



MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION RESEARCH
SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

The Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research

October 2006

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Inside this Issue

Message from the President	p. 1
MLER SIG Officers	p. 2
Report from the AERA Program Chair	p. 3
Request for Book Reviews	p. 3
NMSA Essentials 2007	p. 3
NMSA Research Poster Session	p. 4
NAPOMLE Activities	p. 5
Middle Grades Research Journal	p. 6
Call for Submissions	p. 7
Research in Middle Level Education Online	p. 7
2007 Graduate Student Award	p. 8
Send In Your News	p. 8
Presentation Details for NMSA 2006	p. 8

Message from the President

October 2006

*Kathleen Roney
University of North
Carolina Wilmington*



Greetings, colleagues and friends:

I look forward to meeting up with you in Nashville at NMSA's 33rd Annual Conference and Exhibit. Many of our MLER SIG members are presenting their research, and I encourage you to support them by attending their sessions. Contained in this newsletter is a brief listing of some of these presentations.

Also, as in the past, NMSA's Research Committee is sponsoring a number of sessions which should be of interest to many of us.

Our business meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 3, 5:30 - 6:30 PM in the Presidential Ballroom B (following the chat session). We will meet for an hour—that should give us enough time to get through our agenda. Your officers and counselors have been hard at work moving things along.

As you noticed, this edition of the Chronicle comes to you from the editors' desks of Sue Thompson and Jennifer Friend, members of the MLER SIG and colleagues at University of Missouri-Kansas City. We welcome and thank Jennifer for offering to serve as co-editor of our newsletter. We send a heartfelt "thank you" to Maureen Musser for the three years she kept us in touch with the

happenings of the SIG through our newsletter. Mo's service as newsletter editor was a gift she gave to us—timely calls for submissions, kind reminders, flawless editions, etc.—and helped strengthen the bonds within the SIG. “Best wishes to you for your new responsibilities at Willamette University, Mo.”

Allow me to encourage you to visit the MLER SIG website. There you will access up-to-date information on our SIG's happenings. For example, you will see a “Call for Papers.” Specifically, the Research Advisory Board of the National Middle School Association is seeking submissions for the peer-reviewed online *Research Summaries in Support of This We Believe*. As noted there, NMSA research summaries are abbreviated reviews of the literature in support of tenets of *This We Believe* (2003) and are not to be viewed as exhaustive reviews of the research literature. Research summaries are designed to inform middle school practice, research, and policy as well as to provide basic information. Likewise, as editor, Micki Caskey has invited us to submit our manuscripts for publication in *RMLE Online*.

Finally, allow me to remind you to think about nominations for the Middle Level Education Research Graduate Student Award. This award carries with it a cash award of \$250.00 if the recipient travels to AERA, one-year paid membership in the SIG, and a plaque. The application for this award (due January 15) is available on the MLER website, <http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/index.html>.

It is great to work with you, and I look forward to a fun visit in Opryland.

Safe travels,
Kathy

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**See you soon...
NMSA**

**November 2-4, 2006
Nashville, TN**



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Elizabeth Pate (2005-2007)
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Richard Lipka (2006-2008)
Larry Daniel (2006-2008)
Penny Bishop (2006-2008)

Report from the AERA Program Chair

By Micki M. Caskey
Portland State University

MLER SIG Proposals for AERA's 2007 Annual Meeting in Chicago



The MLER SIG received 53 proposals for the 2007 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). Since AERA initiated a policy that considers proposal submission rate in their formula to calculate a SIG's session allotment, our submission rate was most important. In fact, our SIG fared quite well under the new policy as evidenced by an increase in our session allotment to 11 sessions. Thank you to those researchers who submitted proposals about their studies for our MLER SIG sessions.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to the 46 SIG members who volunteered their time and expertise to review the research proposals. Whether they read two or ten proposals, these reviewers did a careful review, which

included reading, rating, and providing feedback for the researchers. Not only is your service to the SIG invaluable, it is also essential for our successful program at AERA.

Do you know that the MLER SIG meets twice a year—at National Middle School Association's (NMSA) annual conference in November and at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) in April? If you are attending NMSA's conference in Nashville, please be sure to join us for the MLER SIG business meeting on Friday November 3, 2006, 5:30 - 6:30 PM in the Presidential Ballroom B One of the highlights of this meeting is the announcement of the accepted proposals for the 2007 AERA annual meeting.

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We're looking for Book Reviews

Read any good books on middle-level research lately? Send your reviews to Jennifer Friend for newsletter consideration:
friendji@umkc.edu

NMSA Essentials 2007



The Middle Level Essentials Conference is a two-day event scheduled for February 5 & 6, 2007 in St. Louis, Missouri. This event focuses on three topics:

- Professional Learning Communities
- Literacy across the Content Areas
- Closing the Achievement Gap

For more information, go to...

<http://www.nmsa.org/ProfessionalDevelopment/ConferencesWorkshops/MiddleLevelEssentials/tabid/590/Default.aspx>

The second 2007 event is the Symposium on Middle Level Teacher Preparation. This event, scheduled for February 9 & 10, 2007 in Destin, Florida, is designed for College/University professors who prepare students to become middle level educators. The three topic strands are:

- Standards-based Teacher Preparation Programs
- State Policy, Licensure, and Advocacy
- Research on Middle Level Teacher Preparation

For more information, go to...

<http://www.nmsa.org/ProfessionalDevelopment/ConferencesWorkshops/CallforPresentationsSymposium/tabid/1001/Default.aspx>

Also, please continue to check the NMSA web page for opportunities to present. The 2007 NMSA Annual Conference will be in Houston, Texas. The Call for presentations for this event will be available soon.

Douglas Herlensky
National Middle School Association

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Addressing Middle Grades Research



NMSA RESEARCH POSTER SESSION

Nashville, TN
November 2, 2006

NMSA Research Advisory Board's Poster Session provides an ideal forum for researchers to highlight the results of recent research in

middle grades education. Following introductions and a brief overview of the research topics, researchers will display their work, respond to questions and feedback, and disseminate copies of their research papers. The poster session is an ideal opportunity for practitioners and researchers alike to engage in thoughtful dialogue concerning critical issues, varied research methodologies, and research findings. At the conclusion of the session, the research posters reside in the lobby of the Opryland Convention Center for the duration of the conference.

Session information:
NMSA Research Advisory Board's Poster Session
Thursday, November 2nd
12:15 PM - 1:30 PM
Presidential Ballroom B,
Opryland Convention Center

The following is a list of the nine research posters including researcher(s) and affiliation(s):

Are planning, content, strategies, caring, flexibility, and formative assessment crucial factors in enabling middle school social studies teachers to be effective?

Rick Heckendorn,
Manhattanville College

Holocaust Education in the Heartland: Middle Level Educators and the Teaching of the Holocaust (1939-45)
Brian Kahn, Elmhurst College

"Whoa! How Do I Get a Student to Understand?": Preservice Teachers' Learning during a One-on-One, Content-Focused Early Field Experience
Molly Lawrence, The University of Georgia;
Malcolm Butler, University of South Florida-St. Petersburg; Gayle Andrews, The University of Georgia; J. Steve Oliver, The University of Georgia

Motivationally Supportive Classrooms: A Study of Teacher Beliefs and Student Perceptions
Harriet MacLean, St. Mary's College of California

A Better Beginning: Strategies for Mentoring and Supporting a Middle Grades Student Teacher Intern in Your Classroom
Steven Turner, Kent State University

Learning to be Perceptive: Helping Preservice Middle School Teachers Recognize When Students Do Not Understand
Mark Vagle, The University of Georgia

A New Pedagogy for Middle Level English Classes that Increases Students' Ability to Analyze Complex Texts while Preparing Students for Standardized Tests
Robert Vanderburg,
Claflin University

Middle Level Teacher Certification in South Carolina: A Case Study in Educational Policy Development
David Virtue, University of South Carolina

Classroom Learning Environment and Student Motivational Differences between Exemplary, Recognized, and Acceptable Urban Middle Level Schools
Hersh Waxman, Texas A & M University; Andres García, University of Houston; Lisa Read, University of Houston

NMSA Research Advisory Board Poster Session
Chair:

Dr. Micki M. Caskey
Portland State University
Graduate School of Education
615 SW Harrison
Portland, OR 97201
Phone: 503.725.4749
e-mail: caskeym@pdx.edu



NAPOMLE Activities at NMSA 2006

Greetings from the National Association of Professors of Middle Level Education (NAPOMLE)! It is looking to be an exciting fall and winter. Nashville will be outstanding, we can already tell. On Thursday, November 2, NAPOMLE will have the business meeting from 2:00-3:15 PM followed by the Best Practices Session from 3:30-5:00. What a busy day, but there is much to be learned and many friends old and new to be greeted.

The Best Practices Session will be roundtables where presenters will have approximately 15 minutes to explain and expound upon their Best Practice before a whistle blows (literally!) and participants move on to the next round table and presenters do it all again. It worked really well last year and participants were very excited to have the opportunity to learn so much in such a short period of time. The sessions this year run the

gamut from uses of technology, assessment, after school programs, working with parents, and much, much more. Definitely a **Don't Miss** event!

Betty Dore
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NAPOMLE Poster Session at NMSA's 2007 Higher Education Symposium

Ready for Florida in February? The Symposium on Middle Level Teacher Preparation will be held in Destin, Florida, on February 9-10, 2007. NAPOMLE will again have a poster session of Best Practices. All applications for this poster session should be sent to me, Betty Dore, at edore@radford.edu by **December 1, 2006 as a Word Attachment.** I will respond by December 15 so you will have time for travel reservations. Look

forward to seeing many of you there.

As I take over the Presidency of NAPOMLE, it is my wish to find out from all of you what we can better do to serve you. The networking is fabulous and the Best Practices sessions promote the best of the best. Let me know if you have suggestions for other services we can provide.

Look forward to seeing many of you both in Nashville and in Destin.

Betty Dore
Associate Professor
Radford University
edore@radford.edu

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ANNOUNCEMENTS



MLER's Publication: The Middle Grades Research Journal (MGRJ)

*By David Hough
Missouri State University*

Middle Grades Research Journal (MGRJ) is a refereed, peer reviewed journal published by the Missouri State University Institute for School Improvement. MGRJ promotes the dissemination of original studies providing both empirical and theoretical frameworks that focus on middle grades education issues. MGRJ is committed to publishing studies that meet the criteria for evidence-based research and evaluation. A variety of articles are published semi-annually in spring and fall editions (March and October) of each volume year with additional, special issues appearing periodically. Members of the editorial staff are: David Hough (editor-in-chief), Fred Groves (associate editor), Vicki Schmitt (associate editor) and Miranda Akin (assistant to the editor).

Volume 1, number 2 (fall 2006) is a special issue focusing on a group of papers addressing research methodologies sponsored by the Middle Level Education Research (MLER) Special Interest Group (SIG). Versions of these manuscripts were presented to the 2006 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). Dr. Steven B. Mertens, University of

Illinois, served as guest editor.

The MGRJ's Editorial & Review Board was established in May 2006. Members of the board are: Dave Brown (West Chester University), Robert Capraro (Texas A&M University), Francine Falk-Ross (Northern Illinois University), Patrick Freer (Georgia State University), Jennifer Friend (University of Missouri – Kansas City), Billie Gastic (Temple University), Leigh Hall (University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill), Richard Lipka (Pittsburg State University), Tony Manson (Florida A&M University), Steven Mertens (University of Illinois), Nancy Mizelle (Georgia College & State University), Sandra Stacki (Hofstra University), Allen Thurston (University of Dundee), Hersholt Waxman (Texas A&M University) and Bogum Yoon (Texas Women's University). In October 2006, the first semi-annual MGRJ Editorial and Review Board meeting was held via conference call. Board meetings will generally be held during the NMSA Annual Conference in the fall and the annual meeting of AERA each spring.

Manuscript submissions may be made in "hard" copy or electronically via email. If hard copies of manuscripts

are submitted for review, the lead contributing author must send four “blind” copies along with a letter of transmittal to:
Dr. David Hough, Editor-in-Chief
Middle Grades Research Journal
Institute for School Improvement
Monroe Hall
Missouri State University
901 South National Avenue
Springfield, MO 65897

If electronic copies are submitted for review, they must be sent as a Word document via email to:
DavidHough@missouristate.edu.

For additional information on the MGRJ, contact:
Dr. David Hough
Missouri State University
(417) 836-4720
DavidHough@missouristate.edu

**Visit MLER's
website
www.middlelevel.pdx.edu**

Call for Submissions

Research Summaries in Support of This We Believe (TWB)

The Research Advisory Board of the National Middle School Association is seeking submissions for the peer-reviewed online Research Summaries in Support of *This We Believe*.

NMSA research summaries are abbreviated reviews of the literature in support of tenets of *This We Believe (2003)* and are not to be viewed as exhaustive reviews of the research literature.

Research summaries are designed to inform middle school practice, research, and policy as well as to provide basic information about the education of young adolescents for parents and community members.

Contact Dr. P. Elizabeth Pate, University of Texas at San Antonio,
elizabeth.pate@utsa.edu

Submission guidelines available at:
<http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/NMSA%20Research%20Summaries%20in%20Support%20of%20This%20We%20Believe.pdf>

Research in Middle Level Education Online

The National Middle School Association (NMSA) publishes *Research in Middle Level Education Online (RMLE Online)*, an international peer-reviewed research journal. The journal prints quantitative and qualitative studies, case studies, action research studies, research syntheses, integrative reviews, and interpretations of research literature. NMSA's [Research Advisory Board](#) provides guidance for the publication and the MLER-SIG endorses *RMLE Online*. Current and past issues of *RMLE Online*, a list of the editorial review board, guidelines for contributors and contact information are available on the NMSA Website (www.nmsa.org).

Please submit manuscripts and related documents electronically to:

Dr. Micki M. Caskey,
Editor, *RMLE Online*
caskeym@pdx.edu

If you have questions, please contact Micki Caskey by email (above) or by telephone (503.725.4749).



**2007 MLER
Graduate
Student
Award**

**SEND IN YOUR
NOMINATION
FOR THE MLER
GRADUATE
STUDENT AWARD
TODAY!!!
Applications
due January 15!**

The Middle Level Education Research SIG's Graduate Student Award is intended to promote and recognize outstanding research in middle-level education and is presented annually to a graduate student or recent graduate of a masters, specialist, or doctoral program. Nominate Masters, Specialists and Doctoral students who have recently completed theses and dissertations. Go to the MLER Website for specific information and application/nomination form at www.middlelevel.pdx.edu

Graduate students are encouraged to apply for the MLER Graduate Student Award!

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Send In Your News!

Please send any items you would like to have considered for publication in the Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research to Jennifer Friend at friendji@umkc.edu.

The Chronicle is published three times annually – January, June, & October.

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Presentation Details for NMSA 2006 Nashville, TN



NMSA Research Advisory Board Sessions:

NMSA Research Advisory Board sponsors five research sessions at NMSA's 2006 annual conference. You can attend one of these invaluable research sessions each day of the conference.

Thursday November 2nd
NMSA Research Advisory Board's Poster Session
[12:15 PM - 1:30 PM]

Friday November 3rd
What Research Says About . . . Moving from School to School: Transition, Vulnerability, and the Middle Grades [12:15 PM - 1:30 PM]
Presenters:
Paul George &
Cheryl Kmiec

This session examines the most recent evidence pertaining to crucial transitions for young adolescents as they journey from elementary to middle level schools and from these schools to the high school. It highlights exemplary, practical strategies for assisting learners in making successful school-to-school transitions.

Research and Resources in Support of This We Believe: Focusing on Courageous, Collaborative Leadership [2:00 PM - 3:15 PM]
Presenters:
Gayle Andrews,
Vincent Anfara, Jr.,
Micki Caskey,
Larry Daniel,
Steven Mertens,
Michael Muir, &
Elizabeth Pate

This is the third in a series of annual sessions dedicated to Research and Resources in Support of *This We Believe* (2003). This session is conducted by members of NMSA's Research Advisory Board and focuses on the newest of the 14 characteristics of successful

middle grades schools - courageous, collaborative leadership. Both teacher and administrator leadership will be highlighted as the qualities and characteristics of effective leaders are discussed in the context of middle grades education.

NMSA Research Advisory Board's Chat Session
[3:45 PM - 5:00 PM]
Presenters:
Vincent Anfara Jr,
Penny Bishop,
Micki Caskey,
Kimberly Hartman,
Penny Howell,
Richard Lipka,
Steven Mertens,
Nancy Mizelle,
Michael Muir,
Elizabeth Pate,
Teresa Rishel,
Kathleen Roney,
Sue Thompson

Anyone interested in doing research or exploring research findings can come to this session to informally chat with veteran researchers about a variety of middle grades topics in a round table format. The session is built around the needs of the participants. Join the presenters to explore some of the following topics: Young Adolescent Development, Interdisciplinary Teaming, Leadership/

Principalship Issues, Middle Grades Organization, Teacher Preparation, Curriculum, Self-Concept/Self-Esteem, and Advisement in this Age of High Stakes Testing.

Saturday November 4th
What Research Says About . . . Re-Examining Middle School Effects: Comparing Eighth Grade Outcomes for Students in Middle Schools with K-8 Schools
[9:45 AM - 11:00 AM]
Presenter:
Christopher Weiss

Although numerous reforms seek to overhaul or eliminate middle schools, only a handful of studies have directly compared the effects of different configurations of grades. Our analysis uses district and student data from one of the few districts that contain both middle schools and K-8 schools. In examining several student outcomes among eighth graders, we find few differences by school type. Academic and behavioral outcomes are similar in K-8s and middle schools, with only self-esteem and perceived threat showing differences.

Please note that in addition to these Research Advisory Board sessions, the conference has another ten

research sessions in the Research Strand.

Selected NMSA Sessions Conducted by MLER SIG Members:

The Developmentally Responsive Middle Level Principal

Presenters:
Kathleen Roney,
Vincent A. Anfara, Jr.
Date: Friday, November 3
Time: 12-1:30 p.m.

Middle grades principals serious about reforming their schools need to reconstruct core ideas about their role—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 and requires models of good practice. Participants will discuss a model for understanding middle level leadership, complete an instrument for measuring it, and discuss middle grades leadership.

Action Research: Examining What Works in Your Middle School

Presenter: Micki Caskey
Date: Thursday, Nov. 2
Time: 3:45 PM - 5:00 p.m.

Teachers, administrators, and researchers conduct

action research to study systematically the issues that emerge in schools. Explore how practitioners use action research in middle grades classrooms. Examine how inquiry guides these educators to improve their individual and collaborative practice. Experience how you can initiate your own action research study in your classroom or school. Come and exchange ways to promote and carry out action research investigations in middle grades settings.

***Advisory and Advocacy:
Now More Than Ever***

Presenters: Sue Thompson,
John Niska
Date: Friday, November 3
Time: 12:15-1:30 p.m.

Visit and participate with the developers of the just released NMSA Professional Development Kit: Advisory and Advocacy: Now More Than Ever. This kit provides middle schools a great way to plan, implement, and sustain a well crafted advisory and advocacy program. Participants will be actively engaged in several simulations included in the modules of this valuable resource.

***Analyzing the State
Standards: One Key to
Student Success***

Presenters:
Gayle Andrews,
Jo Anne Ollerenshaw,
Cheryl Park,
Elizabeth Pate,
Katherine Thompson,
Date: Friday, November 3
Time: 10:15 - 11:30 a.m.

Confused about the relationship between state standards and your teaching? Come and learn how to use state standards to your advantage for student success. Discuss the rationale behind and purpose of state standards. Using an analysis strategy protocol, learn how to analyze state standards to identify and define key terminology and frame and prioritize focus questions. Learn how to identify developmentally appropriate teaching and assessment strategies based on an analysis of state standards. Handouts will be provided.

**[Links to other
Sessions at
NMSA 2006:](#)**

Featured Sessions with
John Lounsbury
(William M. Alexander
Memorial Lecture),
Rick DuFour
(Professional Learning
Communities), and
Brenda Dyck

(Technology):
[http://www.nmsa.org/annual/
featured.htm](http://www.nmsa.org/annual/featured.htm)

**Special General
Sessions:**

Live from Nashville: A
Middle Grades Concert
Celebration (Thursday,
Nov. 2 at 6:00 p.m.)

Closing Celebration
featuring Ron Clark
(Saturday, Nov. 4 at 1:00
p.m.)

[http://www.nmsa.org/annual/
general.htm](http://www.nmsa.org/annual/general.htm)

Best Practices Sessions:

[http://www.nmsa.org/annual/
best.htm](http://www.nmsa.org/annual/best.htm)

Concurrent Sessions:

[http://www.nmsa.org/annual/
concurrent.htm](http://www.nmsa.org/annual/concurrent.htm)