
Betwixt & Between

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Education for Young Adolescents
A Peer Reviewed Journal of Middle Level Research

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Beyond the Elevator Speech

The Pennsylvania Professors of Middle Level Education and Pennsylvania Association for Middle Level Education have partnered to support a peer reviewed journal focused on research in the field of middle level education. *Betwixt and Between* is the result of this joint venture. We are pleased to welcome you to our learning community and encourage you to submit an article in the future. In the meantime, we hope to elevate your understanding of middle level students, schools, and the issues they face in these challenging times.

—The *Betwixt and Between* Editorial Board.

This Issue

From The Editor's Desk

Teaching Teaming: A Review of the Evidence for the Purposeful Integration of Teaming Partnerships in Middle Level Teacher Education Programs

Archery and Autism in the Middle School

Betwixt & Between

Education for Young Adolescents

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About Our Cover Image

Joe Girard, a successful author, motivational speaker, and salesman, once said, “The elevator to success is out of order. You'll have to use the stairs... one step at a time.”

We hope that Mr. Girard is not correct. Just as elevator call buttons allow us to select a variety of locations and move between them with ease, we hope that *Betwixt and Between* will cover a variety of middle level issues and elevate our collective ability to improve middle level education for all learners. It is our hope that becoming informed about current issues, engaging in research, and learning from others will help our middle level community move from novice to expert across many areas more quickly than going it alone. So, go ahead, take the elevator with us.

Thank you for joining us in our quest to lift up all middle level learners. We hope our journal will provide something new to enhance the professional development of each of our readers.



From the Editor's Desk

Deana Mack

Letter from the editor:

Welcome to the fourth issue of *Betwixt and Between: Education for Young Adolescents*, The Journal of the Pennsylvania Professors of Middle Level Education. I am once again so very happy to work with such talented and devoted individuals.

As Pennsylvania continues its long history of developing teachers, we continue to see changes in middle level certification. For those of us who will always know what it takes to be a middle level educator and to prepare a quality middle level educator, this journal is a great resource. It is my hope that everyone will find the articles presented here of great value in the field of middle level education.

While we continue to prepare future middle level educators, I encourage you all to consider reviewing articles for the journal or to collaborate with other professors of middle level education to submit articles. What we have been able to produce thus far has been both inspiring and useful, and I believe the articles within this edition will be much of the same.

Sincerely,
Deana Mack Ph.D.

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Teaching Teaming: A Review of the Evidence for the Purposeful Integration of Teaming Partnerships in Middle Level Teacher Education Programs

Dr. Stacie Nowikowski

Abstract

Since the introduction of the middle level certificate in Pennsylvania, institutions of higher education have strived to meet the demands of a specialized middle level certification program. Traditionally successful methods of teacher preparation must change with the growth and innovation of the middle level environment. This article is a review of the literature on contemporary teaming practices for pre-service middle level teachers. It explores the available literature on the team-based environment often associated with quality middle level school structure and uses key articles of teaming preparation and partnerships for pre-service teachers to identify patterns of practice for middle level teacher preparation programs. The patterns identified indicate the need for purposeful practice of teaming and partnerships in middle level teacher preparation programs and show implication for more specific research in team-based pedagogies used with middle level pre-service teachers. Literature on teaching teaming and strong partnerships also implicates possible connection to the need for additional research on the strengthening of other collaborative practices such as co-teaching and professional learning communities through middle level teacher preparation

Introduction

Since the introduction of the middle level certificate in Pennsylvania, institutions of higher education have strived to meet the demands of a specialized middle level certification program. The structure of these programs may vary, but are rooted in the foundations of the Association for Middle Level Education's (2012) revised teacher preparation program standards and also their This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents position statement (AMLE, 2010). With the growth and innovation of middle level pedagogy in today's middle level environment, institutions of higher education must grow and change their programs of traditionally successful methods to those more authentic to the collaborative and team-based nature of the contemporary middle level school environment. Compared to the amount of

literature that exists about teaming with middle level students and interactions between teacher teams, little has been written about how middle level teacher preparation programs prepare middle level teacher candidates to be strong contributors to middle level teams.

This article explores the available literature about the team-based environment often associated with quality middle level school structure and the research implications for innovation of current middle level teacher preparation and the use of teaming pedagogies with pre-service teachers. This review of literature serves two main purposes. First, it will highlight the evidence regarding teaming practices in middle level schools, citing evidence of benefits to both students and teacher team participants. Then, the implications for the purposeful integration of

teacher teams into middle level teacher preparation coursework will be explored by comparing key articles of contemporary teaming practices in middle level teacher preparation programs.

The Teaming Environment

In *This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents*, the Association for Middle Level Education (2010), defines the interdisciplinary team as a “signature component” of middle level schools. AMLE defines the interdisciplinary team as “two or more teachers working with a common group of students in a block of time” (AMLE, 2010, Chapter 5, sect. 4, para. 2). This structure becomes the foundation for other quality programs and supports relationships and partnerships within the school (AMLE, 2010). Jackson and Davis (2000) again mention this sentiment in *Turning Points 2000: Educating Young Adolescents in the 21st Century*. In this document, the authors discuss that the interdisciplinary team format is an essential structure for both learning activities and social/emotional supports needed to allow young adolescents to reach their highest learning potentials. These foundational documents and their definitions have continuously influenced reform in middle level schools including growth of the team structure and a changing role for both middle level school teachers and the faculty who prepare middle level teacher candidates.

The strong interdisciplinary team environment is made up of complex and abstract interactions that cannot be achieved through a formulaic prescription of pedagogy provided solely by higher education faculty. There is no one path guaranteed to produce highly qualified teacher candidates who will in turn create strong achievement in middle level students. The interactions of individuals on a middle level team are much more complex than a single activity or course can provide. Erb (2006) likened strong middle level teams and the influence of their administrative leadership to the complex coach-athlete relationship. He believed that the recruitment of talented individuals without the interaction of strong leaders would not create strong teams. He believed that talented individuals who work well together under strong and effective leadership is what truly fosters a successful team partnership within the middle level structure.

These effective teams may be initiated in several grade formats and utilize multiple pathways to success, but share two consistent key elements of (1) creating small learning communities within the school environment and (2) nurturing organized planning structures that allow teachers sufficient time to interact and focus on both academic and student issues (Erb, 2006; Erb, 2001; McEwin & Green, 2010). Both key elements show potential for implementation with pre-service middle level teachers. In the 2009 National Survey Comparison of Randomly Selected and Highly Successful Middle Level Schools, authors McEwin and Green (2010) compared the presence of different elements of middle level structures. In this study, randomly selected schools were compared to schools classified as “highly successful.” These highly successful schools were those schools designated as Schools to Watch by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform. McEwin and Green (2010) noted that highly successful middle level schools more frequently used the interdisciplinary team structure (90% vs. 72%) and also provided teachers with ten or more common planning times per week (40% vs. 28%). This significant number of planning times allowed for both individual and team planning opportunities (p. 58). It was also noted, that the implementation of the team structure does not, in

isolation, create a strong middle level environment. The team structure with strong relationships and critical dialogue among teammates is what fostered and cultivated the success of the format, indicating a critical need for individuals ready to participate in this highly collaborative environment.

Traits of Strong Teams

Not all middle level teams are successful. There are dispositions, personal chemistry, and levels of respect that contribute to the overall effectiveness to the team structure of middle level schools. This balance of individuals and their distinct personalities can often be difficult, and requires respect from each team member and support for the team's vision, norms, and goals. In the literature, there is much evidence suggesting that for successful teams there must be shared respect, open-mindedness, and strong communication during team interactions (Hackmann, Petzko, Valentine, Clark, Nori, & Lucas, 2002; Jackson & Davis, 2000; Robbins & Searby, 2013; Shamber, 1999; Strahan & Hedt, 2009). A study by Kiefer and Ellerbrock (2012) suggests that teachers on teams must also have characteristics of developmental responsiveness that will allow them to react and care for the young adolescents in their team. In this qualitative study on fostering an adolescent-centered community within a team, Kiefer and Ellerbrock (2012) found that the most successful teacher teams were those that held high expectations for their students in class, responded to the students' psychological need for relatedness, and formed positive relationships with their students in the classroom.

Additional traits discussed by Cook and Faulkner (2010) were those of strong organization

and clear definition for time usage within a shared vision for team goals. In their case study of two Kentucky Schools to Watch, the generous amounts of common planning time offered to the teams of teachers studied were deemed effective due to a "clearly articulated" purpose for each session with the overarching goal of meeting students needs. These authors also believed that the strongly defined mission of the schools and the strong organization of team meetings allowed teams to meet expectations and stay on task during common planning sessions. Also in this case study, the professionals' perceptions of having both team and administrative support contributed to team effort and effectiveness. Flowers, Mertens, and Mulhall (2000) cited frequency of meetings and size of teams to also influence quality of positive teacher team relationships. Small teacher teams that met more frequently and had occasion to work through personal and professional conflict were more likely to get to "common ground" and be able to benefit from the teaming experience. In both cases, frequent common planning time and consistent professional dialogue with learning as the focus more often experienced a positive team climate and more frequent team events.

The workings of these successful interactions between teammates hold even more importance in future research critical to middle level teacher educators. In addition to the suggestion that middle level teacher educators may improve in-service teaming participation through quality teaming practice and partnerships with middle level candidates, there is also a research connection in the literature for the possible improvement of other collaborative elements (i.e. co-teaching and professional learning communities) through the teaching of teaming.

As education trends move toward more consistent use of structures such as professional learning communities and co-teaching partnerships, successful teaming and partnerships in these educational phenomena may also be vital to growth of middle level professional development, instruction, and novice induction. A recent study in co-teaching and teaming described that teams can also provide unique mentorship opportunities between novice and veteran staff, providing better transition for newly hired teachers to integrate themselves into the middle level professional environment (Pugach, & Winn, 2011).

Benefits to Teachers and Students

Engaging in quality middle level teaming practices has shown well-documented evidence of benefits for both teachers and students (Conderman, 2011; Graham, 2007; Howell, Carpenter & Jones, 2013; Kiefer & Ellerbrock, 2012; Strahan & Hedt, 2009; Tonso, Jung, & Colombo, 2006; Wilson, 2007). Teachers are able to gain professional growth through the collaborations and processes that are fostered through the effective teaming model. Team meetings, when structured with cohesive vision, provide opportunities for professional discussion of teacher practices and can lead to critical discourse among colleagues when this deliberate effort is put forth by the entire team (Schamber, 2009; Strahan & Hedt, 2009). During a case study, Strahan and Hedt (2009) followed a developing teacher team relationship for a period of three years. In the teacher team involved, collaboration was a key element of their interactions that also led to additional improvements in professional practice. The teachers experienced team problem solving of student learning issues, and the researchers also found members of the team, through the collaborations, were more likely to pick student-centered teaching strategies. Student-centered strategies lead to better student engagement and achievement. According to Kain (2001), teachers in the team structure are “invited to seek ways to make learning more invitational, interactive, and relevant” (p. 210). By focusing their efforts on student learning and not “student problems,” the most successful teams were able to benefit from focused conversation on learning, assessment, core curriculum, and shared resources (Kain, 2001, p. 212-213). Research indicates that small teachers teams that meet more frequently and find a shared vision through professional discourse also experience more positive team climate and more frequent team interaction between members (Flowers, Mertens, & Mulhall, 2000).

Additional evidence exists to support the assertion that strong middle level teams may also experience the benefit of improved teacher team/parent relationships. In a recent article by Robbins and Searby (2013), multiple case studies showed a cross-case theme of a shared goal of “parental involvement for student success” that corresponded with approachable team members who acted as resources and treated parents as equal teammates for problem solving. These strong teacher team/parent relationships were interrelated with the characteristics mentioned previously for strong teacher teams in general. Again, frequent team meetings, shared vision for student success, and strong professional discourse coincided with the teams that experienced the most success.

Whether it is growth in teacher professional practice, improved student learning, or better parent relationships, all affirm that a main function of the team is that it helps to create a smaller, more connected

learning community within the larger school environment (George & Alexander, 1993; Wallace, 2007). This smaller environment, paired with other structures such as flexible scheduling and homeroom or advisory period allow teachers more opportunity to build and foster relationships among themselves, parents, and the students that they serve (Kiefer & Ellerbrock, 2012).

Students also benefit from the complex interactions facilitated by the team structure. Team structure has long been a prominent young adolescent-centered feature of writings about the improvement of middle level schools (Erb, 2006; George & Alexander, 1993; Jackson & Davis, 2000). The positive relationships fostered in this structure between teachers and students enables the teachers to be more responsive to students' developmental and academic needs. Researchers such as Jensen (1998) and Strahan (2008) noted that when students do not have good relationships with peers and teachers that their academic achievement is affected. Research suggests that team structure, when utilized fully, allows for students to benefit from deep connections with teachers and a student peer group (George & Alexander, 1993; Jackson & Davis, 2000; Wallace, 2007). An important article by Strahan (2008) reviewed several studies that examined the relationships fostered between students and teachers at the middle level. In this article, Strahan (2008) noted that during his work with middle level student/teacher teams, students who made little progress were also the students who made few personal connections in the school (p.6). The strongest teacher teams were those that demonstrated warm and supportive relationships by having a deep knowledge of their individual students (Strahan, 2008, p. 6). Strahan and Layell (2006) also noted in a longitudinal study that academic achievement of a team was promoted by factors such as "a climate for learning fostered through team building and positive discipline, teaching of explicit strategies," and the use of instructional strategies that "linked inquiry, collaboration, and real world experiences" (as cited in Strahan, 2008, p. 6). These key teacher team behaviors increased students' learning momentum leading to improved achievement and student self-efficacy.

Implications for Higher Education Reform and Growth

With the abundance of evidence indicating the benefits of teaming to student achievement and teacher effectiveness, the implications for teaching teaming and strong partnerships to middle level teacher candidates are of the utmost importance. With the rigorous nature of contemporary middle level school reforms, there is precious little time for "on the job" training in quality teaming partnerships. New teachers must be sufficiently prepared to be effective teammates and partnership builders from the start of their careers, and the responsibility of developing these effective team-based professionals becomes the undertaking of higher education faculty. Since discrepancies can often exist between pre-service perceptions and in-service practices, authentic collaborative experiences are needed for middle level (and any other) teacher candidates (Flowers, Mertens, & Mulhall, 2000). With the level of importance placed on the middle level teaming structure as identified through the literature, it is surprising that so little has been written about the strategies and pedagogy required to assist middle level candidates in becoming effective team members. It begs the question; is it possible for college faculty to prepare their teacher candidates to

be immediately ready for the authentic and complex team environment? If so, what strategies or experiences exist to promote effective future team members?

In the following section, key examples of articles that specifically addressed middle level teaming practices with pre-service teachers are introduced and patterns of practices for middle level teacher education are discussed. Articles were chosen for their focus on learning methods for middle level teacher candidates (See Table 1). In some cases, teaching teaming was not the initial focus of an article described, but through examination of authors' description and details, patterns of practice for the explicit teaching of teaming and partnerships emerged in the themes of each article. Due to the complex nature of the interactions of team members, these patterns cannot be considered a systematic way to prepare all middle level candidates to be effective team members. Ideally, the patterns discovered in the literature can serve as discussion points for possible reform or as a review of fundamental or signature ways of engaging middle level candidates in the strategies and dispositions necessary for effective middle level team partnerships.

Patterns of Practice

Through the review of available literature, four distinct patterns were noted that applied to teaming experiences in middle level teacher preparation programs. These recommended patterns of experiences included:

- Authenticity of placement
- Longevity of partnership
- Deliberate integration of team opportunities
- Purposeful reflection of team building

Because of the specific nature of the topic, teaching teaming and partnerships to middle level pre-service teachers, it is noted that there was not an extensive amount of literature available. Not all articles indicated all elements described, but each element defined as a pattern was indicated in at least three or more articles to be considered for discussion.

Authenticity of placement. In all articles chosen, the researchers were concerned about the authenticity of middle level candidates field placement experiences. Howell, Carpenter, and Jones (2013), encouraged well-developed university-school partnerships. These partnerships included stakeholders at multiple levels. The authors described field experiences that were clinical in nature where students had the opportunity for their methodology coursework to be directly connected to their clinical placement at the school-based site. All coursework was taught at the school-based site in a way that allowed students to meet for coursework, experience their field placement, and then return to the course group for debriefing and reflection. The authors stressed the authenticity of the placement by noting that college faculty and student candidates "are acknowledged as participants within the school community and not as mere

spectators” (Howell, et al., 2013, p. 45).

Wilson (2007) also identifies the importance of authentic team experiences for middle level candidates, but acknowledged that for some higher learning facilities, that geography of school, availability of placement, or concerns about confidentiality limited the experiences that students had available to them. She explored the ability to simulate middle level teams as a method to overcome the obstacles of finding appropriate clinical placements. The students in her study were able to still experience “a version of team life” similar to that of middle level team structure. Her students experienced community-building activities and were able to practice compromising to achieve the goals of realistic team tasks seen in middle level schools (Wilson, 2007, para.13). Previts, Kleine, & Mizelle (2013) and Coward, Matteson, & Hamman (2012) also showed evidence in their studies of an authentic context for learning as it applies to developing signature pedagogies and forming personal identity for middle level teacher candidates. Authentic team experiences and challenges of partnership building may help teacher candidates to develop the skills necessary to participate in the discourse of team structure.

Longevity of partnership. Another theme that emerged from the identified articles was the concept of longevity of partnership. In an effort to mimic the authentic team environment, authors more often described successful partnerships or cohorts as ones with time periods of a semester or more. This seemed to indicate that more time was necessary to move past the stigma of “the group project,” to something more similar to the partnerships and professional development fostered through a school’s team structure (Howell et al, 2013; Previts et al., 2013; Wilson, 2007). Wilson (2007) specifically described that group work often carried a negative connotation with her students, but when partnerships were fostered through team building activities over an entire semester, that students were better able to overcome group disagreement and the negative connotation of group work to arrive at a more accepted compromise and shared group vision.

Deliberate integration of team opportunities. In a recently revised position statement by AMLE (2015) on the necessary components of middle level certification and licensure programs, there was special emphasis placed on the role of collaboration as a purposeful part of teacher preparation program. This document encourages the “heavy” emphasis on the day-to-day collaborations between colleagues and other possible partners (parents, community members, etc.). It is not surprising that several of the articles examined matched this recommendation from AMLE. Howell et al. (2013) discussed the importance of opportunities to “blend practitioner knowledge with academic knowledge and learn by doing in collaborative settings” (p. 41). While, Wilson (2007) described consistent opportunities for simulated interdisciplinary teams to be in communication with each other through authentic group tasks and discourse. In the models discussed by Previts et al. (2013), teacher candidates were encouraged to collaborate and form professional relationships through their branch of the Collegiate Middle Level Association (CMLA). Candidates also displayed teaming types of behaviors while engaged in professional negotiations about curriculum in their college classrooms and through action research studies that were presented to and evaluated by their cohort groups.

Purposeful reflection of team building. The last element that was found as a common element of

practice when developing teams at the level of middle level teacher preparation was the opportunity for purposeful reflection of the team building process. Whether reflection was present in the studies because it is an integral part of many teacher education programs, or because it became a tool to “sort through” perspectives, emotions, and frustrations of team building is undetermined. Nonetheless, in several of the articles, personal reflection was an opportunity for students to contemplate and consider the complex relationships with which they were involved. Wilson (2007) purposely asked her students to reflect and describe their groups’ histories in an attempt to help students understand the process of teaming and how goals were accomplished. In Howell et al., (2013) students were encouraged meet on site before and after clinical placements in several of the partnerships described. The support and reflection that occurred as part of the cohort groups fostered collaboration at the clinical sites.

These four common elements for teaching teaming and strong partnerships found in the literature allowed middle level candidates to become more prepared to navigate the practices of teaming prior to the start of their careers. AMLE (2015) calls for candidates to be well prepared for building partnerships through both the interdisciplinary team and other community avenues (parent, community, etc.). The evidence contained in these past studies of teaming and partnership building indicates that purposefully integrating authentic, consistent, reflective teaming experiences into middle level teacher preparation programs may better create professionals that are more prepared to traverse the dynamic structure of the team.

Future Research

Although this idea of teaching teaming is highly specific and limited in the number of publications that addresses the topic exclusively, there is strong implication in foundational documents of middle level teacher preparation and in current studies of teaming practices for the research of more specific strategies for engaging middle level candidates in the complex structure of the middle level team prior to certification. Benefits of having a candidate be able to “hit the ground running” as a team professional instead of lacking the skills to be a active member in his or her assigned teams could possibly foster an earlier, more positive effect on student achievement. Additional longitudinal studies that allow faculty to follow their candidates through their first years of teaching to determine the long-term effects of chosen strategies for team-building could greatly inform best practices in teaching teaming in middle level teacher preparation programs. In addition to improvement of interdisciplinary team preparation, there is also indication for the possible connected research topics of co-teaching and professional learning communities. These highly collaborative elements are often integral programs in middle level schools. These subjects of research could also benefit from incoming professionals that are well prepared to collaborate and participate in team partnerships for their students’ achievement and their own professional development. Continued research of teaching teaming and collaboration in teacher preparation may assist with strengthening the link between these contemporary middle level practices and structures.

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Table 1.**Studies of Methods for Middle Level Teacher Preparation with Team Elements**

Researchers	Article Focus	Implications for Teaming Practices
Howell, Carpenter, & Jones (2013)	University and school partnerships	Indicated a strong influence of AMLE framework. In strongest partnership, candidates benefited from embedded, early, clinical placements on school site. Fieldwork was sandwiched between coursework for focus and reflection of clinical experiences. Faculty and candidates are equal community members and participate fully in all teacher responsibilities.
Wilson (2007)	Simulated teaming with middle level candidates	An authentic simulation of team participation was studied when field placement team participation was not available. Moving past "group work" to community building and realistic tasks that led to team discourse were emphasized.
Coward, Matteson, & Hamman (2012)	Development of middle level teacher identity	Data from the two case studies did not purposefully study collaboration, teaming, and partnerships, but noted that there was a lack of data from the teacher participants about these important parts of middle level education. Indicated a need for purposeful integration of partnership experiences into middle level coursework.
Previts, Kleine, & Mizelle (2013)	Signature pedagogies in middle level preparation	Collaboration and teaming behaviors are fostered through purposeful integration of professionalism initiatives through the school's division of CMLA as well as through a negotiated curriculum accomplished through a cohort driven consensus and decision-making process.

Organization Membership

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Pennsylvania Association for Middle Level Education

The mission of the Pennsylvania affiliate of the Association for Middle Level Education is to promote best practices in the schools and classrooms of our Commonwealth.

Membership provides an opportunity to meet like-minded educators, to keep up on the latest middle level practices, and, most importantly, be confident about providing the best education possible for students.

Regional chapters of PAMLE exist throughout the state providing access to local expertise at your fingertips. Membership rates range between \$20 and \$299. To learn more, please visit our website.

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Pennsylvania Professors of Middle Level Education

The Pennsylvania chapter of the Professors of Middle Level Education provides a professional network that contributes to the development of an expanded research base, disseminates best-practices, and enhances the preparation of future middle level educators.

Chapter meetings are held three times per year in various locations throughout the state. The annual membership dues of \$100 provide access to this network for all faculty members within a middle level teacher preparation program. Please take a moment and investigate about our association online.

<http://www.papomle.org>

Archery and Autism in the Middle School

Jo Ann Holtz & Shelly Klinek

Abstract

AMLE Principles Addressed:

Educators use multiple learning and teaching approaches.

Health and wellness are supported in curricula, school-wide programs, and related policies.

The National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP®) promotes the teaching of target archery as part of the in-school curriculum in grades 4-12. This article describes the difficulties of middle school students with autism in general physical education and sports programs while advancing the value of archery, the second leading safest sport, as part of their physical education and sports. The article also includes information on how a Pennsylvania public or private school can get a NASP program in their school.

Introduction

Recently it was reported nationally that Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), commonly referred to as autism, involved one in 68 children. This is a 123% increase from the previous eight years (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014). The 2014 Pennsylvania Autism Census Update publicized that the number of Pennsylvanians with autism receiving services has extended to over 55,000 persons. In 2011, children between the ages of 5 to 12 composed 49.4% of individuals with autism and about one in four or 24.9% affected with autism were between the ages of 13 to 17 (Shea, 2014). Shea also reported about 60% of children or adolescents with autism served by the Pennsylvania Department of Education were included in their classroom 80% or more of the day. The numbers are growing and as more students with ASD are included in classrooms, they are also involved in physical education classes. By now, it should be common knowledge among educators that Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004), stipulated that schools are obliged to provide opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in general physical education classes or in specifically designed physical education as determined by the student's Individual Education Program.

Although research about the inclusion of students with ASD in physical education is somewhat limited, physical education teachers have voiced rather negative feelings toward the practice of inclusion (Block & Obrusnikova, 2007). To compound the problem concerning physical education for children with ASD, very few general education teachers received the proper training or practices for teaching these students (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Results from a study by Beamer and Yun (2014) revealed that general physical education teachers usually felt supported by the special education teacher but were not confident about their own preparation to include students with ASD.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education sets the general and subject-specific guidelines for physical

education teacher preparation programs. Only one guideline includes adaptive physical education. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Department of Special Education (2014), there is no requirement for any specialized certification related to Adapted Physical Education in Pennsylvania. Certified physical education teachers can provide Adapted Physical Education to students with disabilities. In order to become a specialist in Adapted Physical Education, a certified physical education teacher would need to meet the Adapted Physical Education National Standards for Competency in Teaching Adapted Physical Education in the public schools. These standards were not completed until 1997.

It might not be surprising that general physical education teachers without specialized training feel as they do. ASD is multifaceted: every child has different symptoms. Students with ASD could have poor visuomotor and bilateral coordination, as well as postural impairments in dynamic and static balance (Srinivasan, Pescatello & Bhat, 2014). Ohrberg (2013) states, "The child who is low functioning on the spectrum may lack the coordination needed to complete certain athletic movements such as throwing or kicking a ball. Moreover, the same child may have difficulties focusing on the specific task assigned by the coach" (p. 53). Such children struggle to be included in physical activity and organized sports where competition is involved. Healy, Msetfi, and Gallagher (2013) talked with twelve children affected with autistic disorder (aged 9-13 years) and discovered that the issues of sensory challenges, fear of injury and bullying were factors impacting to the students' negative physical education experiences.

According to Davis (2007), some simple steps can be taken to consider including students with ASD in a physical education class; learn about autism, learn about the individual, understand the environmental issues, create a predictable and visual routine and give direct, calm clear and concrete instructions. Alexander and Leather (2013) believe that team dynamics, child to coach ratios, coach qualifications, the type of sports offered, and objectives of the program are vital factors that need to be considered when developing a physical education program to meet the needs of children with ASD.

Scholarly research on youth sports and the participation of children affected by ASD is lacking but a study by Obrusnikova and Cavalier (2011) among 8 through 14 year olds specified that physical activities including physical movements or exercise were commonly not the preferred choices among children affected by ASD. Yanardag, Yilmaz, and Aras (2010) highlighted the significance of understanding the needs of children with autism while managing their sport and recreation programs. Research conducted by Pan, Tsai, and Hsieh (2011) recommend additional studies on the connection between the needs of adolescents with ASD and the physical education highlighted curriculum in order to apprise school policies and remove obstacles to fostering physical activities among these students. Therefore, team sports may not be providing a positive physical experience for students affected by ASD. It would be better if these students could participate in an individual sport.

Archery might just be that sport. The benefit of archery as part of a physical education class is that it doesn't require the level of physical athleticism that many sports do. Another benefit of archery, according to Clifton (2014), is that middle school students learn about the value of patience and focus when they participate in an archery program.

The Sport of Archery

About 2800 BC, the first complex bow was constructed by the Egyptians thus making archery one of the oldest sports. It is also the second leading safest sport right behind table tennis. According to an article in Archery Business (2013), archery requires skill, attentiveness, and determination. It is a sport that can be fun, but also one that lets participants of any age or skill level challenge themselves independently. Kierstein and Erskine (2010) suggest that an archery program delivers an adaptable curriculum devised to introduce equipment, rules of the game and the rudiments of archery to youth at all levels of ability.

The National Archery in the Schools Program

In the late summer and fall of 2001, the Kentucky Departments of Fish & Wildlife Resources and Department of Education and Mathews Archery was organized. Their goals were to meet the academic and conservation purposes of: achieving state and national educational standards; improving student motivation, attention, behavior, attendance and focus; developing motor ability; fostering listening and observation skills; develop relationships promoting graduation: and learning outdoor skills. Upon achieving success in their initial year, “National” replaced Kentucky” and The National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP®) was inaugurated. It immediately expanded its participation standards to include students in 4th-12th grade. According to the organization, it has become the “fastest growing shooting sport in history.”

“The National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP®) is a non-profit educational foundation established to teach target archery as part of the in-school curriculum in grades 4-12” (<http://NASPschools.org>). Currently the program is in 47 states with 12,219 schools enrolled and encompassed 2,150,000 million students as of June 30, 2014.

NASP® suggests that everyone can enjoy the sport of archery, it is highly inclusive and it is a lifetime activity. That means the sport can engage every student; both boys and girls can participate together. It also puts athletes and non-athletes on a level playing field.

Based on the NASP® design, the sport of archery can be initiated without much difficulty. There are three basic focuses: Units of Study, Teacher Training and Archery Equipment. The Units of Study were written by educational professionals, conservation personnel and archery experts to include the state and national standards in the program. Teacher Training is very important and extensive. It is imperative to create well certified and qualified individuals to teach this specific archery program. Archery equipment is highly standardized to be economical, safe, durable and universally fit for almost every student. The basic purpose of the NASP® program is to make it very safe and enjoyable for everyone. The students will learn how to understand and handle the bow safety, be taught how to make a string bow, and learn the Eleven Steps to Archery Success as outlined in the NASP® program.

11 Steps to Archery Success

1. Stance
2. Nock Arrow

-
3. Drawing Hand Set
 4. Bow Hand Set
 5. Pre-Draw
 6. Draw
 7. Anchor
 8. Aiming
 9. Shot Set-up
 10. Release
 11. Follow-through

Benefits of Archery for Middle School Students with Autism

Archery can be an extremely rewarding activity and sport for students with autism because many students with ASD seem to have a great deal of difficulty engaging with others. Archery is an individual sport so there is no socialization or communication involved during the activity. One does not need eye-to eye contact and the participants don't have to compete on a team or interact with others.

Another factor to consider is that students with autism frequently need absolute consistency in their environment. For that reason, archery is a great activity and a chance for a student with ASD to compete in a school sport or to compete nationally. Being consistent with each shot in archery is the key since it is a very important component. It is technique one must acquire to have a successful experience. If a student with autism is motivated to attend to a task, then the ability to maintain considerable intensity and focus will be there.

Also, many students with autism experiences challenges with muscle tone and/or coordination. Archery does not focus on either of these two motor skills. It focuses more on focus, consistency and motivation. Some individuals with autism possess extraordinary abilities and unusual skills. According to Ozonoff, Dawson & McPartland in *A Parent's Guide to Aspergers Syndrome* individuals with autism can have:

- Strong visual skills
- Ability to understand & retain concrete concepts, rules, sequences & patterns
- Good memory of details or rote facts
- Long-term memory

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- Intense concentration or focus, especially on a preferred activity
 - Honesty
 - Problem solving

All of these skills and abilities can be extremely helpful in the sport of archery and promote success to the autistic student.

Curriculum

NASP® created lessons that are safe for everyone. Durkin (2013) states that some archery pros are already helping schools initiate archery programs through NASP®. Teachers can invite guest speakers so students can learn about the sport and, if possible, be given a demonstration with the bow and arrow.

According to information in an article in Parks and Recreation (2012), the U.S. government is focusing on the development of archery and is funding the communities in the country to maintain a competitive level in archery. The article also states that the Archery Trade Association (ATA) helps to bring archery programs to communities across the U.S. In addition, the Easton Foundations award funding grants every year to 501(c) (3) or government supported clubs, programs, and schools that propose archery-related plans or projects. Information about the grant can be found at <http://www.esdf.org/discover-archery/>. If a Pennsylvania public or private school wishes to have a NASP® program in their school, the Pennsylvania State Game Commission covers half the cost for all the equipment and the complete NASP® kit as previously stated. For further information visit <http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=828131&mode=2>

Specific Instructor Training

Specific instructor training is required before The National Archery in the Schools Program can be taught. The training requires at least eight hours for Basic Archery Instructors (BAI). Training requirements for BAI candidates uphold that candidates must be at least 18 years old, pass the BAI practical and score at least 80% on the exam. Currently there are more than 22,000 people who have been certified by NASP®.

According to Todd Holmes, the Pennsylvania State Game Commission Shooting Sports Outreach Coordinator, Pennsylvania currently has 190 schools participating in the NASP® program. There are currently 1,100 registered BAIs in Pennsylvania as well. Also, Act 48 credits are available and BAI workshops are offered at no cost throughout Pennsylvania. The NASP® kits cost is \$6,000.00, but thanks to support from the archery industry, the “kits” can be purchased by the schools for approximately \$3,100.00. The PA Game Commission offers \$1,500.00 grants to help cut the cost of the NASP® kits. So, the school has to come up with is the remaining \$1,500.00. Some local archery shops may help with the cost or school funds might be solicited.

The NASP® kits include:

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- Ten Right/Two Left Original Genesis Bows
 - A Metal Bow Rack
 - Ten Dozen Easton Arrows
 - One Large White Arrow Curtain
 - Equipment Repair Kit
 - One Set of Safety Rules & Posters
 - Arrow Quivers
 - Whistle

People interested in becoming NASP® trained & certified, can visit www.NASPbai.org to search for a class. To get NASP® started in a school, for further information, or how and where to get your free BAI Training contact:

Todd Holmes, Shooting Sports Outreach Coordinator for The PA Game Commission at (717) 787-4250 ext. 3330 or e-mail toholmes@pa.gov

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About our Journal and Manuscript Submission Guidelines:

This peer-reviewed journal is an open access journal promoting research in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania regarding theories and best practices in the education and development of young adolescents. One of our goals is promote the sharing of formal and informal research related to the improvement of middle level education. Some issues may be thematic as determined by the editors in response to topics of timely interest. Submitted manuscripts should be responsive to this purpose and reflect research or analyses that inform practices in these areas. Submissions are accepted from any source but submissions from teachers/professors/researchers working in Pennsylvania will be given priority in the acceptance and publication process.

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Thematic Topic (if appropriate)

Submission Date

- Author’s Name

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- Author's Institutional Affiliation and Address
 - Author's E-mail Address
 - Author's Complete Mailing Address
 - Biographical Information (not to exceed 30 words per author)
- **Abstract** – In a separate file describe the major elements of the manuscript in 100-150 words. Do not include your name or any other identifying information in the abstract.
 - **Manuscript** – In a separate file include the manuscript, references, and supporting charts, table, figures, and illustrations as defined above.
 - Do not include the author(s) name(s).
 - Manuscripts should be no more than 15 pages of narrative (excluding references, tables, and appendices), using the latest APA style, and double-spaced on one side of 8-1/2 by 11-inch paper with justified margins.
 - Pages should be numbered consecutively including the bibliography, but the author's name should not appear on the manuscript itself.
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Betwixt and Between: Education for Young Adolescents

The Journal of the Pennsylvania Professors of Middle Level Education

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Gather your ideas and submit them to the Editor, Deana Mack (dmack@waynesburg.edu).

Deadline for submissions: August 26th , 2016

Publication date: December 2016

Manuscript Submission Guidelines

Content:

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 - o Author's E-mail Address
 - o Author's Complete Mailing Address
 - o Biographical Information (not to exceed 30 words per author)
 - **Abstract** – In a separate file describe the major elements of the manuscript in 100-150 words. Do not include your name or any other identifying information in the abstract.
 - **Manuscript** – In a separate file include the manuscript, references, and supporting charts, table, figures, and illustrations as defined above.
 - ❑ Do not include the author(s) name(s).
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- Authors are expected to take full responsibility for the accuracy of the content in their articles, including references, quotations, tables, and figures.
- Authors of manuscripts accepted for publication are expected to make a presentation about their article at the next PA-POMLE or PAMLE conference.
- There is no remuneration for articles accepted for publication. There is no fee for the review of the manuscript.