

Marshall Memo 144

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
July 10, 2006

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Quotes of the Week

“When the basics like supplies and a schoolwide discipline plan were combined with an administration that offered useful feedback and scheduled time for teachers to collaborate, new teachers were very likely to stay in their schools.”

Conclusion of “Why New Teachers Leave... and Why New Teachers Stay” by Susan Moore Johnson et al., *American Educator*, Summer 2006 (Vol. 30, #2, p. 8-21, 45)
http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/issues/summer06/Teacher.pdf

“[I]f we want children to read well, we must find a way to induce them to read lots; if we want to induce children to read lots, we must also teach them to read well.”

Marilyn Jager Adams (quoted in item #2)

“Every time teachers give feedback to students, they convey messages that affect students' opinions of themselves, their motivation, and their achievement.”

Carol Dweck (see item #1)

“Praise or criticism that focused on children's personal traits (like being smart or good) created a real vulnerability when children hit setbacks. They saw setbacks as showing that they were bad or incompetent – and they were unable to respond constructively. In contrast, praise or criticism that focused on children's strategies or the efforts they made to succeed left them hardy, confident, and in control when they confronted setbacks. A setback did not mean anything bad about them or their personal qualities. It simply meant that something needed to be done, and they set about doing it.”

Carol Dweck (*ibid.*)

1. A Study on Praise and Students' Beliefs About Intelligence

(an "oldie but goodie" article – one of a series predating the Marshall Memo)

In this fascinating 1999 article in *American Educator*, Columbia professor Carol Dweck describes an experiment that she and a colleague conducted with 400 fifth-graders to explore the impact of adults' comments as the students tackled a challenging task. "Every time teachers give feedback to students," she writes, "they convey messages that affect students' opinions of themselves, their motivation, and their achievement." But what is the impact?

Dweck was particularly interested in the effect of praise. A common theory during the "self-esteem" movement of the 1990s was that (a) students should have lots of opportunities to experience success; (b) adults should praise them for their successes, telling them that they're intelligent; (c) this would make students feel good about being smart, love learning, and become confident and successful.

Dweck says that research has shown that this theory is wrong, especially when students suspect that the tasks they're being given are not challenging. "Giving students easy tasks and praising their success tells students that you think they're dumb," she says. "It's not hard to see why. Imagine being lavishly praised for something you think is pretty Mickey Mouse. Wouldn't you feel that the person thought you weren't capable of more and was trying to make you feel good about your limited ability?"

Research has shown that this is true of children with low achievement. Youth in this category are obsessed with their intelligence – and proving it to others. "The children worried about how smart they looked and feared that failing at some task – even a relatively unimportant one – meant they were dumb," reports Dweck. "They also worried that having to work hard in order to succeed at a task showed they were dumb. Intelligence seemed to be a label to these kids, a feather in their caps, rather than a tool that, with effort, they could become more skillful in using."

But what about praising students for succeeding at genuinely challenging tasks? Exploring this question was the goal of Dweck's experiment with a national sample of fifth graders. Here's how it went:

- The researchers gave all the students a puzzle that was challenging but easy enough so that all of them could do quite well. Students worked on the puzzle individually, and they were all successful.

- One-third of the students were praised for their *intelligence*. "Wow, you got x number correct," said the researcher. "That's a really good score. You must be smart at this."

- One-third of the students were told their score but were praised for their *effort*. "You must have worked really hard," said the researcher.

- One-third of the students were praised simply for their *performance*, with no comment on why they were successful.
- The researchers found that all three groups of students enjoyed the puzzles equally in the initial round, were equally eager to take the problems home to practice, and were equally confident about their future performance.
- The researchers then asked students if they wanted to try a harder puzzle or an easier one to work on next.
- Most of the students who had been praised for intelligence chose the easier puzzle. Clearly they had internalized the message that they needed to continue looking smart and shouldn't risk making mistakes and dispelling that idea.
- Most of the students who were praised for effort chose the harder puzzle. They had internalized the message that hard work leads to achievement; they wanted to keep engaged in the process and were not diverted from taking on a more challenging task by a concern about how smart they might – or might not – look.
- The third group was right in the middle.
- Next, the researchers gave students a set of problems that were harder, and they didn't do as well. Afterwards, they asked students whether they had enjoyed the second round of puzzles, did they want to take them home to practice, and how smart did they feel.
- The students who had been praised for intelligence didn't like the harder task at all and were no longer interested in taking problems home to practice. And they began to question their intelligence. "In other words," writes Dweck, "the same students who had been told they were smart when they succeeded now felt dumb because they had encountered a setback. They had learned to measure themselves from what people said about their performance, and they were dependent on continuing praise in order to maintain their confidence."
- The students who had been praised for effort liked the harder task even more than the initial easy puzzle, and were eager to take it home so they could practice and master it. And these students didn't think that the difficulty of the task – or their lack of success – reflected on their intelligence. They just thought they needed to work harder to succeed. "Thus," concludes Dweck, "the students praised for effort were able to keep their intellectual self-esteem in the face of setbacks. They still thought they were smart; they still enjoyed the challenge; and they planned to work toward future success."
- The researchers then gave students a third set of problems that were at the same difficulty level as the initial set, where all the students had been successful.
- The students who had been praised for their intelligence performed much worse than the other two groups – and much worse than they had on the initial puzzles, which were of the same level of difficulty.
- The students who had been praised for effort did the best. And the third group performed in the middle.
- The researchers added one more wrinkle to the experiment. They gave students the opportunity to tell a student at another school about the task they had just completed and what score they received.

- More than 40 percent of the students who had been praised for intelligence lied about their score, exaggerating it upward. The students in the other two groups almost all told the truth about their scores. “This suggests that when we praise students for their intelligence,” says Dweck, “failure becomes more personal and therefore more of a disgrace. As a result, students become less able to face and therefore deal with their setbacks.”

- Finally, the researchers interviewed students about their beliefs about their own intelligence.

- Students who were praised for effort said that intelligence was a matter of their skills, knowledge, and motivation – things over which they had some control and could improve.

- Students who were praised for their intelligence said they thought of intelligence as something innate – a capacity that you either have or don’t have. These and other negative effects of being praised for intelligence were just as pronounced – sometimes more so – for students who were high achievers. “Perhaps it is even easier to get these youngsters invested in looking smart to others,” speculates Dweck. “Maybe they are even more attuned to messages from us that tell them we value them for their intellects.”

“How can one sentence of praise have such powerful and pervasive effects?” asks Dweck. “In my research, I have been amazed over and over again at how quickly students of all ages pick up on messages about themselves – at how sensitive they are to suggestions about their personal qualities or about the meaning of their actions and experiences. The kinds of praise (and criticism) students receive from their teachers and parents tell them how to think about what they do – and what they are.”

Dweck and her colleague have conducted similar experiments with kindergarten students, with the same results. “Praise or criticism that focused on children’s personal traits (like being smart or good) created a real vulnerability when children hit setbacks,” she writes. “They saw setbacks as showing that they were bad or incompetent – and they were unable to respond constructively. In contrast, praise or criticism that focused on children’s strategies or the efforts they made to succeed left them hardy, confident, and in control when they confronted setbacks. A setback did not mean anything bad about them or their personal qualities. It simply meant that something needed to be done, and they set about doing it.”

Dweck sees immediate implications of this research for educators. If we are tempted to reassure our vulnerable, low-achieving students that they are smart, she says, it will backfire! If we are tempted to spur high-achieving students on to higher achievement by telling them they’re gifted, curb the impulse! “Don’t get students so invested in these labels that they care more about keeping the label than about learning,” she writes. “Instead of empowering students, praise is likely to render students passive and dependent on something they believe they can’t control. And it can hook them into a system in which setbacks signify incompetence and effort is recognized as a sign of weakness rather than a key to success.”

Of course we should praise students, says Dweck, but in a different way – for their study strategies, their effort, their concentration, the interesting ideas they came up with, the way they followed through. It’s incredibly affirming to a child when an adult really appreciates

what went into a successful effort. This is more work than simply saying they're brilliant, but it means a lot more – and is better for them.

What about praising a child who really impresses us by doing something quickly, easily, and perfectly? Don't do it, says Dweck. "We should not be giving students the impression that we place a high value on their doing perfect work on tasks that are easy for them. A better approach would be to apologize for wasting their time with something that was too easy, and move them to something that is more challenging."

The good news, says Dweck, is that it is relatively easy to modify the views of young children about their intelligence and effort, and when we do that, their performance improves markedly. Here are her suggestions for educators:

- First, get students to focus on their potential to learn.
- Second, teach them to value challenge and learning over looking smart.
- Teach them to concentrate on effort and learning processes in the face of obstacles.

All this is entirely compatible with high academic standards, says Dweck. "[W]e can (and must) give students frank evaluations of their work and their level of skill," she says, "but we must make clear that these are evaluations of their current level of performance and skill, not an assessment of their intelligence or their innate ability... We do not lie to students who are doing poorly so they will feel smart. That would rob them of the information they need to work harder and improve. Nor do we just give students hard work that many can't do, thus making them into casualties of the system."

The key, of course, is for students to learn strategies for getting better. "It is not enough," concludes Dweck, "to keep harping on and praising effort, for this may soon wear thin. And it will not be effective if students don't know how to apply their effort appropriately. It is necessary that we as educators understand and teach students how to engage in processes that foster learning, things like task analysis and study skills."

The key is how we use praise, Dweck concludes. "Used correctly, it can help students become adults who delight in intellectual challenge, understand the value of effort, and are able to deal with setbacks. Praise can help students make the most of the gifts they have. But if praise is not handled properly, it can become a negative force, a kind of drug that, rather than strengthening students, makes them passive and dependent on the opinion of others."

"Caution – Praise Can Be Dangerous" by Carol Dweck in *American Educator*, Spring 1999

2. Reading Fluency – How to Foster It, and What Doesn't Work

In this persuasive article in the summer 2006 *American Educator*, Oregon-based literacy consultant Jan Hasbrouck rejoices that reading fluency is getting so much attention among educators these days – but is worried that in an effort to improve students' fluency, too many teachers are pursuing two strategies that are ineffective: silent reading and round-robin reading.

It's certainly true, as Marilyn Jager Adams wrote in 1990, that "if we want children to read well, we must find a way to induce them to read lots." But many educators took this idea

and made the leap to implementing sustained silent reading, often for as much as 30 minutes a day, sometimes with the teacher reading silently too. What USSR/DEAR programs ignored was Adams's follow-up statement: "if we want to induce children to read lots, we must also teach them to read well."

Research has shown that unassisted independent reading doesn't help students who are weak in basic reading skills because they don't use their silent reading time well – either wasting time doing little or no reading, or trying to read materials that are above their current reading level, getting frustrated, and developing negative attitudes toward reading (which won't result in their reading lots). The National Reading Panel report (issued in 2000) confirmed that sustained silent reading does not improve fluency, although there is no harm in fluent readers reading silently while the teacher works with struggling students.

The second ineffective strategy – round-robin reading – is a time-honored, well-intentioned attempt to make sure all students are reading in class by having them take turns reading aloud, while providing support if there are words or concepts some students don't know. But round-robin reading has four killer disadvantages:

- Struggling readers can be humiliated and demoralized when they are forced to read aloud in front of their classmates.
- More proficient readers in the class may be uncomfortable as well, and they are subjected to poor models of oral reading.
- Round-robin reading is highly inefficient because it provides only minimal reading practice for students – and therefore has little chance of improving fluency.
- Students who aren't reading aloud are usually not paying attention and therefore gain little from the lesson.

Hasbrouck understands why these two strategies have been so seductive to so many teachers who want to improve their students' reading fluency: "Silent reading *seems* like a good idea since it gives students additional practice," she writes. "Round Robin *seems* like a good idea since it focuses the class on oral reading. But increasing fluency requires more practice, more support, and more guided oral reading than either of these strategies can deliver."

How teachers can measure fluency

What exactly *is* fluency? According to the National Reading Panel, it's the ability to read text accurately, at an appropriate rate, and with good expression. Fluency is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for understanding the meaning of a text; when children read slowly or haltingly, a text is a broken string of words and phrases and it's much more difficult to get the meaning. So it's important for teachers to be able to know their students' fluency levels, intervene with students who have fluency problems, and maintain the fluency of those who are reading proficiently.

Assessing a student's fluency involves capturing three elements: accuracy, rate, and "prosody" (expression and phrasing). The last is the hardest to measure, but the National

Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) invented a four-point scale that can be used to rate a student after the student reads a passage aloud:

National Assessment of Educational Progress Fluency Scale		
Fluent	Level 4	Reads primarily in larger, meaningful phrase groups. Although some regressions, repetitions, and deviations from text may be present, these do not appear to detract from the overall structure of the story. Preservation of the author's syntax is consistent. Some or most of the story is read with expressive interpretation.
Fluent	Level 3	Reads primarily in three- or four-word phrase groups. Some small groupings may be present. However, the majority of phrasing seems appropriate and preserves the syntax of the author. Little or no expressive interpretation is present.
Non-Fluent	Level 2	Reads primarily in two-word phrases with some three- or four-word groupings. Some word-by-word reading may be present. Word groupings may seem awkward and unrelated to larger context of sentence or passage.
Non-Fluent	Level 1	Reads primarily word-by-word. Occasional two-word or three-word phrases may occur—but these are infrequent and/or they do not preserve meaningful syntax.

Another checklist developed by Hudson, Lane and Pullen (2005) gives a more detailed assessment of a student's prosody:

1. Student placed vocal emphasis on appropriate words.
2. Student's voice tone rose and fell at appropriate points in the text.
3. Student's inflection reflected the punctuation in the text (e.g., voice tone rose near the end of a question).
4. In narrative text with dialogue, student used appropriate vocal tone to represent characters' mental states, such as excitement, sadness, fear, or confidence.
5. Student used punctuation to pause appropriately at phrase boundaries.
6. Student used prepositional phrases to pause appropriately at phrase boundaries.
7. Student used subject-verb divisions to pause appropriately at phrase boundaries.
8. Student used conjunctions to pause appropriately at phrase boundaries.

The other two elements of fluency – accuracy and rate – are much easier to measure and can be captured in a single number – the WCPM – words correct per minute. A quick way to get the WCPM is by taking students aside one at a time, having them read an unknown passage for a minute, counting the number of words they read, and subtracting the number of errors. [See the full article for details on choosing passages and what constitutes an error.] Hasbrouck says that getting the WCPM is an extremely time-efficient way to track students' reading fluency, and research has shown that it also provides a surprisingly accurate sense of *their overall reading proficiency*. A low WCPM score is an alarm bell – like a canary dying in

a coal mine – but it doesn't give the diagnosis. A more detailed assessment is required to find if the weakness is with decoding, vocabulary, sight words, etc.

Hasbrouck recommends that teachers use this WCPM procedure to (a) screen all students several times a year, (b) help diagnose a possible cause of struggling students' problems, and (c) monitor the progress of struggling students who are getting additional support. [See the full article for details and grade-by-grade norms.]

Teaching fluency

What does good fluency instruction look like, and how can teachers help students whose fluency is way behind their peers? Here's what Hasbrouck recommends for students at different levels:

- *For beginning readers* – The name of the game in kindergarten and the early months of first grade is decoding, word recognition, and word analysis – in other words, accuracy. Pushing students to “read faster” is not helpful at this stage and will lead them to guess and read less accurately. But as students become proficient at decoding, teachers should encourage them to have their reading “sound like talking” and constantly model appropriate reading rate, phrasing, intonation, and expression as they read large-format books aloud to the class.

- *Maintaining fluency for on-level readers* – Starting in grade 2, Hasbrouck recommends the frequent use of four techniques to maintain and further develop students' reading fluency:

- Choral reading – Students read along orally with the teacher, following the teacher's pace, getting the benefit of a model while they practice reading aloud. The teacher can stop at any point to ask questions, comment on the text, discuss vocabulary, or prompt students who aren't reading along. Choral reading works best if all students follow along in the text with a finger or marker.
- Cloze reading – The teacher reads a text orally and students read along silently, and once or twice every few sentences the teacher pauses at an important vocabulary or concept word and students read it aloud, in unison. Cloze reading is much better than round-robin reading, since students are kept engaged and hear a model of good reading.
- Partner reading – Students read aloud with a partner, with pairs of students carefully selected by the teacher so that less-proficient students are paired with a slightly stronger reader, but the gap in reading levels is never too large to cause embarrassment or frustration. One routine is for the stronger reader to read first, with the other student then re-reading with support.
- Readers' Theater and poetry reading – Dramatic reading of material that is enjoyable and entertaining is another technique that improves fluency. This gives students an incentive to read, re-read, and achieve mastery of an entertaining text.

- *Improving struggling readers' fluency* – For students who are not reading fluently, Hasbrouck says the research is clear on the most important elements: modeling, repeated reading, and feedback. There are several programs on the market – Read Naturally, Six Minute Solution, Quick Reads, and Great Leaps Reading. Each has some of the key components, but

Hasbrouck is most impressed by Read Naturally, which is particularly strong in repeated reading. In this program, each student is assessed at the beginning, gets a baseline fluency level, and sets a personal fluency goal. Students then work their way through the program (spending 20-30 minutes a day) and track their progress on a two-color bar graph. Hasbrouck cites evidence of dramatic progress in students' fluency levels using this program.

Hasbrouck ends her article with two caveats. First, while fluency is important, it's not everything. It's therefore not productive for teachers to push their students beyond the 50th percentile on the fluency scale; they need to reserve time for other key areas of reading – especially increasing vocabulary and getting students to get better at monitoring their own comprehension.

Second, Hasbrouck cautions that a lot is still unresolved in the research. Among the ongoing debates:

- The value of having students read lists of words versus sentences and paragraphs;
- Repeated readings of the same passage versus reading several different passages with similar vocabulary;
- Whether it's better to practice fluency with narrative or expository texts, randomly selected or highly controlled passages;
- The role of silent reading in a comprehensive reading program;
- The role of prosody in fluency and comprehension;
- The best way to achieve automaticity with high-frequency words – studying word lists or reading passages.

“Drop Everything and Read – But How?” by Jan Hasbrouck in *American Educator*, Summer 2006 (Vol. 30, #2, p. 22-31, 46-47),

http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/issues/summer06/fluency.htm

3. Key Factors in Out-of-School-Time Programs

In this article in the summer issue of *Review of Educational Research*, a six-person team of academicians and practitioners shares a meta-analysis of 35 studies of out-of-school-time programs. Their conclusions:

- Out-of-school-time programs can have positive effects on the achievement of at-risk students in reading and math.
- After-school programs and summer school programs have similar impact; when deciding which model to use, educators should look at other factors such as duration, class size, cost, staff recruitment, and location.
- Both elementary and secondary students can improve their reading achievement in out-of-school-time programs; by contrast, mathematics gains are more common at the secondary level.
- Out-of-school-time programs don't have to focus exclusively on academics to have a positive impact on student achievement. A mix of academic and social activities that focus on the whole child can boost achievement.

- Out-of-school-time program administrators should monitor student learning to judge the appropriate investment of time for specific strategies and activities.
- Longer programs are not necessarily more effective, although a minimum of 45 hours seems to be necessary to have an impact on achievement. “Optimal duration may depend on the content area,” say the authors.
- Programs that deliver one-on-one tutoring for at-risk students are beneficial, especially in reading.

“Out-of-School-Time Programs: A Meta-Analysis of Effects for At-Risk Students” by Patricia Lauer, Motoko Akiba, Stephanie Wilkerson, Helen Apthorp, David Snow, and Mya Martin-Glenn in *Review of Educational Research*, Summer 2006 (Vol. 76, #2, p. 275-313), no e-link available

4. The Overrepresentation of Minority Students in Special Education

In this article in the July issue of *Teachers College Record*, six Indiana University researchers report on their study of the disproportionality of minority students in special education classes. After interviewing 66 educators, the team concluded that many teachers and schools feel unprepared to meet the needs of economically disadvantaged students, that classroom behavior and cultural gaps and misunderstandings are especially challenging issues, that special education is perceived by many as the only resource available for helping students who are not succeeding in school, and that people tend to shy away from direct discussion of the issue of race. The article concludes with these implications:

- The factors that create and maintain racial disparities in special education referral and placement are highly complex and interactive. It’s therefore critical to avoid simplistic or linear solutions.
- Reducing minority student referrals to special education without reducing the access to needed educational resources will require substantial increases in the resources available in general education to meet the needs of disadvantaged students.
- The apparent unwillingness or inability of many white educators to confront the inescapable facts of racial disparity in education may itself contribute to the continued inability to effectively address these problems.

“The Context of Minority Disproportionality: Practitioner Perspectives on Special Education Referral” by Russell Skiba, Ada Simmons, Shana Ritter, Kristin Kohler, Michelle Henderson, and Tony Wu in *Teachers College Record*, July 2006 (Vol. 108, #7, p. 1424-1459), no free e-link available

5. Online Professional Development for Teachers

In this interview in the new issue of the *Harvard Education Letter*, Harvard professor Chris Dede argues that online professional learning can be valuable for four reasons. First, he says, “Some people who are silent in face-to-face professional development sessions find their voice in online interactions, for a variety of reasons.” Second, online professional development

can be more powerful because it gives people time to make sure they understand what they're reading or listening to before they respond. Third, online sessions allow teachers to learn when and where they want so they can make optimal use of scarce time. And finally, online courses are less costly so that ideas can be more easily taken to scale.

But Dede is not against in-the-flesh workshops: "The best professional development is not face-to-face only or online only," he says, "it's both... What we do know is that transformation is an intellectual, emotional, and social process, and that having strong support on all three dimensions is necessary, whether it's online or face to face." In-person sessions offer immediacy on the emotional and social level, which builds up intensity. Online sessions offer a broader set of resources, more flexibility with time, and a chance for shy people to find their voice.

Dede believes that before principals jump into online professional development they should conduct a needs assessment of their schools' professional development offerings and look for areas where broader external resources might be most helpful. He has selected ten model online programs based on their track record and results. He cautions that these are "first-generation" programs and things will just keep getting better. The first three have some commentary.

- EdTech Leaders Online: <http://www.edtechleaders.org> - This collection of courses from Educational Development Center (EDC) trains district professionals to teach online workshops to their colleagues.

- WIDE World: <http://wideworld.pz.harvard.edu> - This Harvard-developed model teaches professionals how to apply the "Teaching for Understanding" approach in their districts.

- Milwaukee Public Schools Professional Support Portal – This is not only for professional development but also for attendance, IEPs, lesson planning, and other day-to-day work in schools: <http://mpsportal.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/portal/server.pt>

- e-Mentoring for Student Success: <http://ementoring.mspnet.org>
- Learning to Teach with Technology Study: <http://lts.indiana.edu>
- Online Masters in Science Education: <http://scienceonline.terc.edu>
- PBS TeacherLine and Seeing Math: <http://teacherline.pbs.org/teacherline> and <http://seeingmath.concord.org/>
- Quest Atlantis: <http://atlantis.crlt.indiana.edu>
- Seminars on Science: <http://learn.amnh.org>
- Teachers' Domain: <http://www.teachersdomain.org>

"Online Professional Development for Teachers" – An Interview with Chris Dede by Andreae Downs in *Harvard Education Letter*, July/August 2006 (Vol. 22, #4, p. 8, 7), no e-link available

6. Another View on Single-Sex Schools and Classes

Doug Reeves, head of the Center for Performance Assessment and a faithful Marshall Memo reader, had the following push-back on last week's item on single-sex classrooms (issue 143, #4c). Here's his message:

“The allegation about ‘half a century of research’ by Professor Smithers with regard to single-sex classrooms begs for a rebuttal. Even if the contention were true, the implication is not necessarily the elimination of single-sex classes. If it makes no difference, then it doesn't hurt either girls or boys, and thus the idea is acceptable even if the ‘only’ result is improved classroom discipline and less teacher stress.

“But the more important issue is whether the assertion is true. Other researchers have reviewed the evidence from the UK and come to precisely opposite conclusions – see the amply footnoted *War Against Boys*; even people who detest the author will have trouble contesting the citations. Recent experiments I've seen in Indianapolis and Atlanta support the hypothesis that achievement for both genders improves and discipline problems decline in single-sex classrooms.

“Single-sex classrooms are not a panacea – the basics of rigorous curriculum, quality teaching, and meaningful feedback are all clearly the primary variables in the equation. But why ignore the data from secular and religious schools in support of single-sex classes, at least for part of the day? At the very least, we might consider listening to the testimony of students themselves who are less than thrilled with the social engineering of mixed gender physical education classes.

“The other missing part of this equation is why the ‘girl advantage’ hypothesized by *Newsweek* really exists. It's possible that another round of faux brain research, barely distinguishable from the phrenology of the 19th Century, will explain it all. But it's also possible that what girls are typically rewarded for is quiet compliance. Some of the disparity between boys and girls in such indicators as Grade Point Average and National Honor Society membership might disappear if students were given the opportunity to engage and participate without being on stage in front of the opposite gender. Similarly, at least some of the boys' disadvantage might be reduced if they were less focused on being the alpha male in the colony and more focused on the lessons at hand.”

Douglas Reeves, personal communication, July 5 and 10, 2006

7. Short Item:

Children with autism – This moving and authoritative article on autism in *American Educator* may be of interest to some Marshall Memo readers.

“Alone in the World” by Laura Schreibman in *American Educator*, Summer 2006 (Vol. 30, #2, p. 32-44), http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/issues/summer06/autism.htm

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Do you have feedback? Is anything missing?

If you have comments or suggestions, if you saw an article or web item in the last week that you think should have been summarized, or if you would like to suggest additional publications that should be covered by the Marshall Memo, please e-mail: kim.marshall8@verizon.net

About the Marshall Memo

Mission and focus:

This weekly memo is designed to keep principals, teachers, superintendents, and others very well-informed on current research and effective practices in K-12 education. Kim Marshall, drawing on 36 years' experience as a teacher, principal, central office administrator, and writer, lightens the load of busy educators by serving as their "designated reader."

To produce the Marshall Memo, Kim subscribes to 44 carefully-chosen publications (see list to the right), sifts through scores of articles each week, and selects 5-10 that have the greatest potential to improve teaching, leadership, and learning. He then writes a brief summary of each article, pulls out several striking quotes, provides e-links to full articles when available, and e-mails the memo to subscribers every Monday (with occasional breaks; there were 50 issues in 2004-05).

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- How to change access e-mail or password

Publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educator
American School Board Journal
ASCD SmartBrief
Atlantic Monthly
Boston Globe
CommonWealth Magazine
District Administration
Ed. Magazine
EDge
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Update
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
JESPAR
Jimmy Kilpatrick
Journal of Staff Development
Language Learner
Middle Ground
Middle School Journal
NASSP Bulletin
New York Times
New Yorker
Newsweek
PEN Weekly NewsBlast
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal
Principal Leadership
Principal's Research Review
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Rethinking Schools
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