The Vermont Middle Grades Collaborative

Democracy in Education:

A state-wide conference showcasing
effective middle grades practice

January 11, 2014

Program

Silver Maple Ballroom - 4th Floor
Davis Center
University of Vermont

middlegradescollaborative.org

Program Schedule

10 am – 10:55 am	Welcoming & Keynote Presentation
11 am – 11:45 am	Session A
12:00 – 12:45 pm	Session B
12:45 – 1:15 pm	Lunch
1:15 pm – 1:40 pm	Poster Session
1:45 – 2:45	Workshops
2:50 – 3:00 pm	Closing Remarks

Presentation Locations

Welcoming & Keynote   Silver Maple Ball Room 401
10 am - 10:55 am

Session A
11 am - 11:45 am

- Creating Effective Advisories   Jost Foundation Room 422
- Academic Language Strategies   Williams Family Room 403
- Differentiated Instruction and Assessment Chittenden Bank Room 413

Session B
12pm - 12:45 pm

- Using 1:1 Technology in the Classroom Jost Foundation Room 422
- Engaging Students in Mathematics Williams Family Room 403
- Building Community   Chittenden Bank Room 413

Poster Session   Livak Ball Room 417
1:15pm - 1:40 pm

Workshops
1:45pm - 2:45 pm

- Personalizing Learning in Community Silver Maple Ball Room 401
- Changing Perspectives   Chittenden Bank Room 413
- 1:1 with iPads at Milton High School Jost Foundation Room 422

Closing Remarks   Silver Maple Ball Room 401
2:50 pm - 3:00 pm

Presentation Descriptions

Welcome & Keynote Presentation   Silver Maple Ball Room 401

10 am – 10:55 am

Beyond Ordinary: Powerful Learning for the Middle Years
Nancy Doda
Teacher to Teacher
We are pulled in so many competing directions, but it is time once again to renew our faith in what matters most for young adolescent learning in the middle years. Join me to explore the big ideas that should lift us right up over the bureaucracy and into the hearts and minds of our young people.

Session A   11 am – 11:45 am

Creating Effective Advisories   Jost Foundation Room 422

Unifying Middle School Advisories with Technology
Heather Burt, Jennifer Reeves & Cassie Saikin
Lyndon Town School
Our goal is to create a more unified homeroom system within the middle school at LTS. Our morning meeting, called CPR is a component of Developmental Designs. In order to create a more unified system, we are creating a community website that will provide access to student, teacher, and family resources; morning meeting topics to be discussed by all homerooms; daily announcements; digital citizenship curricula; and student input, amongst other resources.

Changing Homeroom into Advisory
Andrea Gratton
Orleans Elementary School
 An examination of how check-ins, discussions, goals and games have on a group of underachieving, high needs seventh graders when their 15 minute daily homeroom time is converted into a safe and supportive advisory group.

Academic Language Strategies   Williams Family Room 403

Using Functional Linguistic Concepts to Deconstruct Complex Social Studies Text
Sarah Halpine and Don Taylor
Main Street Middle School
Students use functional linguistic concepts to deconstruct complex social studies texts, develop

an understanding of theme/rheme relationships, and then demonstrate their improved understanding through the construction of informational writing pieces. Students will be assessed through the analysis of pre and post writing samples, post-instructional surveys, and individualized writing conferences.

Teaching Academic Conversation Skills to Increase Content Area Understanding
Sylvia Fagin
Main Street Middle School
This project investigates how explicit teaching of academic conversation skills to middle-level English Language Learners (ELL) and mainstream students increases student to student talk time and understanding of subject-area content. The realities of a collaboration/consultation model between the ELL teacher and content classroom teacher in a 24-hour day will be explored

Academic Writing Genre Templates: An Action Research Project with English Learners
Ana Rawson, WSESU ESOL Director
Jennifer Course, WSESU ESOL Teacher
Barbara Tenney FCSU ESOL Teacher
Three separate ESOL teachers have implemented a curriculum based on Beverly Deriwianka's *Exploring How Texts Work: Academic Writing Genres.* In this presentation, we will explain how English Learners have gained insight on how to analyze and create texts based explicit instruction of different writing genres. We will also highlight our findings on language areas necessary to emphasize to help students unlock content understanding and produce effective academic writing pieces.

Flipping a Science Classroom
Mark Justin Pendergrass
Mater Christi School
In this presentation I will described my experiences in flipping a middle grades science classroom. I will share the strategies that have worked and offer suggestions to improve science teaching practice to increase student engagement.

Adding Badgestack to 8th grade CMP3 curriculum
Lisa Therrien
Harwood Union Middle School
Badgestack is a platform in which students work toward proficiency in particular skills or concepts in order to earn the larger badge for a topic. This action research project will explore the effects of adding Badgestack to an 8th grade CMP3 curriculum as a means for differentiation of practice.

Moving toward Standards Based Assessment and Grading
Rachel Miller
Missisquoi Valley Union
I will share the process that our school is creating to move from traditionally based grading to standards based assessment and grading.

Session B   12pm – 12:45 pm

Using 1:1 Technology in the Classroom   Jost Foundation Room 422

Nearpod Across Content Areas
Kelsey Higgins
People's Academy Middle Level
A promise in 1:1 classrooms is increased engagement and an enhanced ability for teachers to access formative feedback from students to drive just-in-time instruction. Learn how a middle level team has used the app Nearpod in their math, science, and humanities classes. In this interactive presentation you will have a chance see this app in action, learn how teachers use it for formative assessment, and gain an understanding of how you can use the tool in your own classroom.

21st Century Classroom Observations
Lizzy Clements and Matt Chandler
Edmunds Middle School
Productive group work eludes many classrooms. Establishing the norms for online group work presents additional challenges even to an experienced, 1:1 sixth-grade team. We will share how

our students critically examined their online conversations to yield student-generated strategies for effective online collaboration, reinforcing our broader team culture in the process.

Engaging Students in Mathematics   Williams Family Room 403

Toward Improving Math Efficacy and Math Outcomes through Partnered Problem Development and Use of Digital and Non-Digital Discussion Tools
Carrie Mauhs-Pugh and Priscilla Davenport
Currier Memorial School
Through this project students will be supported in developing norms for math discussion and peer evaluation, and will use these norms as they attack authentic math problems. They will be invited to create their own problems. The goals of this action research include: increased student self-concept as mathematicians, improved student understanding of social dynamics during academic discussion, improved collaboration skills, improved math skills and creativity, and diminished language barriers due to use of audio/video based technology during math discussions and assessment.

The Effects of Choice and Voice in Middle School Mathematics
Pam Quinn
Middlebury Union Middle School
8th grade math students chose a topic of interest to which they connected geometry concepts. In addition, they chose how they wanted to demonstrate their learning. At the conclusion of the project, students reflected on the experience and added their insights into the process.

Building Community   Chittenden Bank Room 413

Fostering Students' Global Awareness.
Susan Gibeault
Currier Memorial School
Through this project students will use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing; to interact and collaborate with others; and to identify how location influences cultural traits (comparing food, clothing, values in relation to location). The goals of the project are to: 1) increase students' acceptance and celebration of diversity within and outside the classroom; 2) increase students' global awareness by giving them the opportunity to collaborate and experience a culture different from their own; and 3) practice the important 21st century skills of collaboration, communication and critical thinking. These goals are aligned with the CCSS.

It Takes G.U.T.S to Build a School Community
Lindsay Citorik and Lauren LaValley;
Students: Kyla Dodge-Goshea, Kelsey Cram, Henry Bart, Wilson Worn
Otter Valley Union High School
The Otter Valley GEAR UP team will focus on improving school culture and building community in our middle school through the implementation of a structured and interactive advisory program, as well as providing feedback to teachers through student voice. Students will

be fully involved in the planning process of greetings, sharing activities, interactive games and informative curriculum to build community in advisory each day.

12:45 – 1:15 pm	Lunch	Silver Maple Ball Room 401
1:15 pm – 1:40 pm	Poster Session	Livak Ball Room 417

Collaborating with Families in a 1:1 Environment
Maura Kelly
Peoples Academy Middle Level
Over the course of the fall PAML has started a 1:1 iPad program. We have collaborated with families in a variety of ways to ensure that we are meeting their needs. Come and see how parent information nights, iPad open houses and a family table contract has shaped the way that one team designed its family involvement plan.

Imbedding movement into a mathematical setting to enhance student achievement and engagement
Maria D. Lovelette
Missisquoi Valley Union
This research action project seeks to address the social and cognitive need of adolescents who struggle in math physically, mentally and verbally. Rather than having the students sit and practice mathematical concepts during a 55 minute math session on a daily basis, every student will use their body to apply, see and develop mathematical skills through movement.

Including Student Voice in Providing Structures and Supports for Transitioning Sixth Grade Students into Middle School
Susan Pietricola
Alburgh Community Education Center
This action plan created a system of supports for students transitioning from a grade five classroom to a middle school environment to ensure student success in the sixth grade. Pre and post surveys were given to students to gain insight on how to best address student needs and preferences.

Using Information Reports As An Approach To Functional Linguistic Analysis In Science Classrooms
Jenny Magoon, Browns River Middle School
Adam Gollwitzer, Chautauqua Lake Central School
We employed Information Reports as a way to approach functional linguistic analysis within specific science topics. This strategy required students to document, organize, and store factual information on a topic. By introducing text organization and language features, we anticipated that students would produce their own quality Information Reports by the conclusion of instruction. We implemented the strategy at two separate schools and across two distinct content areas (Life Science and Earth Science).

Analyzing Informational Text for Sustainable Understanding
Wendi Dowst-McNaughton
West Rutland School
Students will read *Omnivore's Dilemma* using functional analysis. In differentiated groups students will analyze the structure and language for comprehension and critique of the text. The long-term goal of this sustainability unit is for students to sustainably apply their learning to access and understand informational texts in other subject areas.

ROOTS (Respect Of Ourselves, Town, and School)
Keith Hill, Sharon Jonynas, and five students
Green Mountain Middle School
The students will explain our club, how we began it, what we've done, and how we have improved our school culture.

Developing Narrative Orientation Through Guided Examination of Setting and Characterization
Kyle Chadburn
Brownington Central School
This project will develop more detail-oriented narrative writing practices in eighth grade students by focusing on techniques that introduce setting and character traits. This will include a deconstruction of the term "orientation", development and usage of specific graphic organizers, examination of excerpts from texts, and implementation of acquired skills in student writing.

GHOSTT Day (Giving Hope and Opportunity for Students Today and Tomorrow)
Kathryn Levesque, Dean Meltzer, Kara Merrill & Students at Randolph Union Middle School
Our project is to create a day to inspire eighth grade students to start thinking about their future goals. This day will include a morning kick off assembly that features our Gear Up students and an inspirational keynote speaker, two hands on workshops with invited community guests and one experiential workshop at the Randolph Technical Career Center.

Scaffolding a Writing Project for Middle Level Social Studies
Kraig B Hannum
Manchester Elementary Middle School
Each year students are asked to write more and more in content area classes. In an effort to improve both their writing skills and their knowledge on a content area subject, a scaffold system of steps will be created to help them meet the expectations of the assignment in as painless a way as possible. This project will have the students write an extended response in social studies using the VFW Patriot's Pen essay contest theme for 2013.

Functional Language Instruction in Special Education
Chris Guros
Main Street Middle School
Five sixth grade students receiving special education services in writing were provided with functional language instruction in the genre of informational reports. Writing samples from before and after instruction were studied to judge the effectiveness of instruction.

Abstract for the Unit: The Call of the Wild: An Exploration of Literacy via Fiction and Nonfiction
Victoria Taylor Smith
Crossett Brook Middle School
In this unit, my goal was to instill the love of great literature and the importance of nonfiction for my students. We found the value of literacy via *The Call of the Wild*. To deepen understanding, students read a nonfiction text of choice. Goals were multi leveled, and included a more meta-cognitive understanding of nonfiction

1:45 – 2:45   Workshops

Personalizing Learning in Community   Silver Maple Ball Room 401

Nancy Doda
Young adolescents are best served when they feel connected to a caring, personalized learning community. Given all of our academic charges, how can we create caring schools, teams, and classrooms that provide safe havens for powerful learning? Join me to examine approaches that can help us nurture this needed foundation for personalization and powerful learning.

Changing Perspectives   Chittenden Bank Room 413

Barbara Saxe and People's Academy Middle School Students
People's Academy Middle School Students present a panel discussion about how to change society's perspective of students with disabilities. They will use the book, *Out of My Mind*, by Sharon Draper as the focus of their discussion.

1:1 with iPads at Milton High School   Jost Foundation Room 422

Pete Wyndorf
Milton High School
This presentation shares insights and emerging teaching practice using iPads as a language arts teacher at Milton High School. I will discuss how my students use iPads for sustained research and support with deconstructing context texts.
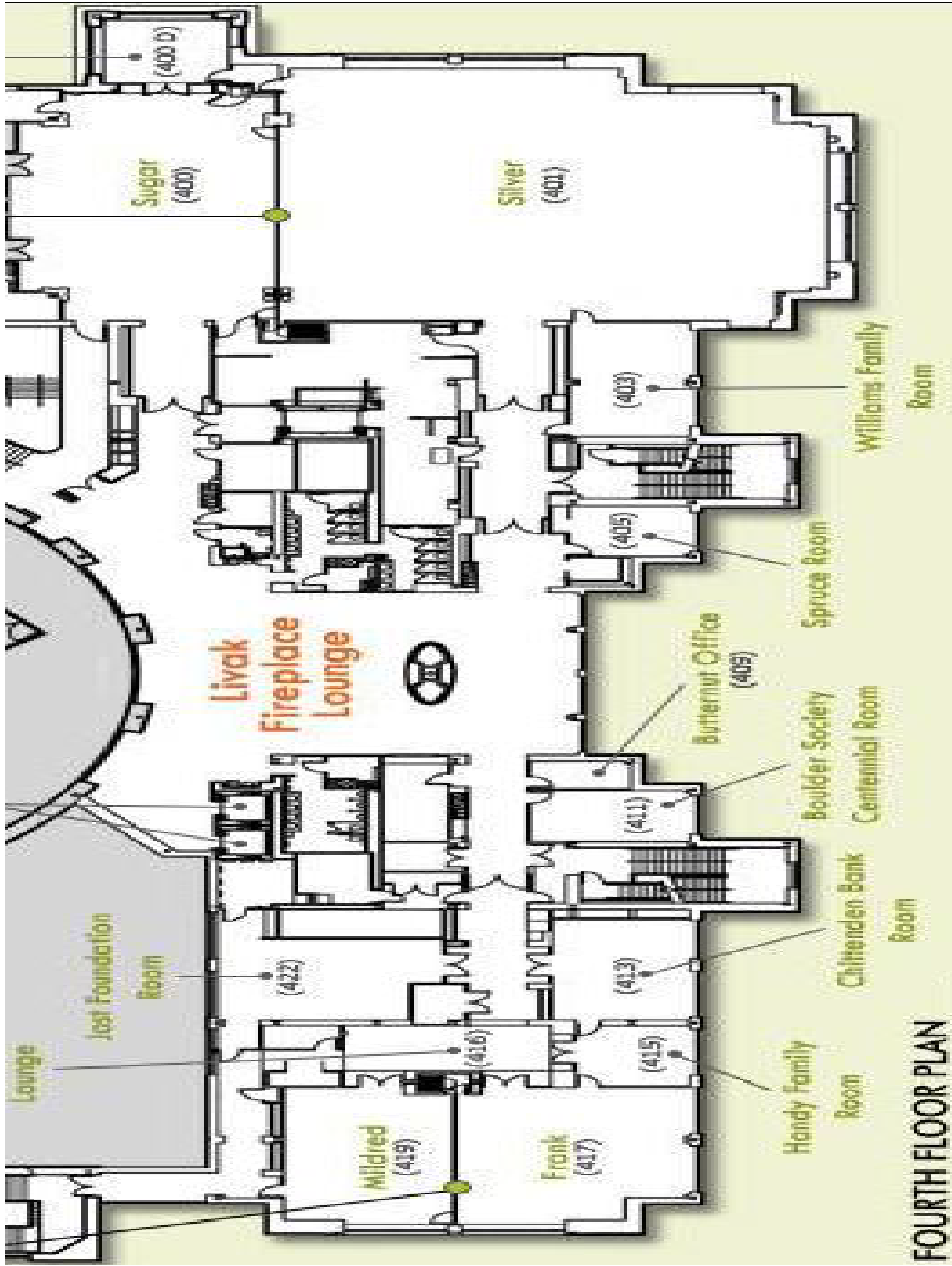
2:50 – 3:00 pm   Closing Remarks   Silver Maple Ball Room 401

Thank you for joining us today.
Have a safe trip home and a very pleasant evening.
middlegradescollaborative.org

Sugar
(400)

(400D)

Silver
(401)

Livak
Fireplace
Lounge

(403)

Williams Family
Room

(405)

Spruce Room

Butternut Office
(409)

Boulder Society
Centennial Room

(411)

Chittenden Bank
Room

(413)

Jost Foundation
Room

(422)

Lounge

(416)

(415)

Handy Family
Room

Mildred
(419)

Frank
(417)

FOURTH FLOOR PLAN