

Marshall Memo 264

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
December 15, 2008

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Quotes of the Week

"Human selfishness can only be unhooked when a great passion overwhelms the selfish agenda."

Chris Warner and Don Schmincke (see item #1)

"I believe that children know when they are in the presence of a teacher who is a continuous and enthusiastic learner. When teachers value their own learning, they are more convincing when they encourage children to invest in learning."

Joan Richardson in *Phi Delta Kappan*, December 2008 (Vol. 90, #4, p. 234)

"Without knowledge, achievement remains a distant dream."

Donna Celano and Susan Neuman (see item #5)

"A necessary condition for active, strategic processing in struggling readers of all ages is accessible text... When we meet children where they are and have a sense of where they need to go, strange but wonderful things happen."

Lydia Conca (see item #8)

"If policy makers could open their ears and eyes to student and teacher perceptions of time, they would learn that the secular Holy Grail is decreasing interruptions of instruction, encouraging richer intellectual and personal connections between teachers and students, and increasing classroom time for ambitious teaching and active, engaged learning."

Larry Cuban (see item #3)

1. Leading with Passion

In this *Wharton Leadership Digest* article, business writers Chris Warner and Don Schmincke draw a leadership lesson from mountain climbing. What intrigues them is the fact that there is much less team spirit and cohesiveness coming *down* a mountain than going *up* – less focus and more complaining, whining, and injuries. Why? Without a challenge, they believe, there is a tendency to put personal desires ahead of the group’s goals, gravitate to comfortable cliques, and revert to one’s own personal needs.

Unfortunately, this is the way people in most organizations behave during the regular workday. “Human selfishness can only be unhooked when a greater passion overwhelms the selfish agenda,” say Warner and Schmincke. “Humans need a compelling saga: a story or drama that inspires passion for a strategic result, a passion that overwhelms selfishness.” Leadership, they say, consists in “managing a greater shared passion.” The saga needs to:

- Have a dramatic theme of beating an opponent, achieving an ideal, or fulfilling a purpose.
- Set a goal that’s difficult to achieve, a challenging summit that needs to be conquered.
- Be captured in language that drives performance, values, and strategic focus even in the face of risk, sacrifice, or pain.
- Clearly define what success (or failure) looks like.
- Focus people on strategic results, not territorial concerns.
- Spawn stories and legends that permeate an organization’s culture.

“High Altitude Leadership: What the World’s Most Forbidding Peaks Teach Us About Success” by Chris Warner and Don Schmincke in *Wharton Leadership Digest*, November 2008 (Vol. 13, #1); this article came from the authors’ book, *High Altitude Leadership* (John Wiley & Sons, 2008)

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2. A Critique of Ruby Payne’s *Framework for Understanding Poverty*

In this *Teachers College Record* article, four professors examine the work of Ruby Payne, in particular her best-selling 2005 book, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*. Their comments on Payne’s work are based on a thorough analysis of the book; in addition, two of the authors attended the immensely popular *Aha! Process* workshops that Payne and her colleagues give to educators around the country.

Payne claims that her book and workshops are based on data, but the authors say that she has conducted no actual research, cites few sources, and when she does, she cites them

incorrectly or depends on non-empirical sources. “Furthermore,” they say, “Payne does not write as a practitioner, embedding her claims in narratives of her own practice. She writes in generalities, as if her claims were founded in research data.”

The authors devote most of the article to examining numerous “truth claims” made by Payne in her book. Here is an example: “Often the attitude in generational poverty is that society owes one a living.” The authors identified 607 truth claims, coded them, entered them into a database, and created four broad categories within Payne’s analysis of poverty: social structures, the immediate environment, language, and characteristics of individuals. Here is a brief summary of the authors’ critiques in each category:

Social Structures:

- *Class* – Payne asserts that there are three socioeconomic classes in America: the poor, the middle class, and the wealthy. Critique: scholars of the U.S. population say it consists of an underclass (12%), working poor (13%), working class (30%), middle class (30%), upper-middle class (14%), and capitalist class (1%). Thus, Payne’s description of class structure is an oversimplification.
- *Poverty* – Payne says that poverty is not a question of income but of culture, and other resources are more important than income to escaping poverty. Critique: poverty is a lack of money, and one “leaves poverty” when one has obtained sufficient financial resources.
- *Culture of poverty* – Payne says that poor people, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or geographic location, all live within a definable, self-perpetuating culture. Critique: this concept, coined by Oscar Lewis in his 1961 book, *Children of Sanchez*, has been discredited by anthropologists and sociologists; it overlooks the diversity of characteristics among the poor and blames the victims.
- *Race, ethnicity, and gender* – Payne does not address race directly, but through a series of nine fictional case studies, six of which involve people of color, Payne enlists her readers’ own associations about race and poverty to link her claims about poverty with African-Americans and Hispanics. Critique: although there are strong correlations between race and class, most poor Americans are white.
- *Hidden rules* – According to Payne, poor people live by a set of “hidden rules”, for example: the noise level is high (the TV is always on and everyone may talk at once); the most important information is non-verbal; one of the main values of an individual to the group is an ability to entertain; a sense of humor is highly valued; decisions are made for the moment based on feeling or survival; and poor people view money as something to be spent, while to people in the middle class, money is something to be managed. Payne says that understanding these hidden rules can help teachers be less angry with students’ behavior and guide them in teaching middle-class values. Critique: these stereotypes are based on anecdotes, not research.

The immediate environment of poor children:

- *Material dailiness* – Payne suggests that the life of poor children is radically different from that of teachers. One way she seeks to demonstrate this is through a “quiz” in

which teachers see if they could survive in poverty. Among the survival skills are knowing how to get guns, how to get someone out of jail, how to function in a Laundromat, get food from grocery store garbage bins, have common-law marriages, use duct tape, and get a green card. Critique: “Many of Payne’s representations of the daily lives of the poor emphasize depravity, perversity, or criminality,” say the authors. “These representations do not account for the majority of low-income people, who work hard, obey the law, and do not exhibit the behaviors and attitudes that Payne has described.” Payne’s descriptions are not based on research, and many of them overlap with the experiences of college students and other social strata (including the fact that duct tape is a staple in almost all American homes and most guns are owned by middle-class people).

- *Resources* – Payne says that poor people will be able to overcome their economic status if they learn to overcome a scarcity of eight types of resources: financial, emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, support systems, relationships/role models, and knowledge of hidden rules. Critique: “Payne’s conceptualization of resources thus permits her to move poverty out of a material realm and into a behavioral one,” say the authors. “Resources are understood as being available to the individual, if the individual chooses to avail herself of them by drawing from her immediate environment.”
- *Poor families* – Poverty is handed from generation to generation, says Payne, and it’s the responsibility of the school to break this pattern. Poor families are female-centered, with men leaving their wives but then living with their mothers or girlfriends. Homes are noisy and chaotic, with lots of coming and going. Critique: poor families have more differences than similarities, researchers have found, but there commonalities: a belief in their own abilities, a determination to raise healthy children, providing love, and valuing children’s independence and competence.

The language of poor children:

- *Limited vocabulary* – Payne says the language of the poor has limited vocabulary and relies on non-verbal signs. Critique: this contradicts another characterization (see below) – that the poor talk around a point using more words than are necessary. Researchers say that the language of the poor is as vocabulary-rich as that of other groups; it’s just that some of the vocabulary is non-standard.
- *Circumlocution and indirection* – Payne says that poor people “circle the mulberry bush” and don’t quickly get to the point. Critique: researchers have found this to be true of some middle-class African-Americans, but the poor are more direct.
- *Audience involvement* – Payne says that discourse among the poor consists of oral storytelling with audience chime-ins, overlaps, and interjections. Critique: although this is the style of some African-Americans, there is no evidence that it is associated with all low-income people.
- *Register* – Payne emphasizes the importance of casual and formal register and the importance of standard English to middle-class success. She advises teachers to teach correct English directly. Critique: “Payne’s poorly delineated summary of language

patterns is worse than no help at all,” say the authors, “since it prepares teachers to blur distinctions among groups whose language is completely different and who need different forms of support from their teachers.” There are better approaches to helping students code-switch between their home speech patterns and the language of power.

Characteristics of individuals:

- *Cognition* – Payne says that students from low-income households lack cognitive strategies: have blurred and sweeping perceptions; see only half of what is on a page; have impaired spatial and temporal orientation; lack concepts or vocabulary for directions, location, object size, or object shape; are not able to keep the memory of an object constant; and aren’t able to hold two objects or sources in mind to compare them. Critique: “Payne’s assertions again characterize the poor, without evidence, as deeply flawed human beings, whose personal failings make continued poverty – or worse conditions – inevitable,” say the authors.
- *Worldview* – Payne says the poor see life as chaotic, live from moment to moment, don’t have a concept of the future, are fatalistic, lack agency, value entertainment more than anything else, and disregard the consequences of their actions. Households are “unkempt and cluttered,” and adults don’t use files and planners to organize information. Critique: again, these are generalizations that ignore variations within low-income people; as for a desire for entertainment, that seems to be true worldwide, irrespective of poverty.
- *Men and women* – Payne says that among the poor, “A real man is ruggedly good-looking, is a lover, can fight physically, works hard, takes no crap.” Women socialize among women, stay at home, and take care of their men by feeding them and downplaying their faults. Mothers are the center of their families and have multiple sexual relationships. Teenage pregnancy and motherhood is common and accepted as part of the culture of poverty. Critique: Payne focuses on behavior and the culture of poverty, whereas research indicates that the most important factor in these behaviors is a lack of money. If teachers are attuned to their students as people, rather than as stereotypes, they can draw on substantial “funds of knowledge” and competencies to support their development and enhance their education.

In sum, the authors believe that Payne’s book is a classic example of blaming the victim. “At its root,” they say, “deficit thinking holds that students who struggle or fail in school do so because of their own internal deficits or deficiencies. These deficits are evident... in limited intellectual abilities, linguistic shortcomings, lack of motivation to learn, and immoral behavior.” Payne’s work is based on stereotypes, not research, say the authors, and reinforces ways of thinking and talking about poverty that are “false, prejudiced, or at the very least, limited.” The authors are deeply concerned that Payne’s books and workshops will influence teachers to stereotype poor children, think that their job is “fixing” them, resulting in lower expectations and placement in lower academic tracks and a diet of rote drill and practice.

The authors also criticize Payne for not suggesting that students might be involved and empowered to overcome their socioeconomic status.

Finally, the authors take Payne to task for not looking at the bigger picture of poverty. “Nowhere in her book does Payne state that poverty, rather than the poor, is the problem that must be addressed,” they write. “We believe that to discuss poverty among caring people obligates one to challenge others to do something about poverty itself – to give, to volunteer, to speak out, to hold politicians accountable – in short, to change a system that perpetuates poverty.”

“This lack of attention to a critical perspective is consonant with Payne’s individualistic, deficit, blame-the-victim perspective,” conclude the authors. “... If the poor are poor simply because they do not know how to behave as if they were not poor, then the middle class and the wealthy should not be taxed to provide public assistance, public health, public schooling, or a public sphere in which the poor might participate. According to such a perspective, neither structural inequality, nor public policy, nor barriers to good jobs, nor lack of money cause the plight of the poor; they just don’t have the right story structure, or tone of voice, or register, or cognitive strategies.”

“Miseducating Teachers About the Poor: A Critical Analysis of Ruby Payne’s Claims About Poverty” by Randy Bomer, Joel Dworin, Laura May, and Peggy Semingson in *Teachers College Record*, December 2008 (Vol. 110, #12, p. 2497-2531), no e-link available

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3. Is More Time in School the Answer?

In this lead article in *Kappan*, Stanford professor/author/former superintendent Larry Cuban asks why various attempts to increase school time have almost always failed to get traction. Since *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, he says, reformers have pushed five different strategies:

- *A longer school year* – Proposals have called for expanding the usual 180-day year to as many as 220 days. But a 2008 report found that very few districts have extended their calendar.

- *A year-round calendar* – Advocates argue that eliminating the long summer vacation would reduce summer learning loss and make better use of facilities, even if the number of days remains the same. But only about 5 percent of U.S. students are on a year-round calendar, most of them in California.

- *Adding instructional time to the school day* – The argument has been made that the 6-1/2 hour day is so riddled with interruptions that there are only five hours of instructional time. But all the advocacy has resulted in increasing instructional time in elementary schools by an average of only 10 minutes.

- *Extending the school day* – The increase in the number of families in which both parents work has put pressure on schools to provide after-school programs, homework help, and tutoring after school. Some programs (including Edison and KIPP schools) have extended their days until around 5:00 p.m. This is the one area in which there has been some change in

recent years, although usually the core academic day isn't any longer. Massachusetts is the exception; it recently launched an effort to help districts lengthen the school day and year.

- *Cybereducation and home schooling* – Starting with Ivan Illich in the 1960s and continuing into the home schooling movement of recent years, parents who are disaffected with the public schools have tried to opt out of the system. The Internet and the development of self-instructing computer programs have made it more practical to get a good education outside of school. But Cuban says that even with recent increases, only about 3 percent of children are in this category.

“Reformers have spent decades trotting out the same recipes for fixing the time problem in school,” he concludes, “For all the hoopla and all of the endorsements from highly influential business and political elites, their mighty efforts have produced minuscule results.” There are three reasons for this failure, he believes: (a) Extending learning time means paying teachers more money, so that’s a big-ticket item; (b) Research on the impact of additional learning time is flawed and has not proved that additional time is the key variable in student achievement; and (c) Most Americans believe schools’ primary mission is producing good citizens: “School is the agent for turning 4-year-olds into respectful students engaged in their communities,” says Cuban, “a goal that the public perceives as more significant than preparing children and youths for college and the labor market.”

Teachers and students view time differently, he says; their common concern is *quality*, not quantity. “What matters most to teachers are student responses to daily lessons, weekly tests, monthly units, and the connections they build over time in classrooms, corridors, during lunch, and before and after school,” writes Cuban. “...Those connections account for former students pointing to particular teachers who made a difference in their lives... Teachers believe there is never enough time in the daily schedule to finish a lesson, explain a point or listen to a student. Administrative intrusions gobble up valuable instructional time that could go to students.” For a substantial number of students who are turned off, “spending time in classrooms listening to teachers, answering questions, and doing homework is torture. The hands of the clock seldom move fast enough for them. The notion of extending the school day and school year... is not a reform to be implemented but a punishment to be endured.” Cuban goes on to describe the pressured world of college-bound students, struggling to put together the perfect combination of AP results and after-school activities and make it through their overscheduled days. “In class,” he concludes, “... both teachers and students are clock watchers, albeit for different reasons.”

Cuban believes that advocates of more school time have missed the essential point. “The crude policy solutions of more days in the year and longer school days do not even begin to touch the deeper truth that what has to improve is the quality of ‘academic learning time,’” he says. “If policy makers could open their ears and eyes to student and teacher perceptions of time, they would learn that the secular Holy Grail is decreasing interruptions of instruction, encouraging richer intellectual and personal connections between teachers and students, and increasing classroom time for ambitious teaching and active, engaged learning... Like the larger public, I am unconvinced that requiring students and teachers to spend more time in

school each day and every year will be better for them. How that time is spent in learning before, during, and after school is far more important than decision makers counting the minutes, hours, and days students spend each year getting schooled.”

“The Perennial Reform: Fixing School Time” by Larry Cuban in *Phi Delta Kappan*, December 2008 (Vol. 90, #4, p. 240-250), http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/k_v90/k0812cub.htm; the author can be reached at cuban@stanford.edu.

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4. “Response to Intervention” – Why Isn’t It Catching On?

In this *Education Week* article, Christina Samuels reports that “response to intervention” (RTI) hasn’t spread widely in American schools, despite the U.S. Department of Education’s aggressive promotion of the idea in the last few years. What exactly *is* response to intervention? Here are the essential components:

- Initial instruction takes place in the regular-education classroom, using the best possible methods and materials.
- Students are assessed to see if any of them are having difficulty learning.
- Students who are struggling are given intensive instruction in small groups using “scientifically based” approaches.
- Those students are assessed on their “response” to this “intervention” – in other words, did they learn?
- Those who are still struggling are given even more intense, individualized help, and perhaps referred for special-education services if that seems necessary.

So the basic idea is good initial instruction, checking immediately for understanding, and prompt assistance for struggling students to catch learning problems before they become more serious. All of this should be a natural part of regular-education classrooms, say its proponents, not an add-on. If it’s done right, student achievement should improve and referrals to special education should decrease.

[Here are two possible reasons that response to intervention hasn’t been more widely adopted: (a) “Response to intervention” is a jargony, somewhat confusing label; in fact, some districts use different terms when they implement it; and (b) The basic idea – teach well, assess frequently, and follow up relentlessly – is so basic to good instruction that it doesn’t sound like something new. And yet many teachers teach, test, and move on without addressing learning difficulties, so the *idea* of response to intervention is important. The question is how to package and name it so that teachers and school leaders will recognize its value and use it to change ineffective patterns of instruction.]

“‘Response to Intervention’ on NEA’s Agenda” by Christina Samuels in *Education Week*, Dec. 10, 2008 (Vol. 27, # 15, p. 9) <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2008/12/10/15rti.h28.html>

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5. How Can a Public Library Be Can Be a Gap-Widener?

“We believe the achievement gap will not dissipate until we can deal with the underlying knowledge gap,” say professors Donna Celano and Susan Neuman in this troubling *Kappan* article. “Knowledge acquisition... is not limited to the classroom. Particularly in today’s information-based society, children are exposed to knowledge-gaining opportunities during much of their out-of-school time. Unfortunately, knowledge acquisition is not equal for all children.”

The authors go on to report two research findings: (a) Middle-class and lower-SES children spend similar amounts of time in public libraries; and (b) More-fortunate children read longer books with more print, visit websites that are more information-rich, and have significantly more adult supervision and support when they read and use computers. Poorer children read shorter books with less print, use computers mostly for entertainment games, and are seldom supervised, encouraged, and supported by an adult mentors.

“These differences in usage,” conclude Celano and Neuman, “are leading to an ever-widening knowledge gap between children from different income levels... Without knowledge, achievement remains a distant dream.”

The key variable is adult supervision and support for less-fortunate children so they can get equal value from the abundant intellectual resources in public libraries.

“When Schools Close, the Knowledge Gap Grows” by Donna Celano and Susan Neuman in *Phi Delta Kappan*, December 2008 (Vol. 90, #4, p. 256-262); the article can be purchased at <http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kappan.htm>

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6. Essay-Writing As a Strategy for Fostering Resilience in Children

In this *Education Week* commentary article, Rutgers professor Maurice Elias says that students facing difficulties in their lives benefit greatly by telling stories about their experiences and feelings. “In fact,” says Elias, “a number of research studies have validated the fact that writing about difficult circumstances is therapeutic for those unable to change what they must live through... This idea taps in to the universally recognized healing and uplifting power of storytelling.”

Drawing on the work of psychologist James Pennebaker and philanthropist Sir John Templeton, the John Templeton Foundation has started the Laws of Life essay-writing program in communities worldwide (see <http://www.lawsoflife.org/>). Plainfield, New Jersey joined the program and asked fifth and eighth graders to submit essays on love, responsibility, respect, relationships, perseverance, self-discipline, courage, honesty, and kindness. Students were also allowed to submit songs, artwork, theater and choreography, poetry, and graphic arts. The best essays were celebrated at a banquet attended by parents, community leaders, the commissioner of education, and the mayor. One student wrote about the fear he and his siblings felt when his mother was arrested and child protection services were about to remove them from their home, and how one of his mother’s friends fought for legal custody when no family member

appeared. The “law of life” this student cited was the importance of giving love even to people one doesn’t know.

“The Plainfield experience illustrates how urban youths, so often the object of remediation and subjected to the pedagogy of poverty, can have their learning energized by reflection and inspiration,” writes Elias. “When they can address their life circumstances and intense challenges and share these experiences with classmates and families in an open manner, it reduces the emotional barriers that often hinder their progress. For most students, in regular and special education alike, extraordinary obstacles have not irrevocably impaired their moral compasses; these can be recalibrated in part by writing laws-of-life essays, studying and taking part in related readings, and entering into the resulting conversations in their classrooms, homes, and community... All academic success and social resilience is grounded in positive, caring relationships, and the Laws of Life process helps strengthen these in many ways.”

“How to Foster Children’s Resilience While They Wait for Schools to Improve” by Maurice Elias in *Education Week*, Dec. 10, 2008 (Vol. 27, # 15, p. 36, 26), no free e-link available; Elias can be reached at RutgersMJE@aol.com.

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7. Reaching Diverse Learners in Reading Classes

In her president’s message in *Reading Today*, Oklahoma State University professor and International Reading Association president Barbara Walker acknowledges the staggering diversity of learning styles, reading levels, and background experiences of students in every classroom and describes four ways that effective teachers are “making a difference by making it different:”

- *Using open-ended questions* – The way a discussion is conducted can open or close children’s minds to a text. Questions like these elicit a wide range of responses:

- Have you ever had that kind of experience?
- Can you point to something in the text that makes you think that?
- Does anyone want to say anything more?
- What made you think that?
- Are there any other ways to think about ---?
- That’s a very interesting way to think about ---

Keeping a journal is another way to encourage diverse learners to respond to and make meaning from texts, images, and videos.

- *Using a variety of texts* – Some students respond better to expository texts, some to poetry, some to narrative, some to songs, famous speeches, or readers’ theater scripts. And since students in any given class read at different levels, it’s also important to make available easy, medium, and challenging texts.

- *Using a variety of teaching formats* – These include whole-group activities, small-group interactions, and individual reading, writing, and projects.

- *Using a variety of teaching techniques* – “There is no single method or single combination of methods that can successfully teach all children to read,” says Walker.

“Therefore, teachers must have a strong knowledge of multiple methods for teaching reading and a strong knowledge of the children.”

“Multiple Pathways Transform Literacy Instruction” by Barbara Walker in *Reading Today*, December 2008/January 2009 (Vol. 26, #3, p. 16), no e-link available

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8. Matching Text Difficulty to Students’ Current Reading Levels

In this article in *Reading Today*, Saint Joseph College (CT) professor Lydia Conca says that the pressure of No Child Left Behind and AYP is leading some teachers to push students to read material that is too difficult for them. This is not productive, says Conca, and she and her graduate students have formulated the following guiding principle: “A necessary condition for active, strategic processing in struggling readers of all ages is accessible text.” Students’ view of their capability as readers varies with text, she says. “When text is not too hard, they are more willing to summon the effort needed to read strategically... When we meet children where they are and have a sense of where they need to go, strange but wonderful things happen. Reading can indeed become a natural act.”

“Can Learning to Read Really Be ‘Natural’?” by Lydia Conca in *Reading Today*, December 2008/January 2009 (Vol. 26, #3, p. 18), no e-link available

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9. Highly Recommended Children’s Fiction

In this regular *Reading Today* feature, bookstore manager David Richardson and librarian Susan Dove Lempke list their top ten children’s fiction books for the year:

Dave’s Top Ten:

- *Where the Steps Were* by Andrea Cheng (Wordsong 2008) age 8 and up
- *That Book Woman* by Heather Henson (Atheneum 2008) age 6 and up
- *Little Brother* by Cory Doctorow (Tor 2008) age 14 and up
- *Wave* by Suzy Lee (Chronicle 2008) all ages
- *Shooting the Moon* by Frances O’Roark Dowell (Atheneum 2008) age 10 and up
- *Bad Kitty Gets a Bath* by Nick Bruel (Roaring Brook Press 2008) age 7 and up
- *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins (Scholastic 2008) age 12 and up
- *Savvy* by Ingrid Law (Dial 2008) age 10 and up
- *In a Blue Room* by Jim Averbeck (Harcourt 2008) all ages
- *The Underneath* by Kathi Appelt (Atheneum 2008) age 11 and up

Susan’s Top Ten:

- *Old Bear* by Kevin Henkes (Greenwillow 2008) age 3-6
- *Traction Man Meets TurboDog* by Mini Grey (Knopf 2008) age 4-8
- *A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever* by Marla Frazee (Harcourt 2008) age 5-8
- *Way Up and Over Everything* by Alice McGill (Houghton Mifflin 2008) age 5-8

- *Lady Liberty* by Doreen Rappaport (Candlewick 2008) age 8-12
- *The London Eye Mystery* by Siobhan Dowd (David Fickling Books 2008) age 9-12
- *The Willoughbys* by Lois Lowry (Houghton Mifflin 2008) age 10 and up
- *Coraline* (a graphic novel) by Neil Gaiman (HarperCollins 2008) age 10-16
- *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins (Scholastic 2008) age 12 and up
- *Paper Towns* by John Green (Dutton 2008) age 14 and up

“Wonders for the Holidays Ahead: Dave’s Top Ten and Susan’s Top Ten” by David Richardson and Susan Dove Lempke in *Reading Today*, December 2008/January 2009 (Vol. 26, #3, p. 29), no e-link available

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10. Nonfiction Book Picks

In this *Reading Today* feature, librarian Susan Dove Lempke zeroes in on eight excellent non-fiction books:

- *Senses on the Farm* by Shelley Rotner (Millbrook 2009) age 3-7
- *Used Any Numbers Lately?* By Susan Allen and Jan Lindaman (Millbrook 2008) age 5-7
- *A Home for Dixie: The True Story of a Rescued Puppy* by Emma Jackson (Collins 2008) age 4-8
- *Wangari’s Trees of Peace: A True Story from Africa* by Jeanette Winter (Harcourt 2008) age 4-8
- *One Hen: How One Small Loan Made a Big Difference* by Katie Smith Milway (Kids Can 2008) age 5-9
- *Lucky 13: Survival in Space* by Richard Hilliard (Boyd’s Mills 2008) age 9-11
- *Paleo Bugs: Survival of the Creepiest* by Timothy Bradley (Chronicle 2008) age 9-12
- *How Many Ways Can You Catch a Fly?* By Steve Jenkins and Robin Page (Houghton Mifflin 2008) age 7-11

“Fun, Fresh, Top-Notch Children’s Nonfiction off the Shelf” by Susan Dove Lempke in *Reading Today*, December 2008/January 2009 (Vol. 26, #3, p. 34), no e-link available

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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 37 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 more than a hundred 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 evening (with occasional breaks; there are about 50 issues a year).

Subscriptions:

Individual subscriptions are \$50 for the school year. Rates decline steeply for multiple readers within the same organization. See the website for these rates and information on paying by check or credit card.

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- All back issues (also in PDF or Word)
- A database of all articles to date, searchable by topic, title, author, source, level, etc.
- How to change access e-mail or password

Publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educator
American Journal of Education
American School Board Journal
ASCD, CEC SmartBriefs, Daily EdNews
Catalyst Chicago
Changing Schools (McREL)
Ed. Magazine
EDge
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher (TESOL)
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
JESPAR
Journal of Staff Development
Language Learner (NABE)
Middle Ground
Middle School Journal
New York Times
Newsweek
PEN Weekly NewsBlast
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal
Principal Leadership
Principal's Research Review
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
Teacher Magazine (online)
Teachers College Record
The Atlantic Monthly
The Language Educator
The New Yorker
The Reading Teacher
Theory Into Practice
Tools for Schools/The Learning Principal