

MLER SIG National Middle Grades Research Project (NMGRP)
AERA/ Chicago
April 12, 2007

Synopsis of AERA/Chicago Steering Committee Planning Meeting (3:00-4:30p.m.)

The Steering Committee members of the National Middle Grades Research Project (see <http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/SteeringCommitteeBios.pdf> for list of members) met during AERA to further the work of the project. During that meeting it became more evident that the 10 Steering Committee members had divergent ideas regarding next steps for this project. They grappled with the divergence, which was perceived to be problematic, but realized that multiple projects with different foci could have the potential to be complimentary to each other. Therefore, it was decided that the project could move simultaneously in multiple directions (i.e., at the current time one approach would be more empirical while the other more theoretical).

- (1) A subgroup of the Steering Committee wanted to move cautiously, but with little delay, into the design and implementation of a research project. This sub-group decided that the phenomenon to be studied in this first research endeavor would be “Common Planning Time” (CPT). Please visit the project information link available on the MLER website (<http://www.rmle.pdx.edu>) and review the documents: “Project Overview” and “Common Planning Time: Key Research Findings.” The entire Steering Committee supported this approach to move forward with the project that would:
 - a. collect both qualitative and quantitative data, starting with the qualitative data;
 - b. be national in scope and longitudinal by design;
 - c. involve as many MLER SIG members as researchers as possible; and
 - d. provide the necessary professional development required for the project.
- (2) A second subgroup of the Steering Committee decided to begin with an exploration of the overarching theories that have guided middle grades research over the past 30 years

Synopsis of Interactive Symposium during AERA/Chicago (5:00-6:30p.m.)

Approximately 30 people (both MLER SIG and non-SIG members) were in attendance. The goals of the symposium were to (a) provide a timeline of events leading up to the NMGRP, (b) review professional development strategies used thus far, and (c) engage in strategic planning for next steps.

Steering Committee members introduced the two research components. Discussion followed and participants were invited to (a) submit their contact information and (b) volunteer to join in one or both of the components (empirical study of Common Planning Time, and/or, exploration of theoretical frameworks).

Action Steps:

- (1) Participants will submit items for the interview and observation protocols for the empirical study to Kathy Roney by May 4, 2007
- (2) Steering Committee will ...
 - a. meet in mid-August 2007 to (a) review protocols and finalize all protocols (both interview and observation) and (b) determine interest in pursuing theoretical component described above
 - b. develop the agenda for the MLER meeting dedicated to this research project—to be held during NMSA 2007 in Houston
 - c. discuss what needs to be accomplished during AERA 2008 in New York
 - d. construct the professional development that will be utilized with project researchers