

Editor's Notes

Due to the increased number of very high quality manuscripts being submitted for consideration, the *Middle Grades Research Journal* is moving in the direction of a quarterly publication. In addition to our spring and fall issues, Volume 3, (2) is the first summer issue for *MGRJ*, and we anticipate publishing a winter issue before year's end. This issue also welcomes a number of new Review Board members who responded to a call during the American Educational Research Association's annual meeting in New York, April 2008.

Our first summer issue features four manuscripts with diverse topics and methods that embody robust approaches to inquiry. The *MGRJ* Advisory Board is pleased to present these studies, each representing very fine research on middle grades issues.

Using background questions from the National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS), Hersh C. Waxman, Texas A&M University and Andres García and Lisa L. Read, University of Houston, used a random sample of 400+ sixth- and seventh-grade students from each of three different school types ("exemplary," "recognized," and "acceptable") in a large urban school district to study school climate and relationships to measures of eight different constructs derived from the scales creating each. Readers will note that while some relationships may be expected, others are a bit surprising. Fraser's (1998) My Class Inventory was adapted and used to collect data from student participants.

Drs. Stuart P. Payne, Robert Rueda, and Myron H. Dembo from the University of Southern California study comparisons between motivational profiles of High-Ability-Low-Performing (HALP) middle school students and their High-Ability-High-Performing (HAHP) counterparts. The motivational constructs and achievement indicators used are *goal orientation*, *expectancy-value beliefs*, and *academic behavior characteristics*. This thought-provoking research produced a number of important findings. Twenty-one percent of the variance in academic grade point average between HALP and HAHP students can be accounted for by "expectancy-for-success beliefs."

Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) effects on the achievement of Kentucky middle school students serve as the subject of inquiry for Drs. Melissa Evans-Andris and Wayne M. Usui from the University of Louisville. Seventy-four schools designated as "low performing" by the Kentucky Department of Education in 1998-1999 were studied. Of these, 18 had subsequently implemented a CSR model over the next four years, and the researchers applied a least squares regression method to analyze 2002 – 2003 academic year data. Again, the findings are surprising, "counter-intuitive" in research jargon, and I urge the readers to give this study close attention, rather than having me "give-up" the results, here.

The fourth study in this issue was conducted by Dr. Cheryl B. Warner, Clemson University, and Dr. Rosemary E. Phelps, from The University of Georgia. While logistic regression analysis of data from 198 sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students failed to confirm their hypothesis that “academic motivation [would] be a negative factor for educational aspirations when applied to an urban sample of African American middle school students,” they did find a “disproportionate ratio between African American females and males in desiring postsecondary education.” This study is a MUST read!

MGRJ is the only “hard” copy research journal currently in existence that publishes studies addressing middle grades issues and, as always, I take this opportunity to thank our MGRJ Editorial & Review Board for their expertise in helping us maintain the highest quality publication possible. All manuscripts submitted for consideration of publication in *MGRJ* were examined and rated by three different members of our Review Board, and we are privileged to present the crème de la crème in this issue. Thanks to all those who support middle grades research.

Dr. David Hough, Editor-In-Chief
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