

Marshall Memo 553

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
September 22, 2014

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Quotes of the Week

“Our system has a fundamental bias toward dealing with problems only after they happen, rather than spending up front to prevent their happening in the first place.”

James Surowiecki in “Home Free?” in *The New Yorker*, September 22, 2014

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/09/22/home-free>

“If low-performing fourth-graders are to be taught from second-grade books, when do they catch up?”

Timothy Shanahan (see item #5)

“Homework has a branding problem. Or, to be a little less pointy-headed about it, everybody hates homework.”

Bruce Feiler (see item #8)

“People tend to be very bad multitaskers, even people who say, ‘I’m a great multitasker.’”

Erika Patall (see item #8)

“We don’t need to be victims of our emotions. We have a prefrontal cortex that allows us to evaluate whether or not we like the emotions that are running us.”

Walter Mischel (see item #1)

“Cruising around in the convertible.”

How a North Brunswick, New Jersey teacher describes scooting around on a wheeled stool conferencing with individual students (overheard during a school visit 9/12/14)

1. Insights on Self-Control

In this *New York Times* article, author Pamela Druckerman reports on a conversation with Walter Mischel, the Columbia University psychologist who conducted the “marshmallow” experiments in the 1950s. His well-known finding was that five-year-olds who could defer gratification – resisting the urge to gobble down a marshmallow or cookie so they could get two when the researcher returned – grew up to be thinner, have higher SAT scores, earn more advanced degrees, use cocaine less, and cope better with stress.

But Mischel (pronounced me-SHELL) says lots of people have drawn the wrong conclusion from his research, believing erroneously that young children’s inability to resist temptation is their lifelong destiny. Self-control can be taught, he says, and that’s especially important for those who are helping low-SES children succeed in school. It also applies to grown-ups trying to resist checking e-mail every few minutes, eating too much bread, yelling at their spouse, or going to bed too late.

“Part of what adults need to learn about self-control is in those videos of 5-year-olds,” says Druckerman. “The children who succeed turn their backs on the cookie, push it away, pretend it’s something inedible like a piece of wood, or invent a song. Instead of staring down the cookie, they transform it into something with less of a throbbing pull on them.” Adults can use similar strategies: Take the bread off the dinner table. When a waiter offers a chocolate mousse, imagine that a cockroach has just crawled across it. When you’re upset, imagine viewing yourself from the outside.

Our brains have two warring parts, explains Mischel. The limbic system demands instant gratification; the prefrontal cortex is rational and goal-oriented. “We don’t need to be victims of our emotions,” he says. “We have a prefrontal cortex that allows us to evaluate whether or not we like the emotions that are running us.” The secret to self-control is training the prefrontal cortex to take control. Specific if-then plans work best: *If it’s before noon, I won’t check e-mail* or *If I feel angry, I will count backward from 10*. This is more difficult for children who’ve been exposed to chronic stress – their limbic system is in overdrive. But if their environment changes, their self-control can improve.

Sitzfleisch alone doesn’t guarantee success, says Mischel. To achieve, people need a “burning goal” that gives them a reason to use their distraction skills. Mischel’s burning goal from childhood was to “make a life that would help my family recover from the trauma of suddenly becoming homeless refugees” (they fled Vienna when the Nazis took over). His current goal is to find coping skills for children suffering from trauma. At 84, he distracts

himself from the afflictions of advancing age. “Melancholy is not one of my emotions,” he says. “Quite seriously, I don’t do melancholy. It’s a miserable way to be.”

“Learning How to Exert Self-Control” by Pamela Druckerman in *The New York Times*, September 14, 2014, <http://nyti.ms/1x2vckj>; Mischel’s about-to-be released book (with Alan Alda) is *The Marshmallow Test: Mastering Self-Control*.

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2. Pretesting As a Key to Learning

In this *New York Times Magazine* article, Benedict Carey asks us to imagine that on the first day of a difficult college course, before we had studied anything, we were able to see the actual questions on the final exam. “Would that help you study more effectively?” he asks. “Of course it would. You would read the questions carefully. You would know exactly what to focus on in your notes. Your ears would perk up anytime the teacher mentioned something relevant to a specific question. You would search the textbook for its discussion of each question.” But that would be considered cheating!

What if you actually *took* the final exam at the beginning of the course? You would do terribly, of course, but the experience would have many of the same positive effects as the “cheating” scenario, sharply improving your overall performance.

How can doing badly on a test produce positive results? It’s because of what psychologists call the pretest effect – “the attempts themselves change how we think about and store the information contained in the question,” says Carey. Answering incorrectly primes our brain for what’s coming later. Failing the pretest provides more learning benefits than conventional studying. In other words, “Testing might be the key to studying, rather than the other way around,” he says. “As it turns out, a test is not only a measurement tool. It’s a way of enriching and altering memory... The test, that is, becomes an introduction to what students should learn, rather than a final judgment on what they did not.”

Why is conventional studying – reading, re-reading, highlighting – less effective? Psychologists believe it’s because we tend to misjudge and overestimate our knowledge and skills. “We are duped by a misperception of ‘fluency,’” says Carey, “believing that because facts or formulas or arguments are easy to remember *right now*, they will remain that way tomorrow or the next day. This fluency illusion is so strong that, once we feel we have some topic or assignment down, we assume that further study won’t strengthen our memory of the material. We move on, forgetting that we forget.” Fluency creates overconfidence and plays tricks on our judgment.

This insight about learning goes back to 1620, when Francis Bacon wrote, “If you read a piece of text through twenty times, you will not learn it by heart so easily as if you read it ten times while attempting to recite it from time to time and consulting the text when your memory fails.” In 1916, Columbia University psychologist Arthur Gates conducted experiments and found that the best way to memorize a Shakespeare sonnet was to spend a third of the time trying to memorize it and two-thirds of the time trying to recite it from memory. In effect, testing was a form of studying and constant improvement.

In the 1930s, Herman Spitzer, a doctoral student at the University of Iowa, wondered, if testing is so helpful, when is the best time to do it? He had 3,500 sixth-graders read an age-appropriate article and then divided them into groups, giving them quizzes at different time intervals and then measuring long-term retention. The students who were quizzed earliest had by far the best recall of the material they'd studied, even through all the students had studied for the same amount of time.

What's going on here? "Retrieving a fact is not like opening a computer file," says Henry Roediger III of the University of St. Louis. "It alters what we remember and changes how we subsequently organize that knowledge in our brain."

Elizabeth Ligon Bjork and Nicholas Soderstrom at UCLA explored this idea further, giving some students pretests at the beginning of lectures and comparing long-term retention with students who didn't take pretests. Pretested students did poorly on the tests, but as long as they were given the right answers and explanations soon afterward, the long-term result was significantly higher retention than the control group. Bjork and others have pondered why this happens. Here are some possible explanations:

- First, students get a glimpse of what the teacher intends to teach, which helps them see where instruction is headed and how the information fits into the course narrative. Students who get the pretest preview are more confident in judging what's important and what isn't. Teachers always try to signal this as they teach, but pretested students are more attentive and hear what they're saying better. "Taking a practice test and getting wrong answers seems to improve subsequent study," says Bjork, "because the test adjusts our thinking in some way to the kind of material we need to know."

- Second, wrong guesses puncture students' overconfidence about what they know. A student might be sure he knows that Canberra is the capital of Australia, but when confronted by a multiple-choice item with Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide as alternative answers, he's suddenly not so sure. "If you're studying just the correct answer, you don't appreciate all the other possible answers that could come to mind or appear on the test," says Robert Bjork, another UCLA professor. Pretesting is a kind of "fluency vaccine."

- Third, retrieving is a different mental process than straight studying. The brain is digging out information, along with a network of associations, and that alters and enriches how the network is re-stored. Guessing operates in similar fashion. "Even if the question is not entirely clear and its solution unknown," says Carey, "a guess will in itself begin to link the question to possible answers. And those networks light up like Christmas lights when we hear the concepts again."

This suggests a limit on the usefulness of pretesting: quizzing students in Arabic or Chinese when they have no prior knowledge or associations won't be helpful. "The research thus far," says Carey, "suggests that pre-finals will be much more useful in humanities courses and social-science disciplines in which unfamiliar concepts are at least embedded in language we can parse."

"Exams Measure What We Know, But They're Also One of the Best Ways to Learn" by Benedict Carey in *The New York Times Magazine*, September 7, 2014, <http://nyti.ms/1B2o4Sy>;

Carey's new book is *How We Learn: The Surprising Truth About When, Where and Why It Happens* (Random House, 2014)

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3. Seven Ways Assessments Can Build Student Motivation

(Originally titled "Can Assessments Motivate?")

"Many educators believe that success breeds success – that achievement leads to motivation," says Richard Curwin (David Yellin Academic College of Education, Jerusalem) in this *Educational Leadership* article. "However, that's backward. Motivation or effort leads to success, not the other way around. Cheating, luck, and easy work can all lead to success, but they do not increase motivation." Tests, unfortunately, often kill motivation, says Curwin. Test scores and other extrinsic rewards may keep students working, but they create *finishers*, not learners.

Curwin believes certain assessment practices spur effort and motivation in students. Here are some examples:

- *Never fail a student who tries, and never give top grades to one who doesn't.* Effort should be counted as part of grades, he says – improvement should count, as should asking for help, offering to help others, and extra work. And students who coast to good grades should be seeking out (or given) more-challenging assignments.

- *Start with the positive.* Commend students on what they got right before correcting what they got wrong.

- *See mistakes as learning opportunities.* "In every life situation, from building relationships to playing computer games, except school, mistakes are important in the learning process," says Curwin. Mistakes in school should be used as diagnostic tools.

- *Give do-overs.* Students should be able to learn from their mistakes and try assessments again.

- *Show students the final test as they begin a unit.* "This way, they can see what they need to learn, what the teacher's priorities are, and how to organize their learning," says Curwin.

- *Prioritize corrections.* Too much red ink overwhelms students and makes it more likely that the corrected paper will be thrown away. "Tell students you'll give them a chance to fix those two most important mistakes, which you've marked, before moving on to two more," he suggests.

- *Do not compare students.* Grades should be given based on standards, not how other students are doing, says Curwin.

"Can Assessments Motivate?" by Richard Curwin in *Educational Leadership*, September 2014 (Vol. 72, #1, p. 38-40), <http://bit.ly/1si36QU>; Curwin is at richardcurwin@gmail.com.

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4. Myths About Testing

In this *Education Week* article, Sherah Betts Carr (Mercer University) and Anaya Bryson (a Gwinnett County, GA teacher) say that since No Child Left Behind, many teachers feel overwhelmed with the number of tests their students must take and the way mandated state tests overlap with district and classroom assessments. It seems that all the public and the media care about are test scores. “The accountability waters are as choppy as ever,” say Carr and Bryson, “but teachers don’t have to drown in them.” To maintain their sanity, educators need to push back on three myths:

- *Myth #1: Tests don’t allow schools to teach higher-order material.* It’s true that many standardized tests focus primarily on students’ ability to recall facts, proofs, and vocabulary and contain many abstractly constructed questions. But it’s not true that students will be harmed if teachers spend classroom time on deeper concepts and help students develop higher-order reasoning skills. Teachers need to stick to good pedagogy and effective curriculum, say Carr and Bryson, helping students connect concepts and skills in different subject areas and relating the curriculum to everyday life.

- *Myth #2: Test scores define a teacher’s worth.* Educators need to look beyond raw test data and focus on their students’ *growth*, say Carr and Bryson: “Teachers should document what they feel they’ve done well, identify what areas in their practice need improvement, and explore the steps required for growth.” They also need to make good use of the amazing array of resources available today.

- *Myth #3: Teachers are powerless when it comes to testing.* “Ultimately, what happens in the classroom must be about the students,” say Carr and Bryson. Teachers need to be realistic about what they can change and what they can’t, and continue to teach caring and collaboration to prepare students for life in a multicultural society. “They must concentrate on how their students learn, reflect on their practices, and seek the support they need to improve their instructional skills.”

“Debunking Three Assessment Myths” by Sherah Betts Carr and Anaya Bryson in *Education Week*, September 17, 2014 (Vol. 34, #4, p. 28, 24), www.edweek.org

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5. Are “Just Right” Books Too Easy?

In this article in *Reading Today*, Timothy Shanahan (University of Illinois/Chicago) examines the long-standing belief that children learn best when they’re taught at their current instructional reading level, using materials that are not too hard, not too easy – “just right.” This seems like common sense, as anyone who has watched a frustrated student struggling with a frustration-level book can understand.

“But what if that doesn’t actually work?” asks Shanahan. “If low-performing fourth-graders are to be taught from second-grade books, when do they catch up?” The Common Core standards take a different approach, requiring teachers to push their students to read more-challenging texts.

So what should teachers do? “This is exactly the kind of dilemma that should lead educators to turn to research evidence,” says Shanahan. He examined the relevant studies and found no credible support for on-level reading instruction. The basic concept turns out to be wrong. “The point shouldn’t be to place students in books easy enough to ensure good reading,” he says, “but to provide enough scaffolding [for example, pre-teaching vocabulary and oral reading prior to reading for comprehension] to allow them to read harder books successfully... Such scaffolding allows students to read these frustration-level texts *as if* they were at their instructional levels. Instructional level is not where lessons should begin, but where they need to end.”

To see the studies that convinced Shanahan, see www.reading.org/scaffolding-studies.

“Should We Teach Students at Their Reading Levels?” by Timothy Shanahan in *Reading Today*, September/October 2014 (Vol. 32, #2, p. 14-15), www.reading.org; Shanahan can be reached at shanahan@uic.edu.

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6. A Balanced Approach to Challenge in Literacy Instruction

In this *Reading Today* article, literacy consultants Jan Burkins and Kim Yaris describe a common scenario: a student reading below level has guided reading every day, using books at her instructional level. Because she’s so far behind, she gets a “double dose” of reading – she’s pulled out for a second guided reading lesson, missing a lesson with a more-difficult text in her classroom. “Due to the lack of exposure to texts that stretch her,” say Burkins and Yaris, “her reading progress plateaus, which earns her even more time with instructional-level texts and targeted practice in word work.”

However, exposing students to challenging texts can be taken too far, say Burkins and Yaris. They describe a boy entering a New York State fifth grade as an avid, above-level reader who was asked to read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a dense text at the post-graduate level. No amount of scaffolding could make it comprehensible to this student and his classmates, and the eight weeks they spent on this unit sapped their enthusiasm and proficiency.

The answer, say Burkins and Yaris, is a well-crafted mixture of reading experiences based on an accurate diagnosis of each student and good teacher judgment. “Students need consistent interactions with texts of varying levels to develop reading proficiency,” they say. Here’s how they see four kinds of reading instruction contributing to all students’ growth:

- *Read-aloud* – The teacher reads to students.
 - Text level – substantially above grade level
 - Accessibility - Probably frustration level for most students.
 - Who does the work - The teacher does all the print work; the teacher and students work together to make meaning.
- *Shared reading* – Teacher and students read a text together
 - Text level – On or a little above grade level
 - Accessibility - Probably frustration level for many students.

- Who does the work - The teacher and students do the print and meaning work together.
- *Guided reading* – Students read from a common text with support from the teacher
 - Text level – On readers’ individual level
 - Accessibility – Instructional level for each student
 - Who does the work – The student does most of the print and meaning work.
- *Independent reading* – Students read from different texts on their own
 - Text level – From below grade level through above grade level
 - Accessibility – Multiple texts for each reader, varying from independent to frustration level depending on the amount of productive effort and students’ stamina
 - Who does the work – The student does all the print and meaning, but intentionally varies the text selections to increase the amount of effort required to solve problems.

“Break Through the Frustration: Balance vs. All-or-Nothing Thinking” by Jan Burkins and Kim Yaris in *Reading Today*, September/October 2014 (Vol. 32, #2, p. 26-27), www.reading.org; the authors can be reached at tct.jan@gmail.com and kyaris@literacy-builders.com.

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7. Should Books in School Libraries Be Organized by Reading Level?

In this article in *Knowledge Quest*, Georgia librarian Susan Grigsby makes the case for not leveling books in school libraries – for example with Lexile numbers, AR levels, or colored dots. “I believe strongly in teaching independence in book selection,” she says, and creates personal bibliographies for her middle-school students by having them fill out surveys of their interests – mysteries, humor, fantasy, science fiction, action/adventure, historical fiction, romance, or realistic fiction – tell their specific non-fiction interests, and write the titles of books they really love. Grigsby also works with language arts teachers to organize monthly book talks to share books and other materials students might not pick up on their own.

“To be sure, this commitment results in a lot of extra work for me,” says Grigsby, “but I would rather put the time into teaching independent self-selection than labeling or color-coding books on my shelves.” Technology came to the rescue when the district upgraded its online public access catalog (OPAC) and she taught students how to create customized lists of books based on interest.

Why does Grigsby feel so strongly about not leveling books? First, because reading levels are “just one factor in a complicated equation,” she says. They don’t address a book’s maturity level and are a crutch in making good decisions about the appropriateness of a title. Second, because when students are interested in a book, they can push through material above their current reading level by using context clues, using deeper thinking, and looking up words in the dictionary – and when they aren’t interested, even an on-level book can seem too difficult.

And third, students need to be able to navigate any library in the world, and most libraries won’t have leveled bookshelves. What students need outside the walls of school is the ability to know their interests, constantly stretch them, and find just the right book. “When we

are able to set students free to find materials appropriate to their tasks, appropriate to their reading levels, and appropriate to their interests,” Grigsby concludes, “we are contributing to a wonderful story indeed.”

“The Story Is More Important Than the Words: A Portrait of a Reader-Focused Library Program” by Susan Grigsby in *Knowledge Quest*, September/October 2014 (Vol. 43, #1, p. 22-28); Grigsby can be reached at susan.grigsby@gmail.com.

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8. Advice for Parents on Homework

“Homework has a branding problem,” says author Bruce Feiler in this *New York Times* article. “Or, to be a little less pointy-headed about it, everybody hates homework.” But this hasn’t always been so. “Parents have been having these battles since before electric lighting,” he says. In the 19th century, homework was popular because people viewed the brain as a muscle that needed to be strengthened by nightly exertion. At the beginning of the 20th century, there was a backlash against repetitive drills, and by the 1940s, homework was out of favor. Then Sputnik got people panicked about the U.S. falling behind the Soviets and lots of homework was part of the solution. There was another dip in the 1960s, and then *A Nation at Risk* caused yet another surge in the 1980s. Today we’re hearing from both sides: Chinese kids are doing six hours of homework before breakfast! No, play is more important than make-work and Google wants employees who are creative.

In Feiler’s own household, the homework wars come down to squabbles over several questions, and he went looking for answers from experts:

- *Do children need to work at their own desks or is the kitchen table okay?* Eva Pomerantz, a specialist on parent involvement at the University of Illinois, likes the kitchen table because a parent is usually around, increasing the chance of connections, but is busy preparing meals, which makes it less likely they’ll do the homework themselves. But it depends on your house, she says: “If you have a crazy, noisy kitchen, that’s probably not the place for your kids to be doing homework unless they have amazing concentration.”

- *Is it okay for children to do homework sprawled on their beds?* “It’s not about the kid being on their bed while they do their homework,” says Erika Patall, a University of Texas expert on motivation and achievement. “It’s about the extent to which they’re really engaged and attentive to their work.” Young people vary in their preference for bright or dim lighting and sitting up or lying down. If the kid is falling asleep, looking out the window, or on the phone, then bed homework is a problem.

- *How about listening to music or doing FaceTime with friends?* Patall says the research on multitasking is pretty clear: “People tend to be very bad multitaskers, even people who say, ‘I’m a great multitasker.’” Doing other things extends the time homework takes and erodes the quality of work.

- *Should parents go over homework to check for errors?* “If you’re concerned that imperfect homework makes you look bad, that’s problematic,” says Pomerantz. But regularly looking over homework may help students put in more effort and catch their own mistakes.

• *Should parents criticize sloppy homework or stick to encouragement?* “You don’t always have to be upbeat,” says Patall. “You don’t want to deliver critical messages that imply things can’t be fixed. So you never want to say things like, ‘You’re stupid.’ But pointing out a situation where they should try harder would certainly be justified.”

• *What will make children more self-motivated?* The key is to give them as much control over their homework as possible, says Pomerantz, who has to fight her own tendency to be controlling. She tells her children how hard she works and says she expects them to do the same. “If you give them space to be self-reliant,” she says, “they usually will take it.”

“The Homework Squabbles” by Bruce Feiler in *The New York Times*, September 14, 2014, <http://nyti.ms/1rs2juA>

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9. Carol Ann Tomlinson on Nurturing Student Motivation

(Originally titled “Releasing the Will to Learn”)

In this *Educational Leadership* column, Carol Ann Tomlinson (University of Virginia) says that when a student is unmotivated, something is amiss. “Either we can’t see what motivates the student in question,” she says, “or the student’s life is dangerously off course. In either case, ‘unmotivated’ behavior should register to educators as a call for help.” Teachers are crucial to motivation, and they should tune in to students’ unspoken questions in three concentric circles of their school lives to help build self-motivation:

• The personal sphere – *Does the teacher see me?* students wonder. *How does the teacher see me?* “Some students feel invisible in their classrooms,” says Tomlinson. “Some feel judged and found wanting.” Good teachers combat low expectations and provide all students with visible support and an appropriate amount of voice and autonomy.

• The social sphere – *Do I belong here?* students wonder. *Am I valued? Do I have something meaningful to contribute?* Good teachers help connect isolated students to peers and they model and insist on mutual respect.

• The academic sphere – *Is this stuff worth my time?* students ask. *Can I do what’s being asked of me?* Good teachers build wonder, imagination, and curiosity into lessons, link the curriculum to students’ lives, challenge students to work beyond their current level, and support all students to listen, ask, find out, reason, disagree, self-correct, and start over.

“Releasing the Will to Learn” by Carol Ann Tomlinson in *Educational Leadership*, September 2014 (Vol. 72, #1, p. 86-87), <http://bit.ly/1rrSWEQ>; Tomlinson is at cat3y@virginia.edu.

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10. Close Reading with Sets of Related Picture Books

(Originally titled “Close Reading Without Tears”)

In this *Educational Leadership* article, Nancy Boyles (Southern Connecticut State University) says she is a big fan of close reading because it has the potential to teach students

“to delve into a text and uncover one layer of meaning after another, to appreciate as much as possible a book’s multiple themes, diverse points of view, rich language, unique structure, and other carefully constructed nuances.” But Boyles worries that students may be a little daunted when we tell them they’ll be reading very difficult material more thoroughly than they’ve ever read anything before. In addition, close reading won’t be successful if teachers use random texts that don’t lend themselves to this kind of intense focus.

One way to make close reading motivational and successful for elementary students, says Boyles, is using sets of picture books linked by a theme, topic, author, genre, issue, or problem and getting students to explore significant points of comparison. Here are some possible sets with an overall guiding question:

- Who was Abraham Lincoln – the boy, the man, the president? (grades 2-5)
 - *Honest Abe* by Edith Kunhardt and Malcah Zeldis
 - *Looking at Lincoln* by Maira Kalman
 - *Abraham Lincoln Comes Home* by Robert Burleigh and Wendell Minor
 - *Abe’s Honest Words: The Life of Abraham Lincoln* by Doreen Rappaport and Kadir Nelson
- How do you see the moon – as an astronomer, an astronaut, a Native American, or a storyteller? (grades 3-6)
 - *Faces of the Moon* by Bob Crelin and Leslie Evans
 - *Moonshot: The Flight of Apollo 11* by Brian Floca
 - *Thirteen Moons on Turtle’s Back* by Joseph Bruchac and Thomas Locker
 - *The Man in the Moon (The Guardian of Childhood)* by William Joyce
- The Underground Railroad: What choices would you make? (grades 3-5)
 - *Unspoken* by Henry Cole
 - *Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman* by Alan Schroeder and Jerry Pinkney
 - *Night Boat to Freedom* by Margot Theis Raven and E.B. Lewis
 - *The Underground Railroad: An Interactive History Adventure* by Allison Lassieur

Boyles suggests getting students to answer questions drawn from the Common Core standards. Here is a selection:

Standard 1 – Finding evidence:

- Which text in this set presents facts or numbers in the most surprising or interesting way?
- Which text raises the most questions for you?

Standard 2 – Finding the main idea or theme, summarizing:

- Do the texts seem to have the same or different central ideas or themes?
- How can you apply the central ideas of these texts to a current problem or issue?

Standard 3 – Analyzing how events, individuals, or ideas develop and interact:

- Which text shows the strongest connection between parts – sequence, setting, characters, and central idea?

Standard 4 – Understanding word choice as craft:

- Which text had the most positive tone? Which seemed the most biased?

- Looking at all the texts, choose six words that are most important to understanding this topic. Why is each word important?

Standard 5 – Analyzing structure and genre:

- Which text’s structure seemed the most helpful to you? Why?

Standard 6 – Assessing how point of view and purpose shape content and style:

- Do these authors have the same or a different point of view?
- After reading all the texts, which do you most strongly agree with and why?

Standard 7 – Assessing multiple forms of texts:

- How did the illustrations change your understanding or feelings?

Standard 8 – Critiquing texts

- Is the author of each text being fair to all sides of the topic?
- Is there any information in any of these texts that you think might be incorrect?

Standard 9 – Making text-to-text connections:

- What is the central idea across these texts?
- Which text seems the strongest in terms of message, character development, facts, etc.?
- Which text has the clearest connection to a problem or issue in the world today?

“Close Reading Without Tears” by Nancy Boyles in *Educational Leadership*, September 2014 (Vol. 72, #1, p. 32-37), <http://bit.ly/1si2FGe>; Boyles is at nancyboyles@comcast.net.

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11. Books That Celebrate Friendship

In this *Reading Today* article, Jan Lacina and Robin Griffith (Texas Christian University/Fort Worth) quote an eight-year-old saying that a friend “doesn’t like you for what you have, but they like you for who you are.” Here are their recommendations for books that reflect cross-cultural friendship:

- *The Other Side* by Jacqueline Woodson (Putnam Juvenile)
- *Extra Credit* by Andrew Clements (Atheneum Books for Young Readers)
- *Freedom Summer* by Deborah Wiles (Aladdin)
- *The Storyteller’s Beads* by Jane Kurtz (Harcourt Brace)
- *The Friendship Doll* by Kirby Larson (Delacorte Books for Young Readers)
- *The Many Colors of Friendship* by Rita Kaye Vetsch (Eloquent Books)
- *The Sandwich Swap* by Queen Rania Al Abdullah and Kelly DiPucchio (Hyperion Books)
- *Those Shoes* by Maribeth Boelts (Candlewick)
- *One Green Apple* by Eve Bunting (Clarion Books)
- *Our Friendship Rules* by Peggy Moss (Tilbury House)
- *Drita, My Homegirl* by Jenny Lombard (Putnam Sons)
- *Only One Club* by Jane Naliboff (Flashlight Press)

“Making New Friends: Using Literature to Inspire Cross-Cultural Friendships” by Jan Lacina and Robin Griffith in *Reading Today*, September/October 2014 (Vol. 32, #2, p. 30-33),

www.reading.org; the authors can be reached at j.lacina@tcu.edu and r.griffith@tcu.edu.
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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 43 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 64 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 50 issues a year).

Subscriptions:

Individual subscriptions are \$50 for a year. Rates decline steeply for multiple readers within the same organization. See the website for these rates and how to pay by check, credit card, or purchase order.

Website:

If you go to <http://www.marshallmemo.com> you will find detailed information on:

- How to subscribe or renew
- A detailed rationale for the Marshall Memo
- Publications (with a count of articles from each)
- Article selection criteria
- Topics (with a count of articles from each)
- Headlines for all issues
- Reader opinions (with results of an annual survey)
- About Kim Marshall (including links to articles)
- A free sample issue

Subscribers have access to the Members' Area of the website, which has:

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

Core list of publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educational Research Journal
American Educator
American Journal of Education
American School Board Journal
AMLE Magazine
ASCA School Counselor
ASCD SmartBrief/Public Education NewsBlast
Better: Evidence-Based Education
Center for Performance Assessment Newsletter
District Administration
Ed. Magazine
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Week
Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis
Educational Horizons
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher
Go Teach
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
Independent School
Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk (JESPAR)
Journal of Staff Development
Kappa Delta Pi Record
Knowledge Quest
Middle School Journal
NASSP Journal
NJEA Review
Perspectives
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal
Principal Leadership
Principal's Research Review
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Responsive Classroom Newsletter
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
School Administrator
School Library Journal
Teacher
Teachers College Record
Teaching Children Mathematics
Teaching Exceptional Children/Exceptional Children
The Atlantic
The Chronicle of Higher Education
The District Management Journal
The Language Educator
The Learning Principal/Learning System/Tools for Schools
The New York Times
The New Yorker
The Reading Teacher
Theory Into Practice
Time
Wharton Leadership Digest