Betwixt & Between

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Spring 2021

Education for Young Adolescents

A Peer Reviewed Journal of Middle Level Research

Highlights From This Issue:

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.

Betwixt & Between

Education for Young Adolescents

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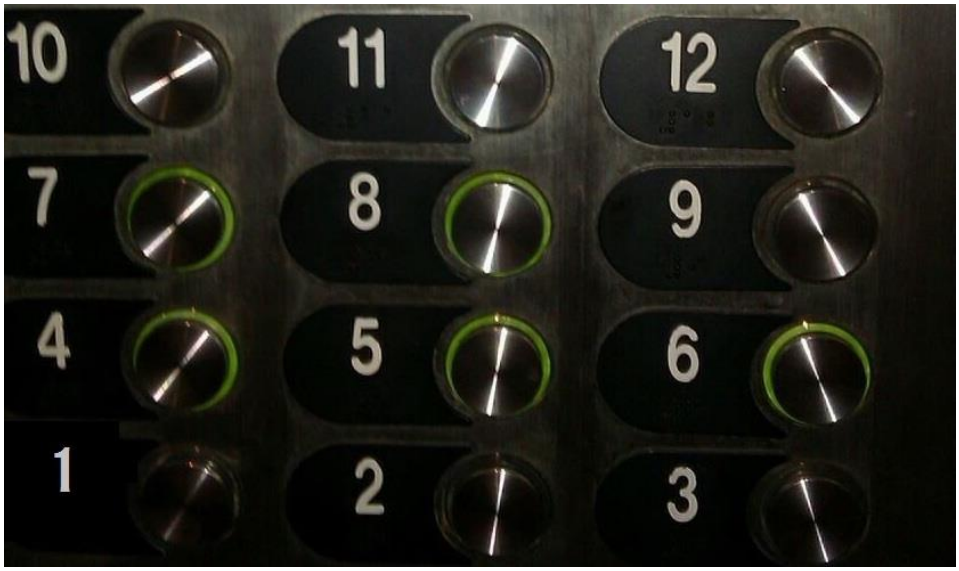
About Our Cover Image

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 2021 edition of Betwixt and Between: Education for Young Adolescents, The Journal of the Pennsylvania Professors of Middle Level Education. At a time when teachers have begun to receive credit in ways that have been easy to overlook in the recent years' past, this issue is brought to you with a "recipe" of resilience, passion, and desire. Resilience was necessary in production of a journal issue in times of quarantine, new demands, online learning, ever changing job demands, and undefinable, magnanimous amounts of flexibility. Passion was the driving force to overcoming obstacles to make this journal happen. It seeks to demonstrate the importance of teaching and reaching those in middle level education. Desire to have something positive and important come out of this unique time also played an important role. Much like middle level students often present us with, this edition had challenges, changed overnight, demanded more, wanted more, but surprised us in the end. The result is an impressive "recipe."

This edition has new, exciting elements contained within to inspire you and intrigue you. Future calls for work will be seeking additional pieces from principals, teachers, and teacher candidates in addition to the research submissions you are accustomed to reading in this journal.

May the 2021-2022 school year be a time of reaching middle level students and future teachers in ways where we can see the smiles, love, and engagement on their entire faces.

Sincerely,
Deana Mack Ph.D.

Perceived versus Measured Achievement in the Middle Level Science Classroom: The Impact of Socio-economic Status

Abstract

The range of challenges faced by students in low socio-economic contexts are well documented. Lack of support, differing cultural norms, poor nutrition, stress, and transiency are just a few. Add to this the lack of adequate school funding, appropriate equipment, and quality instruction, and the chances of academic success for this demographic group seem even more challenging. In this investigation, we bring student voice into the conversation adding their perspective to better understand how the following 3 variables intersect specifically in the area of science: student attitudes toward the content area, self-efficacy toward the content area, and measured academic success through standardized assessments. Data from an electronic survey and standardized science test scores of one 8th grade team are analyzed and reported. Multiple findings are unexpected and challenge previous literature on student attitudes toward science and achievement of

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low SES groups in science raising more questions to be investigated.

The range of challenges faced by students in low socioeconomic contexts is well documented. Inadequate support systems, differing cultural norms, poor nutrition, stress, and transiency are just a few of the blockades that students hailing from low socioeconomic backgrounds face much more frequently and significantly than students from middle class backgrounds. Add to this the lack of adequate school funding, appropriate equipment, and quality instruction, and the chances of academic success for this demographic group seem even more challenging. Science, as a content area, has received more intensive focus and support in recent years, but can be challenging and intimidating for students. Affecting both of the previously mentioned issues is student self-efficacy which is influenced by many factors and conversely, impacts student success in the classroom.

In this investigation, we examined this situation through the eyes of the students themselves to better understand how the following three variables intersect specifically in the area of science instruction: student attitudes toward the content area, self-efficacy toward the content area, and measured academic success through standardized assessments.

Review of the Literature

Student Voice

One of the primary pillars of middle level philosophy and resulting best practices for young adolescents (ages 10-15) is the valuing of student voice (Bishop & Harrison, 2021). A small percentage of existing literature has incorporated the perspective of young adolescents themselves (Feldman, 2002). Most findings and conclusions are based on the adult perspectives of teachers, parents, or administrators. Yonezawa & Jones (2009) explain that including student voice significantly changes the conversation and provokes adults to think in ways they would not have, had the student perspective not been included. Laux (2018) concludes, "… to continue to ignore these voices would be a disservice to students and

teachers alike." In order to gain a deep understanding of student success disparities and what might be done to narrow the achievement gap, we asked the students themselves and considered their voice as an important part of the discussion.

Self-efficacy

Bandura (1994) has defined self-efficacy as "people's beliefs in their capabilities to exercise control over their own functioning and over events that affect their lives" (p. 1). It has long been established in existing literature that student perceptions of their own ability to be academically successful significantly influence their actual measured achievement (Alexander et al., 1987; Rice et al., 2012). Wiederkehr et al. (2015) suggest that, "… self-efficacy is a very strong predictor of academic performances across a wide variety of subjects …" (p. 772). Many factors can contribute to student self-efficacy. Teacher-student interactions/relationships have been shown to have a significant influence on student self-efficacy (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). This impact has been documented both negatively and positively based on their perception of their teacher. Smart (2014) explained, "Students who perceived their teachers as being friendly and understanding reported they had higher motivation in science" (p. 2). Socioeconomic status influences student self-perceived performance (Wiederkehr et al., 2015). These factors have significant impact considering students' self-efficacy is clearly correlated with achievement (Zhang et al., 2011) specifically in the context of science classes at the middle level (Smart, 2014).

Science

Science, as a content area, has become a focus in recent years emphasizing the vital importance of 21st Century Skills needed for jobs that do not yet even exist (Bybee & Fuchs, 2006). Many of these skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, collaboration, technology, and communication are concentrated in the teaching of science. The value of science is being elevated through the rise in Science/Technology/Engineering/Mathematics (STEM) programs among other initiatives. Just as this

pattern emerges, recent research is increasingly indicating a trend of middle level students not enjoying science (Rice et al., 2012). Smart (2014) goes so far as to state, "A growing trend is that middle level students tend not to enjoy science. This results in a drop in achievement which leads to a drop in motivation" (p. 3). How much a student enjoys a content area often has a direct influence on how successful they will be academically in that content area (Rice et al., 2012).

Socioeconomic Implications

Historically established in the literature, students from low socioeconomic contexts struggle more than middle class students with both self-efficacy toward academic achievement (Wiederkehr et al., 2015) and actual measured achievement on standardized assessments (Lam, 2014; Lumpkin, 2016; Milne & Plourde, 2006). Lam (2014) clearly states, "There is a positive relationship between socioeconomic status (SES) and academic performance" (p. 326). Milner (2010) introduces the concept of 'opportunity gaps' between middle class children's lives and the lives of poor/working class children. Lower income parents more often deal with stress, depression, an inability to cope, and a sense of powerlessness (Jensen, 2009). Low SES students have less access to a literacy-rich environment, more often lack a supportive adult, and tend to value education through a more abstract lens (Payne, 2019). All of these trends, when combined, would seem to elevate the challenge of academic success in science classes for low SES students. With these issues in mind, the guiding question for this investigation is:

How does SES influence students' perceived achievement versus measured achievement?

Methodology

An Institutional Review Board (IRB) application to conduct this investigation was submitted and approved through the participating university. The building principal distributed information to the parents describing the investigation, requesting their consent, and the student participants' assent. Assessment data and SES information for each student participant were obtained through the building principal with signed parent permission. Student names which were associated with test scores, SES, and

survey responses were coded to maintain the anonymity of student participants. Only the principal had access to the code key.

Participants

Participants are two teams of 8th grade students enrolled in science class at a local middle school. The school was recruited primarily based on the socioeconomic diversity of its student population because that is the focus of the guiding question. Also considered was its proximity to the research university, and the willingness of the principal to collaborate and support participation in the investigation.

Comparative demographics are compiled in the chart below and were collected from websites from the US Census Bureau and Future Ready PA.

	county	school district	participating building
White	70.3%	77%	57.6%
Hispanic	22.5%	14%	24.7%
Black	7.4%	4%	9.3%
Asian	1.6%	3%	4.7%
economically disadvantaged (free/reduced lunch)	12%	6.7%	39.8%

The standard identification of students meeting the criteria for free and reduced lunch eligibility is used here to define *economically disadvantaged* or *low socioeconomic*. We use the term *middle SES* to refer to students who do not qualify for free or reduced lunch. As reflected in the chart, a broad range of both ethnic and socioeconomic diversity is represented in the student population. It is also notable that this building has been recognized by several standards as an exemplary middle school, most recently

redesignated as a Schools To Watch building by The National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform (https://www.middlegradesforum.org/schools-to-watch).

Data Collection

In order to address the guiding question, various types of data were collected from two sources. High-stakes assessment scores and information on student SES were provided by the building principal. Information on self-efficacy and individual student perceptions of their own success in science classes was collected through an anonymous virtual survey platform (instantsurvey.com) which took student participants approximately 10 minutes to complete (Appendix A).

Data Analysis

Data were available to the research team from different sources, in different formats, and at different times. The constant comparative strategy (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was employed in which results were checked and examined as they were collected. Nowell et al. (2017) further describe *thematic analysis* as a specific type of the constant comparative process. When all data sources had reported, a master chart was developed. We separated data associated with the economically disadvantaged students from the data associated with students who were not economically disadvantaged. We also organized each of the two groups of students by ranking participants by test scores. Student comments were included. As possible themes emerged and were identified, a color-coding system was developed to determine if continuing data supported the early trends as well as to note new patterns that may have emerged.

Limitations

As with the majority of investigations involving the participation of human subjects, there is always the possibility that participant responses are skewed in some way due to the fact that they are aware they are participating (self-reporting) in a research study; known as the Hawthorne Effect (Cook, 1967). There is no way to completely eliminate this variable from the process, but special care was taken

to ensure the student participants that the electronic survey was completely anonymous and that the research would only be served if their answers were honest and direct.

The sample size in this investigation is relatively small due to the challenges of acquiring written consent from parents. Participants were from one middle school and voluntarily participated. While the findings can add to our understandings of the target issues, they may not be generalizable to the broader population based on the small sample size and the limited geographic area.

Findings

Test Scores

The following table reflects the range of actual scores on the Science Pennsylvania State Standards Assessment (PSSA) test of these 8th graders:

n-33	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
low SES group (free/reduced lunch)	0	25%	62.5%	12.5%
middle SES group (not free/reduced lunch)	4%	16%	52%	28%

The percentages of students reaching the Proficient/Advanced levels combined are very close at 75% (low SES) and 80% (middle SES). But when just these portions of the sample (Proficient/Advanced) are broken out, a little more distinction based on SES is evident.

n-26	Proficient	Advanced
low SES group (free/reduced lunch)	83%	17%
middle SES group (not free/reduced lunch)	65%	35%

The data point that reflected the most obvious difference between the two groups was the range of scores. While the low SES group had a range of scores from lowest to highest of 312 points, the middle SES group score range was 786; over two and a half times as wide.

n-33	raw of scores	group range
low SES group (n-8)	1176-1488	312
middle SES group (n-25)	1048-1834	786

Part of the reason for this may be the fact that there were a larger number of participants in the middle SES group (25) than the low SES group (8), but it seems unlikely that would explain a discrepancy that large. Only one participant scored Below Basic on the PSSA.

Student Perceptions

A broad comparison of the two groups' responses to the survey (socio-economically disadvantaged and not socio-economically disadvantaged) reflects some differences. Both groups communicated a relatively equal range of enjoying science from "it's ok" to "love it." The singular participant reporting a dislike of science was in the middle SES group. The low SES group reported a slightly lower level of how well they thought they were doing in science class. The same is true for student self-perceptions of how well they achieve on science tests: slightly lower average for lower SES students. In response to how they thought they were doing in science class, no students reported "hate it" or "don't like it." Only two students reported self-perception of not doing well on science tests (both in the middle SES group), and no students at all reported not being successful in science classes.

Attitudes toward Science

Findings in this specific school building about young adolescents' attitudes toward science clearly indicate an overall enjoyment of the content area. This is somewhat contradictory to the consensus of

existing research. Only one student reported that they didn't like science. The primary reasoning offered by students for enjoying science as a content area is the opportunity to participate in hands-on labs and experiments. Typical comments include, "We get to do cool stuff that we wouldn't do in other classes like dissecting worms and frogs," and "We always do fun things and experiments in class." Many students just stated that science had always been interesting to them and that there are a lot of different topics within science to learn about. Several stated that even though they did like science, it was often complicated or confusing. Some examples include, "I like it when I understand it," "Some topics can be super complicated," and "… science can get really confusing."

Interestingly, some students gave lengthy, detailed answers demonstrating a genuine affinity for science as a content area specifically. One student explained, "I like it because I've always been interested in science throughout my school career. I've always liked the thought of analyzing things and finding some outcome and how it scientifically makes sense." Another student stated, "It helps you learn what the world is made of from the molecule properties to biological formations." These two students were from different SES groups and their PSSA scores were not close (366 points apart).

Reasoning for success

Using a broad lens across the data on the reason for students' perceived success in class and on tests, we discovered a very unexpected pattern. There was very little difference when comparing students' reasoning between the low SES group and the middle SES group. But there was a consistent, common pattern within both groups that reflected three specific explanations for why students did well in science from their perspective.

	lower PSSA scores	middle PSSA scores	higher PSSA scores
Both low and middle SES groups	studying, getting things done on time, and work ethic	good grades	natural ability

In both SES groups, students scoring at the lower end of the PSSA range attributed their academic success in science to their own work ethic usually described as *studying*. Typical comments included, "because I study hard and try my best," "I pay attention on the material that's being taught to me," and "because I listen and participate." Several mention the importance of submitting work on time, "Turn in homework and projects on time," and "because I do my work on time." Teachers were attributed with student success four times in the entirety of the data, and all were from this lower achieving group.

Students scoring in the middle range of the PSSAs did not tend to attribute their success in the science classroom to anything more specific than "getting good grades." They quoted high numeric scores and referenced good letter grades, but did not explain how or why they thought they got them. Typical comments include, "I get at least grades in the 90s," and "I usually get Bs and As for the whole time." There is a noticeable focus on grades and scores particularly in this group of middle range PSSA achievers.

Responses from students with the highest PSSA scores were very short and to the point. They attribute their success to simply being smart. Typical responses include, "I'm just a naturally smart student," "because I'm good at it," and "… it comes naturally for me." *Studying, work ethic,* and *grades* are never mentioned. Representative comments from this section were selected equally from the lower and middle SES groups.

Discussion

While the actual science test scores did indicate the middle SES group achieving slightly higher than the low SES group, the discrepancy was not as wide or distinctive as expected based on the existing literature. There could be many variables contributing to that phenomenon some of which may include the quality of the science teachers and program in this particular building, or the richly diverse population (both socioeconomically and ethnically) in this building. We wonder if the findings would be different if data were collected in two separate buildings on low and middle SES and compared.

Another relative surprise is the positive self-efficacy of students toward science as well as student reports that the vast majority (all participants except one) like science as a content area. We wonder again if that is specific to just this building, or if the dislike of science as a content area noted in previous literature may be changing.

The most striking finding, also unexpected, was the reasoning given by students for why they were doing well in science. Comments reflecting their perceptions were tiered in a consistent pattern based on PSSA scores with both SES groups mirroring each other. The comments were most common between the SES groups, and most different between the three PSSA achievement groups. We cannot explain this yet, but clearly it warrants more investigation.

Keeping in mind that this was a small project with a limited number of participants, findings from this study do raise several questions that warrant further investigation moving forward. Is the science achievement gap between low and middle SES groups beginning to narrow? Does the recent focus on STEM content have anything to do with this phenomenon? Or is there something distinctive or different about this particular middle school that is able to address the achievement gap in science? Further, does this measured narrower achievement gap exist in the other content areas in this building or is it specific to science?

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Appendix A

Student Survey

Do you like science? Why or why not?

(1=hate it 2=don't like it 3=it's okay 4=like it 5=love it)

1 2 3 4 5

_____
_____
_____

How do you think you are doing in science class? What makes you think that?

(1= really bad 2=not good 3=ok 4=good 5=great)

1 2 3 4 5

_____
_____
_____

How do you do on science tests? Why do you think that is?

(1=really bad 2=not good 3=ok 4=good 5=great)

1 2 3 4 5

_____
_____
_____

About The Author

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She serves on the Executive Board of the Pennsylvania Association for Middle Level Education and is an AMLE reviewer for the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

Sowing The Seeds of Advocacy

Dr. Priya M. Poehner, Ph.D.

Lock Haven University

Self-advocacy begins early as evidenced in children's early utterances of "more", "no", "yes", "I do it", etc. and children glean understandings about the world around them based on people's reactions to these words and phrases. These early understandings and experiences lay the foundation for advocacy defined as "any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of others." (www.allianceforjustice.org).

Looking back on our childhood experiences, most of us can think of moments when we had to advocate either for ourselves or someone else. Growing up in India with a younger brother with special needs, I was often frustrated at the lack of peer/ schooling opportunities for him. Some of my early advocacy attempts involved finding out about various schools that might work with his needs. I also made sure to invite my friends to spend time with me at our house so that my brother had opportunities to be around other children. These early moments led to other advocacy experiences: as a young international student in the US, I often had to advocate for my need for assistance with housing and employment. As a non-US citizen and a non-driver, I had to seek modifications to the existing rules and protocols within my teacher education experience. These difficult public conversations and pleas ran counter to my cultural upbringing in which I had been taught to manage with the hand I was dealt rather than "fight" for more. However, this self-advocacy led to a departmental awareness of issues faced by international

and less affluent students, which in turn led to changes to field experience policies and procedures.

The term advocacy is derived from the Latin *advocare* meaning “to call out for support.” This call for support differs from one culture to the next, with many choosing not to verbalize the struggles they face, but to handle it alone instead. While this strategy provides self-preservation, it does not allow for others to learn about issues faced by their peers and to discover collaborative solutions that have to potential to improve situations for many more people. History has demonstrated that when people have chosen to advocate for themselves, their actions led to ripples of many more feeling empowered to share their struggles and needs.

The year 2018 had the most teacher strikes in a decade after cuts to teacher education led to larger class sizes, lower salaries, hits to pension and benefits, and smaller classroom budgets. These teacher strikes were mostly victorious and raised public consciousness to the intricacies of classroom practice and needs previously overlooked. These strikes also reawakened conversations in teacher preparation programs to prepare teacher candidates for post-hire terminology and advocacy experiences. Teacher preparation programs need to provide opportunities for teacher candidates to have advocacy experiences as a part of their program of study. Teacher education programs, much like public schools, are facing many of the same crises. In 2018, I had the opportunity to collaborate with another colleague in the State System of Higher Education and provide our Middle Level teacher education candidates with an opportunity to share their stories of success and need with state Senators. These conversations contributed to the removal of part of a bill that could have potentially changed teacher certification grade bands in Pennsylvania to a structure that would not have been developmentally appropriate for either Early Childhood or Middle Level students. The young teacher education candidates used their voices to fight to maintain the quality and focus of their teacher education programs and their timely advocacy laid the groundwork for future

educational reform in the state. The seeds for advocacy might be small, but they have the potential for progress and much needed change.

The Importance of Young Adolescent Literature in Middle Level Teacher Education Programs: Getting to Know Our Students' Literary Tastes

About The Author

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Morgan Bentley is currently a sophomore at Kutztown University majoring in middle level education with concentrations in math and social studies.

Middle school is a time of discovery. It includes everything from what you like to eat in the school cafeteria to figuring out what you want to be when you "grow up". The ideal middle school would allow flexibility for the self-discovery of middle school students (AMLE, 2020). This includes a well-balanced and engaging curriculum. English Language Arts (ELA) classes provide excellent opportunities to reach students and leave a lasting impact. Most students have decided by this point whether they enjoy reading; especially the ones who don't. Reading is a life-long skill that students use on a daily basis. However, how are you supposed to get a middle schooler interested in something they find boring, time-consuming, and overall, not 'cool'? If we pay attention to what middle schoolers are individually interested in, we can find an engaging book for each student. A targeted course in young adolescent literature included in a teacher education program can provide a rich background knowledge for future middle level teachers.

It is important to have books that not only captivate the interest of our students, but provide the opportunity to understand themes, literary devices, and genres. Reading aloud to them is also an excellent strategy for students to "… learn reading strategies and vocabulary

words while building background knowledge. Adult interaction motivates children to read themselves" (Press et al., 2009). At Kutztown University, middle level majors are required to take an entire course that focuses on literature in the middle grades. In the class, students review what they learned themselves in middle school, read, (and for some, reread) books. The book selection is especially relevant to middle level curriculum, young adolescent themes, and various genres. In class discussions, we brainstorm ways to integrate them in the classroom with other subjects, and then apply these ideas in a cumulative activity at the end of the semester with an introduction to an abbreviated lesson plan.

As a sophomore who took ELU 221 (Literature for Middle Level Learners) this past fall, not only did I enjoy the class, but it also helped me understand my future students' perspectives as well. Many genres were covered including realistic fiction, mystery, historical fiction, and fantasy. It felt very much like a middle school environment as my classmates and I were discussing our favorite parts from the books, and especially the middle schooler humor that we not-so-secretly enjoyed. One significant benefit I derived from the class was that we read books that were from an extremely different perspective from how I grew up. It allowed me to confront my own biases that I didn't even realize I had, and gave me the opportunity to reflect and change. This came along with reading books such as *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas and *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park.

As a pre-service teacher, I understand I still have quite a way to go to prepare to become a full-fledged teacher. However, I think that a course like this is essential to every middle level education program. During middle school, young adolescents are just beginning to develop their identities. Carefully chosen stories including guided discussion can help us, as teachers, help the students find themselves. As a middle level teacher candidate, it was an important and necessary experience to open my mind to the perspectives of others who have had different experiences than my own. By reading these carefully selected books, I feel more

prepared to be open-minded towards my students' experiences and hopefully pass that open-mindedness to them.

References

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About The Author

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Failure Should Have Limits

When we think of grades, we often attribute them to either a letter grade or percentage. As a letter grade, we assign an A, B, C, D, and E or F. However, as a percentage, we have a 10 percent range for each letter from A thru D and a 50-percentage range for a F. If we were to assign a letter grade to every 10 percentage points that can be attributed to a student's failing grade then we would need to add letters G, H, I, J and K. This might seem a little ridiculous to assign students a K grade, but in fact that is what we are doing when we give them a zero. Zeros (or K grades) do not identify the students' ability or understanding of the content, only their lack of handing in an assignment, completing tasks on a particular due date, etc. Now don't get me wrong, students should not be "given" grades that are not warranted or deserved, but we also cannot penalize them beyond our typical grading system.

Another way of looking at how the power of zero impacts students' overall grades is to look at a simple science experiment. In the experiment, the teacher wanted the students to determine the average

daily temperature. If the students in a group were to record the temperature on Monday and it was 88°, Tuesday was 85, the student missed Wednesday's recording, Thursday was 89, and Friday as 91° then they could have two potentially two different averages if they were to use the zero (average 70.6°) or not (average 88.3°). The science teacher would indicate to the group that they would need to void the zero-temperature reading due to the fact it would greatly skew the averages and it would give a false representation of the true temperature recordings of the week. We can say the same is true of a student's grades in that a zero would greatly skew the average which would give a false representation of the student's ability to comprehend the material.

By using zeros in our traditional grading system, we are not taking an accurate representation of the student's knowledge, but grading their accountability or ability to adhere to a deadline. As educators, we need to accurately evaluate students on mastery of the content and give them multiple opportunities to give us a true representation of their learning. Thus, failure should have limits in order to justify the grading system and to accurately document students' true understanding of the curriculum.

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

Betwixt and Between: Education for Young Adolescents

The Journal of the Pennsylvania Professors of Middle Level Education

Middle level educators are cordially invited to submit work to be shared across the state and beyond the on-line journal, Betwixt and Between: Education for Young Adolescents.

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

Deadline for submissions: January 9, 2022

Publication date: Spring 2022

Manuscript Submission Guidelines:

We are seeking the following Submissions for 2022: Research Articles, Schools to Watch Principals, Middle Level Teachers, Middle Level Teacher Candidates, Middle School Students, and Middle Level Teachers)

Please visit: https://papomle.org/online-journal for specific "Call to Manuscripts" details.

General Content:

Betwixt and Between: Education for Young Adolescents is an open access peer-reviewed journal promoting research in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania regarding theories and best practices in the education and development of young adolescents. This journal provides for 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.

Content for special edition/Option for those currently in the field of middle level education:
Betwixt and Between is also interested in receiving editorials, professional experiences, action research, reflective item, etc. from those who are currently placed in the middle level grades. If you are teaching a middle level grade, student teaching a middle level grade, a principal of a middle level grade, or supervising a student teacher in a middle level grade, this special edition option is for you. *Please note there is a special interest in responses to teaching under the conditions and changes Covid-19 has presented to our schools.

Format

All submissions must be prepared using word processing software and saved in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or rich text format (RTF). Manuscripts must comply with the guidelines in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, current edition. Double space all text, including quotations and references, use 1 inch margins for top and bottom, and use 1.25 inch right and left margins. All text should be Times New Roman 11-point font. Complete references should be placed at the end of the manuscript, using the "hanging indent" function. Additional article publication formatting details are listed on the PA-POMLE and PAMLE web sites.

Submission Guidelines

1. Manuscripts must be submitted electronically via email attachment to Deana Mack (dmmack@geneva.edu), Editor.
2. Submissions must include three separate files saved in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or rich text format (RTF) as follows:

   Submission:

   - **Cover Page** – Include the information listed below in a separate file
     - Manuscript Title
     - Thematic Topic (if appropriate)
     - Submission Date
     - Author's Name
     - 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.
    - Charts or illustrative material will be accepted if space permits. Such materials must be camera-ready. Photographs will usually not be used unless they are black and white and of high quality.

3. The editor reserves the right to edit articles accepted for publication.

Review:

- Manuscripts are peer reviewed in the order they are received.
- Manuscripts must be received by January 9th for consideration for the spring issue.
- It is the policy of B&B not to return manuscripts. Authors will be notified of the receipt of the manuscript. After an initial review by the editors, those manuscripts that meet the specifications will be sent to peer reviewers. Authors will be notified if the manuscript is judged to be not appropriate for review. Following peer review (blind review by 2 peers) and editor review, the author(s) will be notified as to the status of the manuscript. The journal editors reserve the right to make editorial changes in the manuscript.
- 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.
- Currently, approximately 30% of articles are accepted on their first submission. Approximately 50% of articles are accepted on a provisional basis, meaning that they will be reconsidered once suggested revisions have been attempted.

Organization Membership

Members of each organization receive notification when new issues of Betwixt and Between are released. Don't miss an issue! Join the PAMLE and the PA-POMLE professional organizations today.

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 $309. To learn more, please visit our website.

http://www.pamle.org

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 learn more about our association online. http://www.papomle.org

Our journal is available at the following link: https://papomle.org/online-journal