

MLER Middle Level Education Research Special Interest Group

The Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research



Message from the Chair

Points of Interest:

- Message from the Chair
- AERA 2015
- MLER-SIG Business Meeting Minutes

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Greetings. I hope everyone is enjoying a positive and productive start to the new year and surviving the winter weather. While it probably doesn't help those digging out in New England, spring will be here before we know it.

In looking back over the past year, I am excited about what the MLER SIG has accomplished. We added a MLER SIG sponsored research roundtable session to the AMLE Conference with 21 papers shared. We also had over 70 members present for the business meeting at AMLE, and we had about 45 people participate in the dinner/social event after the business meeting. While we always want to consider ways to increase and enhance our membership, I am thrilled with the positive energy being generated in the MLER SIG.

As we progress through 2015 and continue to have a

positive impact on middle level education research, there are several informational items I want to share:

New Website:

The MLER SIG has a new website that is up and running. The new web address is www.mlrsig.net. Nicole Miller is the current Webmaster, and she has done a phenomenal job putting the website together. I am grateful for her hard work and creativity. I also want to thank Micki Caskey for hosting the former site and serving as Webmaster for many years. We have always had an informative website, and I am confident this will continue into the future.

AERA 2015

The 2015 American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting will be held in Chicago, Illinois from April 16-20. The MLER SIG will host six sessions, which include



Chris Cook

Northern Kentucky University

a business meeting, a working roundtable session, a paper session, and three roundtables (see Page 9). The specific time and locations of these sessions should be released in the coming weeks. I hope to see you in Chicago.

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RMLE Online Call for Manuscripts

The editor of *Research in Middle Level Education Online* is seeking manuscripts concerning quantitative and qualitative research studies, case studies, action research studies, as well as research syntheses. *RMLE Online* is an



international, peer-reviewed research journal published by the National Middle School Association.

Guidelines for contributors, a listing of the Editorial Review Board, and past issues

of *RMLE Online* are available at www.amle.org

If you have questions, please contact David Virtue, Editor, at virtue@mailbox.sc.edu

Message from the Chair *(Continued from page 1)*

Revisiting the 21st Century Research Agenda

At the MLER SIG business meeting, held during the AMLE meeting last November, we had a discussion about the need to revise *A 21st Century Research Agenda*, published by NMSA (now AMLE) in 1997. I know several people signed up at the meeting, but if anyone else is interested in participating in the effort to create a revised research agenda for middle level education, please let me know. I know several people were unable to attend the meeting at AMLE and we would greatly benefit from your participation in this project.

Steve Mertens has set up a meeting of MLER SIG researchers for **Wednesday, April 15** in Chicago to begin our discussion of a revised research agenda. This is the day prior to the start of the annual AERA meetings from April 16-20. The meeting would likely start around 12 or 1 pm and go until 5 pm. The meeting space is located at 150 North Michigan Avenue on the northwest corner of the intersection of Randolph Street and Michigan Avenue. If you have any interest in participating, please let me or Steve Mertens know.

I hope everyone has a wonderful year and I look forward to seeing you in Chicago in April. Enjoy the rest of your semester!

Best,

Chris Cook

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Send In Your News!

Please send any items, announcements, or information you would like to have considered for publication in *The Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research* to:

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The Newsletter is published three times annually—Spring, Summer, & Fall.



The purpose of the MLER SIG is to improve, promote, and disseminate educational research reflecting early adolescence and middle level education.

Membership in the MLER-SIG connects AERA members who are committed to research issues related to young adolescents. SIG members exchange information and ideas through Annual Meeting presentations, newsletters, and informal gatherings.

Membership cost is \$10/year. The MLER-SIG (#88) is listed on the third page of the AERA Membership Application Form.

Thinking ahead to the AMLE conference in Columbus

David Strahan, Executive Advisor

While much of our attention is focused on the upcoming AERA meeting in Chicago, it is not too early to begin thinking about the Association for Middle Level Education conference in Columbus Ohio scheduled for October 15-17, 2015. This year we hope to see a more integrated set of meetings orchestrated by the four major groups who serve those of us in higher education: the AMLE Research Advisory Committee, the AMLE Professional Preparation Committee, the National Professors of Middle Level Education, and our Middle Level Research Special Interest Group. Many of us belong to several of these groups and have often expressed a wish that sessions could be scheduled in a more coordinated fashion. This morning, Chris Cook and I participated in a conference call with representatives of the other groups to consider ways to work together, not only on the schedule, but also on the format of meetings and, perhaps, on the creation of working groups that can spend additional time together across the conference. Please stay tuned - and watch for email invitations to participate.

AMLE2015

Middle Grades Review

A provocative journal for debate within the field of middle grades education

- Invites a Critical Perspective
- Broadens the Discourse of Middle Grades Education
- Explores Democratic Education, Innovation, and Social Justice
- Encourages Multimedia Submissions

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

For more information:

middlegradescollaborative.org or editors@middlegradesreview.org

Issue 1(2): Student Voice: Authentic or Contrived?

The middle grades community at large has long advocated listening to young adolescents in order to meet their academic and affective needs. Some advance the practice of student involvement as a means for school improvement (Cook-Sather, 2006). Others propose student voice as a means of altering status differentials between teacher and learner (Rudduck, 2007). Still others view student participation in decision-making as a social justice issue (Fielding & Rudduck, 2002). In each, student voice, broadly defined, brings with it issues of power and politics. In this issue of *Middle Grades Review*, we intentionally draw wide boundaries around the concept of student voice. We invite authors to question when and how student voice is authentic or contrived. We encourage essays proposing theory as well as those that promote and/or problematize the role(s) of student voice in middle grades education; reports of original research on young adolescent voice or involvement; practitioner-written discussions or examples of student voice in teaching and learning; and other manuscripts related to student voice within middle grades education. As always, we are pleased to receive submissions that include an array of media to convey content.

Submission Date: April 15, 2015;
Publication Date: August 15, 2015

Issue 1(3): Social Justice: For Whom?

Deeply influenced by educational progressivism, the middle level concept emerged in the 1960s as an effort to respond to the needs of young adolescents by providing schools appropriate for their particular and unique strengths and needs (McEwin & Smith, 2011). Despite the humanistic aims of this social and educational reform movement, relatively little has been published regarding how social justice issues unfold within middle grades education. For this theme issue, we invite manuscripts that examine aspects of social justice in relation to the field. We encourage essays that tackle the hard questions of equity in middle level schools, classrooms or teacher education; discussions of research that relate to diversity, privilege, opportunity, and/or access in middle grades education; practitioner opinions and/or accounts of grappling with social justice issues in schools; and other manuscripts related to social justice and the middle level concept.

Submission Date: August 15, 2015;
Publication Date: December 15, 2015



New Middle Grades Longitudinal Study Launched by NCES in 2017

The US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is preparing to launch the new Middle Grades Longitudinal Study starting in 2017. The MGLS:2017 will be the first study to follow a nationally-representative sample of students as they enter and move through the middle grades. The data collected through repeated measures of key constructs will provide a rich descriptive picture of the experiences and lives of all students during these critical years and will allow researchers to examine associations between contextual factors and student outcomes. Because mathematics and literacy skills are important for preparing students for high school and are associated with later education and career opportunities, the study is placing a focus on student growth in these areas and on their instruction. Major areas of interest for the study include: growth in cognitive, social, and physical development during early adolescence; academic success in mathematics and reading, and positive youth development.

Field testing will occur during 2016 and the full study will begin in 2017 with the selection of a nationally representative sample enrolled in grade 6. Other study design components include the inclusion of public and private schools, schools with varying grade configurations, and oversampling of students with disabilities. Students will be followed from 6th (2016-17) to 8th grade (2018-19).

Products from the study will include federal reports (descriptive and analytic) and data files which will be made accessible to educational researchers. These data sets can be used for statistical analyses, development of policy briefs, academic journal articles, dissertations, and master's theses. Data from the 6th grade data collection should be available for public use in late 2018.

NCES has developed and implemented numerous longitudinal studies of K-12 education over the past several decades. Other NCES studies include the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, High School Longitudinal Study (2009), Education Longitudinal Study (2002), and National Education Longitudinal Study (1988).

Visit the [MGLS:2017 website](#) for additional information.

Steve Mertens, Immediate Past Chair, MLER SIG





Connecting Scholars

Graduate Student Mentorship Initiative (GSMI)

In an effort to foster positive mentorship relationships that occur informally and conveniently, the MLER SIG is pleased to offer a hybrid mentorship program. The intent of this program is to connect graduate students in middle level education research with experienced researchers in their shared field without the demand of having to be in the same physical location (e.g., university, conference). Once assigned, mentor and mentee will be encouraged to connect via technology (e.g., skype, email, gchat) and in person at middle level events/conferences, when possible.

If you are interested in participating in the GSMI, either as a mentor or as a graduate student, please take a moment to complete the appropriate (VERY BRIEF!) survey at the website below.

<http://learnbydesign.net/MLER/> (*MLER must be capitalized*)

Click on MLER SIG Mentor Survey if you're a Mentor or

MLER SIG Mentee Survey if you're a Graduate Student

If you have questions about the initiative, please contact Cheryl Ellerbrock or Jennifer Denmon.

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Conference Information

(Ctrl+Click Links below for more information)

2015 AERA Conference Theme

Toward Justice: Culture, Language, and Heritage in Education Research and Praxis"

The 2015 AERA Annual Meeting theme is a call to examine the meaning of culture, language, and heritage in education research and praxis with the aim of advancing justice. We have the opportunity and the moral obligation to apply principles and evidence from social science research and theorizing to the problems of injustice. How do various communities conceptualize justice, including the many scholarly communities within our association?

Five Headquarter Hotels: Fairmont Chicago, Hyatt Regency Chicago, Marriott Magnificent Mile Chicago, Sheraton Chicago, and Swissotel Chicago.

Travel and Hotels: [Book Your Hotel Online](#)
Registration Rates: [AERA 2015 Registration](#)

The AERA Annual Meeting is the largest gathering of scholars in the field of education research. It is a showcase for ground-breaking, innovative studies in a diverse array of areas -- from early education through higher education, from digital learning to second language literacy. It is where to encounter ideas and data that will shape tomorrow's education practices and policies, and where to connect with leading thinkers from the U.S. and around the world.

The 2015 Annual Meeting, with an expected attendance of more than 14,000, will feature over 2,600 sessions.



MLER SIG Program for AERA 2015

The 2015 AERA Annual Meeting is upon us, and, once again, the MLER SIG will offer a strong program. This year, the SIG received 32 paper submissions. Though this is slightly fewer submissions than last year, the SIG received a number of quality proposals on a wide range of topics. Thank you for submitting your work to the SIG for review. As you may know, the SIG is allotted “slots” in the AERA program based on the membership of the SIG and the number of paper submissions received. Thank you for submitting your work to the SIG, and please make plans to support our colleagues as they present their papers at the Annual Meeting.

Our AERA program would not be possible without volunteer reviewers. Thank you to the following colleagues who served as reviewers for the 2015 program: Pam Angelle, Penny Bishop, Kathleen Brinegar, Micki Caskey, Jennifer Denmon (graduate student), Francine Falk-Ross, Nancy Flowers, Nicole Hesson (graduate student), Hilary Hughes, Virginia Jagla, Nicole Miller, Sarah Pennington (graduate student), Cynthia Reyes, Mary Roe, Heather Rogers Haverback, Kathleen Roney, Mary Beth Schaefer, Meredith Swallow (graduate student).

AERA 2015 Program Overview

Submissions for AERA 2015

- 32 paper submissions
- 1 Working Group Roundtable submission
- 15 proposals accepted
- 45%** acceptance rate

MLER SIG Program

- 1 Working Group Roundtable Session
- 1 Paper Session
- 3 Roundtable Sessions

MLER SIG Researchers Meeting

All MLER SIG members are encouraged to attend a meeting of MLER SIG researchers on Wednesday, April 15 to discuss revisions to the research agenda. Please contact Chris Cook or Steve Mertens if you are interested in attending or have any questions. We look forward to seeing you there!

MLER SIG SESSIONS

Working Group Roundtable Session

Teacher-Pupil Planning in Middle Grades Schools: Research and Evaluation for Methodologies for Examining the Intentions of This Process

Session Organizer: Roney

Presenters: Brinthaup, Mertens, Power, Lipka, & Roney

Paper Session

Middle Level Culture and Community

Reasons for Listening to Music: Self-Report of 13-15 Year Olds Ruchlewicz

Disconnection? Investigating Multimodal Instruction within Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) in Diverse Middle School Language Arts Classroom Strickland, & Mackay

Experiences of Middle Level Students, Teachers, and Parents in the National Do the Write Thing Violence Prevention Program Peterson, Williams, Myer, & Tinajero

Predicting School Enjoyment and Aspirations for Middle School Students: What Counts? Smith, Georgieva, Curtis, & Schimmel

Can Middle School Transition Help to Explain Changes in Racial Achievement Gaps? Vanlaar, Reardon, Kalogrides, & Fraine

Group Roundtable Sessions

Roundtable Session 1

Issues in Middle Level Instruction and

Planning

- **A Longitudinal Study of the Effects of Math Coaching in High-Poverty Schools in Chicago** Schiller, Stack, & Doyle
- **A National Study of Common Planning Time Activities: Examination of Differences by State** Lomascolo & Angelle
- **Filling in the Gaps: Practicing Middle School Teachers' Multiliteracies Knowledge** Boche

Roundtable Session 2

Middle School Reform and Academic Achievement

- **Describing Characteristics of Pennsylvania's "Schools to Watch": Focusing on Social Equality and Developmental Responsiveness** Parke & Generett
- **Measuring the Impact of a Nationally Funded i3 Project on Middle-Grades Student Academic Performance** Flowers, Begum, Carpenter & Mulhall
- **The Relationship Between Middle Schools with Schools to Watch Designation and Academic Achievement** Falbe

Roundtable Session 3

Qualitative Inquiry in Middle Level Education Research

- **Adopting an International Baccalaureate Program in an Urban Public Middle School: A Good Fit?** Storz, & Hofman
- **Quality of Qualitative Studies in the Field of Middle Grades Education** Yoon
- **"How Am I Going to Do This There?": Collaborative Inquiry as a Pedagogy for Student Teaching** DeMink-Carthew



Business Meeting
November 6, 2014, 5:30 – 7:00 pm
AMLE Annual Meetings
(Nashville, TN)

MINUTES

Welcome & Introductions

Research Advisory Board Committee Report

- (a) Research Summaries are Posted on AMLE site
- (b) Need authors to complete research summaries

Financial Report (Lisa Harrison)

- (a) Money comes from MLER membership-sign up
- (b) New members or donations

Program Chair Report (Shawn Faulkner)

- (a) Two Council seats to begin term at conclusion of AERA 2015
 - i. Elections 2015
- (b) Graduate student mentoring initiative: (Jennifer Denmon and Cheryl Ellerbock)
 - i. Reformatting the questionnaire and link
- (c) Decrease in paper submission: less than less year 43% acceptance rate
- (d) AERA 2015
 - i. One working group roundtable session
 - ii. One paper session
 - iii. Three roundtable sessions
 - iv. One business meeting
 - v. Is there a new AERA formula for the number of sessions allotted for SIGS? For MLER?
 - Need to increase the number of submissions
 - Perhaps it is due to the lack of travel funds

Leadership Development Report (Nicole Thompson)

- (a) Two Council seats to begin term at conclusion of AERA 2015

- i. Please nominate/self-nominate
- ii. AERA will send ballot in February

- (b) Graduate student mentoring initiative: Jennifer
 - i. Reformatting the questionnaire and link
 - ii. Requested people sign up once its fixed

Membership and Outreach Report (Nicole Miller & Nicole Thompson)

- (a) 171 members- graduate students are contacting the 103 that have lapsed
- (b) Moving the website to its own domain- Word Press site
- (c) Facebook page- We do not have a Twitter handle soon

7) Awards and Recognition Report: Deadline January 1

- (a) Graduate Student Award
- (b) Vincent A. Anfara, Jr. Outstanding MLER Award
- (c) Lipka Lifetime Achievement Award
- (d) AERA has a job board posting- send it to them and they will post it on the site

8) Publications

- (a) The Chronicle
- (b) SIG Handbook Series
 - i. Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education
 - ii. Handbook of Resources
- (c) Middle Grades Research Journal
 - i. Reviewers and submissions for 2015

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Business Meeting
November 6, 2014, 5:30 – 7:00 pm
AMLE Annual Meetings
(Nashville, TN)

(continued from page 10)

- ii. Vol. 10, 2015- Call for proposals
- (d) 2nd Edition Encyclopedia of Middle Grades Education
 - i. Call for proposals/ submissions- April 1 deadline

8) Research Agenda

- (a) Form Ad Hoc Committee- to revise NMSA version of 21st Century Research Agenda... published in 1997

9) Announcements from Membership

- (a) Assistant professor-Tenure-track, at Vermont, Burlington
- (b) Vermont- Technology, non-tenure track
- (c) Middle Grades Review- new online journal
 - i. Provocative ways we research
 - ii. 4 o'clock The Falls: Information
- (d) University GA- middle grades education position
 - i. Department head- educational theory and practice
- (e) Appalachian State University- Assistant or associate middle grades position
- (f) Dean position Mercer University

Featured Publications from Membership

Schlein, C., & Chan, E. (2012). Considering culture in the interpretation of field texts. In *Narrative Inquirers in the Midst of Meaning-Making: Interpretive Acts of Teacher Educators* (pp. 109-129). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Schlein, C., & Chan, E. (2013). Examining students' experiences as a foundation for multicultural curriculum development. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*.

Chan, E. & Ross, V. (2014). Narrative understandings of a school equity policy: Intersecting student, teacher, parent, and administrator perspectives. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*.

Chan, E., Heaton, R. M., Swidler, S. A., & Wunder, S. (2014). Examining CPED cohort dissertations: A window into the learning of Ed.D. students. *Planning and Changing CPED Special Issue*.

Chan, E., & Schlein, C. (in press). Narrative and critical explorations of voice in intercultural experiences. In B. Garii, & C. Schlein (Eds.), *Critical and narrative intercultural teaching and learning reader*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Press.

Chan, E., & Schlein, C. (in press). Standardized testing, literacy, and English language learners: Lived multicultural stories among educational stakeholders. In K. F. Malu and M. B. Schaefer, *Research on teaching and learning with the literacies of young adolescents: Volume 10 in the Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Press.



Publishing Opportunities for Middle Grades Research

The following outlets specialize in publishing middle grades research and are sponsored by AERA's Middle Level Education Research SIG, Association for Middle Level Education, and the like. While not comprehensive, the list may be useful to middle grades researchers, particularly to those new to the field.

◆ *Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research*

The Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research is the online publication of AERA's Middle Level Education Research SIG. The Chronicle is published three times a year in January, June, and October and includes book reviews, descriptions of research or publications, and other information of interest to MLER SIG members. This electronic publication also features a peer-reviewed section and seeks brief articles of scholarly work including original research and reviews of literature. For additional information, please contact Dr. Pam Angelle, Editor, Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research, at pangelle@utk.edu

◆ *The Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education*

Since 2000 the MLER SIG has sponsored a research handbook that is co-published by Information Age Publishing and the National Middle School Association. As of 2012, nine volumes have been published with each volume focusing on a specific topic like curriculum, instruction, and assessment; the professional preparation of middle grades teachers and administrators; middle school reform; action research; and an international look at education young adolescents. Vincent A. Anfara, Jr. serves as the Series Editor for this publication and calls for manuscripts can be found at the MLER website, <http://www.middlelevel.pdx.edu>

◆ *Research in Middle Level Education Online*

Research in Middle Level Education Online (RMLE Online) is an international peer-reviewed research journal published by the National Middle School Association. The Journal publishes quantitative and qualitative studies, case studies, action research studies, research syntheses, integrative reviews, and interpretations of research literature. NMSA's Research Advisory Board provides editorial guidance and MLER SIG endorses the publication. Dr. Karen Swanson, Editor, can be reached at SWANSON_KW@mercer.edu
See guidelines for contributors: <http://www.amle.org/Publications/RMLEOnline/tabid/426/Default.aspx>

◆ *Middle Grades Research Journal*

Middle Grades Research Journal (MGRJ) is a refereed, peer-reviewed journal published by the Missouri State University Institute for School Improvement. The journal publishes original studies providing both empirical and theoretical frameworks that focus on middle grades education. A variety of articles are published quarterly in March, June, September, and December of each volume year. For more information about the Journal and its submission guidelines, please visit <http://www.infoagepub.com/middle-grades-research-journal.html>
Inquiries may be directed to Dr. Frances R. Spielhagen, Editor, at mgrj@infoagepub.com.

◆ *Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) Research Summaries*

AMLE Research Summaries are abbreviated reviews of the literature in support of tenets of *This We Believe* (2010). These 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. See the submission guidelines: <http://www.amle.org/Research/ResearchSummaries/tabid/115/Default.aspx>