Flowers (CPRD, University of Illinois)

Assessing the Success of Turning Points in Boston Public Schools

Abstract: This paper examines the evidence of effectiveness of Turning Points, a middle-grades' Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) model. Utilizing a quasi-experimental design, two types of data and two control groups are used in evaluating the effectiveness of the reform model on a group of nine middle-grade schools in Boston, Massachusetts. The data consists of self-study data collected from teachers, principals, and students and school-level student achievement data. Teachers in Turning Points' schools report slightly higher levels of team and classroom practices, higher levels of decision-making, and their students report positive levels of self-esteem, efficacy, depression, and behavior problems. Student achievement results for Turning Points were comparable to the control group. Limited-English proficiency (LEP) students in Turning Points' schools, however, had higher student achievement scores in English as compared to the control group, the district, and the state. Finally, Turning Points' schools engaged in teaming with high levels of common planning time had higher English achievement scores compared to schools with low or no common planning time.

(2) Joanne M. Arhar (Kent State University), Elizabeth Goldthwait (Kent State University)

Relationship between Criteria for Admission to Middle Childhood Education, Program Completion, and Performance in Teaching

Abstract: A study of 88 graduates of a middle childhood teacher education program examined the relationship between entrance criteria, successful program completion, and performance in teaching. Entrance criteria include GPA, Praxis I, essay, and interview.

Results indicate that GPA is related to subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and performance on some of the Praxis II tests, but not to student teaching evaluations or Praxis III. Praxis I scores and essay are unrelated to most other variables. Interview scores predict methods GPA. Most students who are admitted to the program successfully complete it. All students who took Praxis III passed it but none of the entrance criteria were found to be significantly related to either student teaching evaluations or Praxis III.

(3) Lillie R. Albert (Boston College), Marialice B.F. Curran (Boston College)

Middle School Teachers Talk About Their Teacher Preparation

Abstract: This case study use interview and survey data to document the influence of teacher preparation programs on middle level teachers. The teachers participating in this study spoke and wrote about three specific types of practices: intellectual, teacher preparation, and affective. This study concludes that there is a difference between middle school students and students at other levels; therefore, this distinction should inform teacher preparation programs on how to best prepare prospective middle level teachers. Specifically designed middle level teacher preparation programs need to provide practicing teachers with a variety of practical experiences at the middle level, including both pre- and full- practicum experiences, as well as specific middle level coursework taught by professors who are ambassadors of the middle school.

(4) Shawn M. Glynn (University of Georgia), K. Denise Muth (University of Georgia), Elizabeth Pate (University of Georgia)

Preservice Education of Middle School Teachers: A Contextual Teaching and Learning Approach

Abstract: One of the major goals of recent reform efforts in middle school

education has been to insure that preservice teacher education prepares teachers effectively for classroom practice. Beginning middle school teachers often have difficulty relating various theories and methods taught in preservice courses to what actually happens in their daily teaching practice. This presentation describes a research study that applies a contextual teaching and learning (CTL) approach to the preservice education of middle school teachers at a large state university. Case studies of participating teachers and their students over two years supported the view that preservice education in CTL can accelerate the professional development of middle school teachers and, at the same time, foster their students' achievement and attitudes.

Micki M. Caskey - Portland State University (Chair)

Kimberly J. Hartman - University of North Carolina at Charlotte (Discussant)

Explorations of Middle Schools AERA Paper Session: Roundtable 45

Thursday, 4/15/2004, 8:05 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.
Hyatt - Elizabeth Ballroom E, Second Level

(1) Leo Mickey Fenzel (Loyola College in Maryland)

Predictors of Intrinsic Motivation among Urban Middle School Students: The Mediating Role of Self-Worth Perceptions

Abstract: The present study examines three predictors of intrinsic motivation for school work and the mediating role that self-worth perceptions play in the process. Predictors include students' perceptions of school-related strain, parental support, and their academic competence. Participants include 62

young adolescents (69% African American) attending urban parochial middle schools. Results provide support for the mediating role of self-worth in predicting students' levels of intrinsic motivation, a finding that has particularly important implications for establishing effective learning environments for young urban adolescents of color. Results suggest that educators and parents form partnerships that help young adolescents succeed in school and help them navigate the host of stressors in the urban environment that mitigate against school success.

(2) Constance Bauer (Rowan University)

Promoting Culturally Responsive Teaching as Enacting an Ethic of Care in Middle Level Education

Abstract: This study examines how school-wide change activities affect teachers' practices when teaching culturally diverse suburban middle school students. Research focuses on how implementation of a teacher study group affects understandings regarding teaching African American females. Data include observations of white male teachers' classes, interviews with teachers and students, field notes from study group meetings and teacher surveys. Data suggest that teachers whose attitudes and practices reflect and incorporate students' cultural backgrounds and interests are most effective with the African American girls. Findings indicate that teachers who learn about students' needs and interests demonstrate patience, provide opportunities for group work, and make learning relevant. The study has important implications for educational leaders striving to build a caring, culturally responsive school climate.

(3) Patrick Akos (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Timothy R. Konold (University of Virginia), Spencer Niles (Penn State University)

Career Readiness Typology and Typal Membership in Middle School

Abstract: Choices made in middle school begin to shape a career identity and represent pathways to potential careers. Career indecision may be developmentally appropriate in middle school and school counselors hold primary responsibility to facilitate career development and help students make related choices. This study examined the career readiness of 629 8th grade students using the Career Factors Inventory. Data revealed elevated needs for information, specifically self-knowledge, as compared to normative samples in high school and college. Additionally, a career readiness typology demonstrates the heterogeneity of career development needs of 8th grade students and reveals little variance on sociodemographic factors. Implications for school counselors and school personnel are also presented.

(4) Robert M. Capraro (Texas A&M University), Victor L. Willson (Texas A&M University), Mary Margaret Capraro (Texas A&M University), Linda D. Wilson (American Association for the Advancement of Science)

Effects of Curriculum Variation on Structure in Middle School Mathematics

Abstract: This paper explores changes in students' representations of number and algebra from pre test to posttest and examines differential changes due to instructional variation. Number (use, interpret and compare equivalent forms of fractions, decimals and percents) and algebra (equations summarizing time related change) were assessed for grades 6 through 8. The results reported here are from the first two years of a five-year longitudinal study being conducted in two states, involving 62 teachers, 8 school districts, 19 schools, and 4 textbook series. The findings illustrate that the two forms of each test are psychometrically equivalent. The number test more accurately replicates the co-variance matrix and provides one plausible fit for the construct. The algebra test is a marginal fit to the

construct and provides insights when comparing the pre and posttest fit to the construct. While the posttest analysis of algebra indicates a plausible fit to the construct further investigation will provide added information about the interaction of the construct as measured by the test and its effects on the student performance on general algebra tasks and high stakes tests.

(5) William R. Kist (Kent State University)

Multiliteracies in Action: Case Studies of Multiliteracies Classrooms

Abstract: This session will describe the efforts of an ongoing research study that is finding and describing "multiliteracies" classrooms across the U.S. and Canada. Student and teacher perceptions (as well as researcher perceptions) will be utilized to describe what an up-and-running "new literacy" classroom looks like overall, on a daily basis, and from a "local literacy" perspective. Six case studies have been completed. Thick descriptions of these "new literacy" classrooms have been developed and will be developed, including sample assignments and assessments used (with sample assignment sheets and rubrics.) Analysis of the data has also provided trends of "multiliteracies" teaching as well as significant local differences, which will be shared.

(6) Doris Williams-Smith (University of Houston)

Learning from School Districts About Factors Related to Urban Middle School Teacher Effectiveness and Retention

Abstract: Research Question: Which factors lead to effective teaching in urban middle schools? Purpose: 1.To identify characteristics of effective urban middle school teachers. 2.To identify crucial elements of teacher preparation programs for preparing teachers to be effective in urban middle school settings. 3.To identify most effective recruitment strategies for

urban middle schools. 4.To identify induction strategies that have proven to be most effective. 5.To identify factors that have had the most impact on retention of effective urban middle school teachers. Data Collection and analysis: was conducted in three phases - 1.focus groups of middle school principals and teachers, 2.development of survey instrument, and 3.factor analysis of survey results from 400 respondents from 49 middle schools in two urban districts.

(7) Michael L. Dalton (Oregon State University), P. Maureen Musser (Willamette University), Micki M. Caskey (Portland State University), William Greene (Southern Oregon State University), Marilyn Olson (University of Oregon), Linda L. Samek (Western Baptist College)

Middle Schools: A Reform Movement at a Defining Moment

Abstract: Currently there is confusion and controversy regarding the No Child Left Behind Act and what middle level teachers are authorized to teach. The purpose of this study was to investigate five questions:

1. Do current national policies related to content preparation align with middle level principals' recommendations for highly qualified teachers?
2. How are the national and state policies impacting the pool of potential middle school teachers?
3. Are the national (i.e., NCLB) and state licensure policies understood and applied by middle level principals?
4. Are the social-emotional needs of middle school students balanced with the growing academic/intellectual expectations for highly qualified middle level teachers?
5. Is the current climate of high stakes accountability limiting the development of interdisciplinary curriculum?

Policy Issues in Middle Level Education

SIG - Middle Level Education Research Symposium

Wednesday, 4/14/2004, 10:35 a.m. - 12:05 p.m.
Marriott - Torrance, South Tower, Fourth Level

This symposium focused on the forthcoming volume of the Handbook, *Reforming Middle Level Education: Considerations for Policymakers*. Some of the chapter authors presented their contributions to this edited book.

Vincent A. Anfara - University of Tennessee at Knoxville (Discussant)

Sue C. Thompson - University of Missouri at Kansas City (Discussant)

Dan French - Boston Center for Collaborative Education (Discussant)

Nancy M. Doda - National-Louis University (Discussant)

Ronald D. Williamson - Eastern Michigan University (Discussant)

Nancy L. Ames - Educational Development Center (Discussant)

David Payton - New York State Department of Education (Discussant)

Making Middle Grades Work SIG - Middle Level Education Research: Paper Session

Tuesday, 4/13/2004, 10:35 a.m. - 12:05 p.m.
Marriott - Mission Hills, South Tower, Third Level

(1) Ceil Daniels (Success for all Foundation), Anne M. Chamberlain (Success for All Foundation), Nancy Madden (Success for All Foundation), Robert Slavin (Johns Hopkins University)

Comprehensive Middle School Reform: Early Findings from the Success for All Middle School Evaluation

Abstract: This paper will present research results comparing reading outcomes of students in a comprehensive middle school reform, the Success for All Middle School, with students in matched control conditions. Data examining academic impact, as well as the implementation process of this new model, will be reported. Preliminary achievement data from state accountability measures show school-level reading gains made by Success for All Middle Schools to exceed gains made by control schools in six of seven pairs. These differences approach statistical significance ($p < .06$). Observation and interview data reveal unique challenges to implementing whole-school reform at the middle school level, as well as viable strategies for meeting those challenges, all aimed towards increasing student achievement. The Success for All Middle School design is one of few comprehensive, replicable models for middle schools serving many at-risk young adolescents. Consistent data indicating whether and how this model can be successfully replicated across a wide variety of circumstances will provide an important tool for educators concerned with the success of these children.

(2) Allen Ruby (Johns Hopkins University), Douglas J. MacIver (Johns Hopkins University), Vaughan Byrnes (Johns Hopkins University)

Reading Proficiency in High Poverty Middle Schools

Abstract: High-poverty, high-minority middle schools are not overcoming the reading deficits of their students placing them at increased risk of dropping out. We examine the impact of an adolescent literacy program, Student Team Literature, on 2,794 students at 7 high-poverty middle schools in Philadelphia that were involved in the whole school reform Talent Development Middle School Model. Their change in reading proficiency level from 5th grade to 8th grade is compared against 9773 students at 23 similar schools in the District that did not use STL. Students using STL

were 42% more likely to move up from the lowest reading proficiency level and 25% less likely to move down to it.

Sandra L. Stacki - Hofstra University (Chair)

Richard P. Lipka - Pittsburg State University (Discussant)

Middle Level Education Research SIG Business Meeting SIG - Middle Level Education Research Interactive Symposium

Monday, 4/12/2004, 6:15 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.
Hyatt - Edward D, Second Level

Participants:

Vincent A. Anfara, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, President

Kimberly J. Hartman, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Program Chair and President-Elect

Kathleen Roney, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Vice President and Newsletter Editor

Nancy B. Mizelle, Georgia College and State University, Treasurer

Joan S. Lindgren, Florida Atlantic University, Secretary

National Database Team Presentation

David L. Hough, Southwest Missouri State University (Discussant)

Vincent Anfara, University of Tennessee at Knoxville (Discussant)

P. Gayle Andrews, University of Georgia (Discussant)

Steven B. Mertens, CPRD, University of Illinois (Discussant)

The National Database Planning Team presented on the status of the grant that is being written to fund a major national study of middle schools. David Hough, Steven Mertens, P. Gayle Andrews, and Vincent A. Anfara led the discussion, provided a project update, and entertained questions and comments for MLER SIG members.

POLICY BRIEFS

Interested in authoring a Policy Brief?

Contact Kim Hartman
Khartman@email.uncc.edu

COMING SOON!!!!

Volume 4 of the SIG's Book series

Reforming Middle Level Education: Considerations for Policymakers

The 4th volume of *The Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education* will be available soon.

Volume 4, ***Reforming Middle Level Education: Considerations for Policymakers***, was edited by Sue C. Thompson, The University of Missouri, Kansas City.

Chapter authors include: Sue Swaim, John H. Lounsbury, Vincent A. Anfara, Jr., Sue C. Thompson, Ronald D. Williamson, J. Howard Johnston, James A. Beane, Nancy M. Doda, Dan French, C. Kenneth McEwin, Thomas S. Dickinson, Tracy W. Smith, Nancy Ames, David A. Payton, Jeanette Stern, Sandra L. Stacki, Stephanie Hirsh, and Deborah Kasak.

Copies may be ordered from Information Age Publishing (203-661-7602) or from the National Middle School Association's bookstore (<http://www.nmsa.org>).

The Encyclopedia of Middle Level Education

Edited by Vincent A. Anfara, Jr, P. Gayle Andrews, & Steven Mertens

Many MLER SIG members have signed-up to author long and short entries for the forthcoming encyclopedia. Manuscripts for *The Encyclopedia of Middle Level Education* are due by July 1, 2004.

Information about the encyclopedia is available on the MLER SIG website. If you have any additional questions, please contact one of the editors.

MLER MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Kathy Roney, President-Elect and Program Chair, is currently preparing a survey that will be administered to the

MLER membership. The Officers and Association Council are interested in knowing more about your membership needs and the degree to which the SIG is addressing those needs.

This initiative is part of the strategic plan that was developed in 2003. When you receive this survey please take the time to respond.

Articles, News, Book Reviews, Op Ed Pieces, Helpful Information Needed

The editors of the newsletter are searching for articles, news, book reviews, and other information that would be of interest to MLER SIG members.

Please send any items you would like to have considered for publication to Vince Anfara at vanfara@utk.edu

The SIG Newsletter is published three times annually in March, June, and October.

Visit our website
<http://www.middlelevel.pdx.edu>

