Marshall Memo 148

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
August 21, 2006

In This Issue:

Quotes of the Week

"Our task is to teach the kinds of kids we have, not the kinds of kids we used to have, want to have, or the kids that exist in our dreams."
Gerlach, 2002 (quoted in item #2)

"The actual proves the possible."
Chester Finn on exceptionally effective schools, quoting Kant (see item #1)

"When children teach children, there is improvement in student learning."
Rebecca Bond and Elizabeth Castagnera (see item #3)

"If you spend the entire school day struggling to read things that are too hard, you're going to give up."
Doug Fisher, San Diego English teacher (see item #4)

"Dropping out of high school today is to your societal health what smoking is to your physical health – an indicator of a host of poor outcomes to follow, from low lifetime earnings to high incarceration rates to a high likelihood that your children will drop out of high school and start the cycle anew."
Anne Nelson (quoting Thornberg, 2006; see item #4)

1. Checker Finn Takes on the Pessimists

In his column in last week's *Education Gadfly*, Checker Finn responds to recent articles in the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* (by Diana Schemo and Charles Murray, respectively). Yes, says Finn, disadvantaged children spend 91 percent of their lives (birth through age 18) outside of school, where they are often subjected to forces that are not supportive of high achievement. "It's true that mediocre schools, of which the U.S. has far too many, have great difficulty overcoming those forces," says Finn. "But it's equally true that outstanding schools do it all the time."

"It's obvious that schools can do lots more when the 91 percent cooperates," he continues, "when non-school influences (family, peer group, neighborhood, church, you name it) tug in the same direction as school. It's also obvious that schools face a huge challenge when they must combat uncooperative forces in other parts of their pupils' lives. What's remarkable, however, and what Schemo and Murray both overlook, is how many terrific schools manage to overcome precisely that challenge. For three decades, there's been a wealth of anecdote, example, and research attesting to the success of individual schools in 'beating the odds' and producing well-educated youngsters in spite of the hostile forces at work in many of those kids' lives." Finn cites several sources, including the Education Trust database of high-performing schools: http://www2.edtrust.org/edtrust/dtm/.

"The actual proves the possible," says Finn (quoting Kant), and the essential elements of effective urban schools are becoming increasingly apparent:

- A clear mission and a coherent program;
- Strong, "smart" leadership;
- A demanding curriculum aligned with state standards;
- Expanding the school's "footprint" (a longer school day, week, and year);
- Enveloping children in a culture of achievement that counteracts contrary messages;
- Sheer tenacity ("students are dialing teachers' cell phones at 10 p.m., the middle school makes sure its graduates are placed in a terrific high school, it helps them fill out their college applications, and so forth").

"Yes, such schools cost more," concludes Finn. "Sometimes the cost is measured in dollars, sometimes in sweat equity from tireless teachers and relentless principals, most often in both. But it can be done and is being done with and for the kids who need it the most. The challenge America faces is to do it with millions more."

"March of the Pessimists" by Chester Finn, Jr. in *Education Gadfly*, Aug. 17, 2006 (Vol. 6, #31, p. 1-2) http://www.edexcellence.net/foundation/gadfly/index.cfm

2. The Art and Science of Co-Teaching

This article by Jacqueline Thousand, Richard Villa, and Ann Nevin in *Theory Into Practice* argues that when teachers co-teach, students benefit – especially students with special needs.

What is co-teaching? The authors lay out a continuum from least-intrusive to most intense student support options:

- Natural peer support: same-age or cross-age peers help students with disabilities in class, between classes, and socially.
- Consultative and stop-in support: one or more adults, usually special educators, meet regularly with classroom teachers to keep track of student progress and consult on whether special materials or adaptations are needed.
- Co-teaching support: two or more adults share responsibility for teaching some or all of the students assigned to a classroom, using one of four approaches: supportive, parallel, complementary, and team teaching (more on these below).
- Individualized support: this involves one-on-one support for needy students by teachers or paraprofessionals – the challenge being for the adult to avoid becoming "attached at the hip" to individual students and fostering increased independence so the one-on-one support can fade.

Thousand, Villa, and Nevin go on to describe four approaches to co-teaching gleaned from the research on successful programs:

a. Supportive teaching – One teacher takes the lead instructional role and the other(s) rotate among the students, watching and listening as students work together and stepping in to provide one-on-one help when needed. The trick with those in the support role is not to become "velcroed" to individual students, which can block their interaction with other students and can also be stigmatizing, leading other students to perceive that the student and support teacher are not genuine members of the class.

b. Parallel teaching – Two or more adults work with different groups of students in different parts of the classroom. There are eight variations on parallel teaching:

- Split class: Each co-teacher is responsible for his or her subgroup, providing guided instruction or re-teaching the group as necessary.
- Station or learning center teaching: Each co-teacher is responsible for assembling, guiding, and monitoring one or more centers or stations.
- Co-teachers rotate: The adults move among two or more groups of students.
- Co-teachers cover different components of the lesson: This is similar to station teaching, except the co-teachers rotate from group to group rather than the students moving from center to center.
- Cooperative group monitoring: Each adult takes responsibility for monitoring and providing feedback and help to a given number of cooperative student groups.

- Experiment or lab monitoring: Each co-teacher monitors and helps a given number of lab groups, giving guided instruction to those groups that need the most support.
- Learning style focus: One co-teacher works with a group of students using visual strategies, another works with auditory strategies, another with kinesthetic strategies.
- Supplementary instruction: One co-teacher works with most of the class on a concept, skill, or assignment; the other (a) instructs students to apply or generalize the skill to a relevant community environment; (b) provides extra guidance to students who are self-identified or teacher-identified as needing extra help; or (c) provides advanced enrichment activities.

The key with parallel teaching, say the authors, is to avoid creating a special class within the class by always having the same groups of students working with the same co-teachers. "It is important to keep groups heterogeneous whenever possible and rotate students among different co-teachers," they write. "Students stretch their learning by experiencing different instructors' approaches and expertise." Students also avoid stigmatization that may come from always being seen with the same teacher or paraprofessional.

c. Complementary teaching – One teacher does something to enhance the instruction provided by a colleague. For example, one teacher might provide a lecture on the content while the other paraphrases statements and models note-taking on the content on chart paper or an overhead transparency. It's important to take advantage of the complementary strengths of co-teachers in the room, including subject-area expertise, foreign-language proficiency, or special-education knowledge.

d. Team teaching – Both teachers plan, teach, assess, and assume responsibility for all the students in the classroom, sharing leadership and execution in a way that draws on their individual strengths and expertise. For this to work, both adults must be comfortable alternately taking the lead and being a supporter, and it takes lots of planning to work smoothly. One question with team teaching is whether the team should split up at the end of each year, with one teacher looping up with students so during the next year students have the advantage of a co-teacher who knows them well.

Working in a co-teaching team is not easy, and Thousand, Villa, and Nevin acknowledge that teachers need to put in the time to answer a host of questions, including:

- Who adapts curriculum, instruction, and assessment for selected students?
- Who handles discipline and delivers the consequences?
- How will students' progress be monitored?
- Who completes the paperwork for students with IEPs?
- Who gives students feedback on assignments and records students' progress?
- Who meets with parents and administrators?

What's the evidence on co-teaching's impact? A study in 16 California elementary schools documented the following results:

- Better overall student achievement;
- Fewer referrals for behavioral problems;

- Fewer problems with disruption;
- Fewer referrals to intensive special-education services;
- More students qualifying for gifted and talented services;
- Less paperwork;
- Teachers feeling happier and less isolated.

Another study of co-teaching in 23 schools across eight districts produced similar findings, and also found:

- Improved social skills for low-achieving students;
- Improved attitudes and self-concepts among students with disabilities;
- More positive peer relationships;
- Students felt they were getting more teacher time and attention;
- Teachers reported improved professional growth, personal support, and an enhanced sense of community within general education classrooms.
- The most frequent complaint was that there wasn't enough staff development to learn how to be more effective co-teachers.

A third study comparing 95 co-teaching faculty with 96 other teachers added these findings:

- Co-teaching increased teacher confidence handling classroom problems;
- Co-teachers had more positive attitudes toward the classroom;
- Co-teachers had greater tolerance toward children with cognitive deficits.

Co-teaching can also result in improved student performance on high-stakes assessments, say the authors, citing a study of dramatic gains in the Shelby County, Tennessee high schools.

What accounts for these remarkable benefits for teachers and students? The authors point to the following:

• Co-teaching capitalizes on the unique, diverse, and specialized knowledge of each teacher in the team.

• Co-teaching allows students to "experience and imitate the cooperative and collaborative skills that teachers show when they co-teach"; students can also be explicitly taught these skills (for example, how to be good peer tutors, "study buddies," and cooperative group members).

• There is increased flexibility in grouping and scheduling, which allows students to get quicker attention from teachers and thereby increase their academic learning time.

• Co-teaching fosters "smarter" teaching that uses research-based findings more effectively;

• Co-teaching generates novel ways of individualizing learning.

The authors conclude with the following tips for teachers who venture into the challenging waters of co-teaching:

• Know with whom you need to collaborate. Include those who will help you invent new solutions.

• Establish and clarify collaborative goals to avoid hidden agendas. Common goals set up positive interdependence.

• Agree to use a common conceptual framework, language, and interpersonal skills. Avoid using jargon. Attend staff training together to learn similar strategies. Agree that it's okay to ask questions for clarification and to learn from each other.

• Practice communication skills that help achieve student learning goals and maintain positive adult relationships. Consciously include trust-building and creative problem-solving activities in planning meetings. Be sure that absent team members are told about important decisions. "Clarify accountability for who will do what, set deadlines, and include celebrating daily successes."

• Consciously work toward a collaborative climate, de-emphasizing competition. This might include celebrating a "co-teaching team of the year" instead of the "teacher of the year."

• Tap into each others' strengths and talents. "Set up multiple opportunities to observe others to discover their secrets of effective collaboration."

• Expect to be responsible and expect to be held accountable. Follow through on agreements.

• Reflect on how the co-teaching is going and take time to celebrate wins, large and small.

"The Many Faces of Collaborative Planning and Teaching" by Jacqueline Thousand, Richard Villa, and Ann Nevin in *Theory Into Practice*, Summer 2006 (Vol. 45, #3, p. 239-248), no e-link available

3. Peer Tutoring to Support Students with Special Needs

In this article in the summer issue of *Theory Into Practice*, California high-school teachers Rebecca Bond and Elizabeth Castagnera argue that if teachers can skillfully orchestrate peer tutoring in their classrooms, the results are often better for students with disabilities than conventional teaching and the use of paraprofessionals. The authors describe several approaches:

• *Class-wide peer tutoring* – A higher-achieving student is paired with a lower-achieving student, both are trained, and they take turns tutoring each other using materials individualized to their needs. Swapping roles is important, say Bond and Castagnera, so that both students get the benefits that come from being the teacher. Studies have shown that class-wide peer tutoring increases academic and social-interaction skills in students with and without disabilities: "When children teach children, there is improvement in student learning," they write.

• *Peer-assisted learning strategies* – In this approach, pairs of students take turns tutoring each other, using a highly structured script. For example, in a high-school English class, Katie used a script to tutor Sarah: Katie reads the material first, then Sarah re-reads the same text; whenever Sarah makes a word-reading mistake, Katie says, "Stop. You missed that word. Can you figure it out? [four seconds of wait-time] That word is ----. Say the word… Good. Now read the sentence again." This approach has been found to be effective in improving reading fluency and comprehension for students with and without learning disabilities and is listed as a best practice by the U.S. Department of Education.

• *Cross-age tutoring* – Older students tutoring younger students is a time-honored and well-supported intervention, and studies show that both tutor and tutee make substantial gains in vocabulary, reading accuracy, self-correction, and comprehension. The older student may be performing at grade level or be a student with a disability. Although the older student is often covering material he or she has learned before, it sinks in deeper – as well as improving the older student's confidence and self-esteem. Usually students with disabilities are in the position of receiving special help, so being useful to others is a nice change. Cross-age tutoring is especially helpful, say Bond and Castagnera, because it can eliminate the need for pullout instruction by specialist teachers.

• *Peer-tutor elective class* – This involves a regular-education peer tutor attending class with a special-needs student and providing one-on-one support as needed. The peer tutor is enrolled in a special peer-tutor elective class taught by the special education teacher. Sometimes peer tutors are able to move from one class to another after half a period, supporting two students in two classrooms who have different needs – for example, one student who needs help understanding the directions at the beginning of a class and another who needs help with the work in the latter part of the class.

Follow-up studies have shown that both tutors and tutees benefit from peer-tutor elective arrangements. One tutor said, "I have learned more about biology as a peer tutor than I did when I took the class myself last year!"

Peer tutors are pulled out regularly for training by their special-education teacher supervisor. Each of the five training classes has a focus:

a. A discussion of inclusive education: equity, fairness, and special education laws;
b. Learning a variety of basic teaching strategies and ways to provide simple, on-the-spot modifications and accommodations to meet tutees' needs, also the importance of not doing the work for their tutees and making sure tutees participate as fully as possible in their classes;
c. Details on specific learning disabilities, including difficulties some tutees have communicating;
d. The importance of friendships and their role facilitating friendships for tutees;
e. Reflections on what they, as well as their tutees, have learned over the semester, presented in a portfolio of classroom assignments, tests, photographs, and reflections written by the tutor and/or tutee.

The training includes four types of helping that can become common to all classrooms, for tutors and tutees alike:

- Asking for help appropriately, e.g., "Could you help me with this?"
- Offering help respectfully, e.g., "Would it help if I read that problem out loud for you?"
- Accepting help graciously, e.g., "Thanks for noticing that I needed help with that."
- Rejecting help kindly, e.g., "No thanks, I have my own way of trying to do this."

Peer tutors keep a daily journal to record class activities, what their tutee needs, and areas in which they (the tutor) need assistance. While in the regular class, the tutor takes direction from the general education teacher. Five minutes before the end of the class, tutors return to the special education teacher and share what occurred in the class and any specific communication from the general education teacher. Tutors are evaluated by both teachers and graded on their attendance, the quality of their support, their positive interaction skills, and on-the-job work habits, which include following directions, showing initiative, accepting responsibility, communicating ideas, questions, and needs, and completion of their homework assignments from the training sessions, as well as their final projects.

"Peer Supports and Inclusive Education: An Underutilized Resource" by Rebecca Bond and Elizabeth Castagnera in *Theory Into Practice*, Summer 2006 (Vol. 45, #3, p. 224-229), no e-link available

4. Dropouts – What Can Be Done?

In this *ASCD Infobrief* on the dropout problem, education writer Anne Nelson comes right to the point: "Dropping out of high school today is to your societal health what smoking is to your physical health – an indicator of a host of poor outcomes to follow, from low lifetime earnings to high incarceration rates to a high likelihood that your children will drop out of high school and start the cycle anew." (Thornberg 2006)

Nelson traces the roots of the problem back to elementary schools, where a process of "slow disengagement" begins: missed homework assignments, low or failing grades, and being kept back. In middle school, this escalates to 2-hour lunches, skipping one class, then other classes, and then missing whole days or weeks of school. Once the pattern of absences is established, says Nelson, many teens drop out because they believe they can never catch up.

Nelson lists the obvious ways that elementary and middle schools can prevent failure from snowballing. But she feels strongly that the dropout problem can be successfully attacked by high schools, even if they receive students who appear to be on the slippery slope to failure. Interviews with dropouts pointed to ways they believed their high schools could have done better:

- A closer connection between school and work;
- Real-world experiences like internships and service learning;
- More relevant and engaging experiences in school;
- More help in areas where they struggled with schoolwork;
- More after-school tutoring, Saturday sessions, and summer school.

A sidebar in Nelson's article describes the turnaround of Hoover High School in San Diego. This high-poverty school (99% free and reduced- price meals) used to be one of the lowest-performing high schools in the city. The staff confronted the brutal facts and wrote a plan with these features:

• *A focus on literacy* – "Our kids had competence issues in terms of reading, and how can you blame them," said Doug Fisher, Hoover English teacher and director of professional

development. “If you spend the entire school day struggling to read things that are too hard, you’re going to give up.” The school designed a literacy program to give students a system for boosting reading competence across all their courses.

• *Mentorships* – The school implemented the Challenge 10 program, whereby each staff member chose 10 students to guide through academic and social difficulties. This program brought additional guidance to 1,400 students.

• *Health center* – The school provided doctors, a full dental clinic, and a referral system to hospitals and specialists and became the primary health provider for 1,200 families. “The resulting message is simple,” writes Nelson. “If you need health care, come to school.”

• *Community outreach* – The school reached out to community organizations, and they reiterated the theme: “If you need something, come to school.”

• *Truancy prevention* – Pairs of local police officers and vice principals visited homes and teen hang-outs and brought truants to school. The message to incipient dropouts was, “Hey, Hoover missed you so we came and got you.”

• *Support worker* – The school found the funds to hire a full-time guidance social worker/parent-center coordinator, and this person conducted parent information workshops on high-stakes California tests, brought parents into the school to help out, and organized adult ESL classes.

• *You can make it* – Once they got students in the door, teachers followed up with a strong message about all kids being able to achieve at high levels.

“Closing the Gap: Keeping Students in School” by Anne Nelson in *ASCD InfoBrief*, Summer 2006 (Issue #46, p. 2-3), no e-link available

5. Ideas to Get Students Writing

In the first of a series of columns in *Reading Today* offering practical tips for getting students writing, author Margriet Ruurs says students produce better writing when they have something to write *about* – and care about the topic. Teachers can spark interest and motivation by any of the following:

• Have students keep a special journal to jot down possible ideas – funny expressions, interesting events or things they hear or see.

• Make a list of nonfiction topics you think students might like to explore.

• Collect interesting headlines from newspapers and keep them in an album for students to browse. Examples: “Teenagers stranded on island,” “Scientists spot footprints of Abominable Snowman,” “Children find prehistoric egg.”

• Check out this *USA Today* website that lists unusual news items every day: http://www.usatoday.com/news/offbeat/digest.htm.

• Clip pictures from magazines, including advertisements, that might give students ideas for a story. Examples: an elephant sharing dinner at the table with a family (linoleum advertisement); two mice driving a red convertible (a rental car ad).

• Have students tell their story out loud before they begin to write, working on the beginning, middle, and end, defining the problem, and telling how the problem gets solved.

"Write Away: Practical Tips for Helping Young Writers" by Margriet Ruurs in *Reading Today*, August/ September 2006 (Vol. 24, #1, p. 40), no e-link available

6. Making Sustained Silent Reading Productive

In this letter in the current issue of *Reading Today*, St. Thomas Aquinas College professor Michael Shaw proposes five characteristics that sustained silent reading must have if it is to increase students' motivation and achievement:

• Teachers know their students' interests and provide print and computer texts to match.

• Teachers use on-going assessment to know their students' reading levels and provide appropriate ranges of texts so that each child can read successfully through "managed choice."

• Teachers use independent reading time to reinforce print and comprehension skills and strategies that have been systematically and explicitly taught through demonstrations and think-alouds.

• Teachers have students respond to what they read in a variety of ways, including journals, discussion, graphic organizers, sticky notes, art, and drama – all to encourage active reading, monitor progress, and plan instruction based on students' needs.

• Teachers have students reflect on their reading strategies in order to build inner control of reading.

A second letter from Connie Hebert, a literacy consultant, echoes Shaw's point about the need for a variety of reading matter for sustained silent reading and adds another point: students must know *why* they have sustained silent reading. "Explaining to students that daily time is provided so that they can become better, faster readers is a good way to assist them in 'owning' the experience of SSR," she writes.

"Sustained Silent Reading: Another View" by Michael Shaw and "Does SSR Work? Ask the Kids!" by Connie Hebert in *Reading Today*, August/ September 2006 (Vol. 24, #1, p. 16, 17), no e-link available

7. How Much Freedom Should Teachers Have to Depart from the Script?

In this article in *Reading Today*, University of Illinois professor Timothy Shanahan (the new president of the International Reading Association) addresses the question of how teachers should deal with "scripted" reading programs. He confesses that when he was a teacher, he reacted negatively to being told exactly how to teach reading, but now that he is a professor and a textbook author, he believes that teachers shouldn't be able make all instructional decisions on their own. "I think the real idea here is that good teaching is a matter of student learning and has nothing to do with avoiding commercial materials," he says. "Sometimes teachers can make superior instructional choices to what is recommended in the textbooks, but there also are times when closely following the textbooks would be the best way to serve children… There is no doubt that we need highly skilled, well-prepared teachers who can

provide high-quality instructional effectively. But we also need well-designed programs that if followed carefully would lead to successful learning under most circumstances."

In some situations, good teachers might be allowed to depart from the textbook, says Shanahan. Three examples: (a) if students haven't learned what's been taught, re-teaching makes sense; (b) if a lesson is a dud, perhaps that lesson should be dropped; and (c) if there are too many lessons to fit into the time allotted, some might need to be trimmed. In such cases, teachers should be able to overrule the program, says Shanahan – but not on their own. "Rather than teachers guessing about implementation decisions," he says, "I prefer reliance on the collective judgments of groups of teachers who are using classroom data as the basis for the choices. Such groups would likely make better implementation decisions."

In the third example (too many lessons), there might really be a design flaw in the textbook – or it might be a case of "a poky teacher who is dragging through well-designed lessons too slowly." Shanahan's advice: "Before I'd trim the program, I'd be curious about how the others teachers were doing with it, and I'd consider experimenting with faster delivery. If several teachers were having trouble getting in all of the lessons, I'd alter the program, but I'd do it systematically. For instance, the teachers should review all of these lessons together to determine which ones could most safely be omitted. Or, if the faster delivery led to greater learning, as it sometimes does, I would push for faithful implementation and would provide pacing coaching to the teachers."

"The Worst Confession: Using a Scripted Program" by Timothy Shanahan in *Reading Today*, August/September 2006 (Vol. 24, #1, p. 14), no e-link available

8. What Makes a Middle-School Field Trip Worthwhile?

In this article in the August issue of *Middle Ground*, Virginia teacher Rick Wormeli, who has been on his share of lame field trips, suggests criteria for truly worthwhile trips:

- Ample hands-on activities, vivid experiences, and meaningful interaction with content;
- Opportunities for students to grow and learn in significant ways;
- Strong connections to the school's mission and curriculum;
- Done on a day when most students will be present and attentive to the content;
- Done only when students have studied the topic, know the "back story" for what they will see and hear, and understand the purpose of the trip.

Wormeli goes on to suggest the most substantive types of field trips for middle-school students:

• Journeys to interview or hear someone of historical significance;

• Museums and galleries in which students get serious background and interaction opportunities with experts or docents;

• Outdoor education programs in which students engage in nature study and interaction with an interpreter or geologist or naturalist;

• Off-campus simulations such as Civil War re-enactments and cultural performances;

• Shadowing experiences with professionals;

- Service learning experiences;
- Behind-the-scenes tours;
- Work with primary research sources;
- Major events in the community.

"Making Field Trips Matter" by Rick Wormeli in *Middle Ground*, August 2006 (Vol. 10, #1, p. 23-23), no e-link available

9. Short Items:

a. Getting teens to sit with kids they don't know in the cafeteria – Mix It Up at Lunch Day is a program sponsored by Teaching Tolerance at the Southern Poverty Law Center. The program encourages middle- and high-school students to seek out students they don't normally sit with in the school cafeteria. The designated day this year is November 14th.

A survey of more than three million students who participated in the program last year found that 96% of participants interacted with students outside their normal social circle; virtually all of the interactions were positive; 79% of students made new friends; 74% were more comfortable interacting with different people than they were before; and 91% became more aware of the social boundaries that existed in their schools. "The whole lunch period was very fun," wrote one California middle-school student, "and I hope this day is celebrated everywhere because it really brings everyone together."

Information on the program is available at: http://www.tolerance.org/teens/index.jsp.

"News to Use" in *Middle Ground*, August 2006 (Vol. 10, #1, p. 7)

b. A "bio-cube" for writing biographies – This online resource from Read/Write/Think is a nifty device for getting students to organize and write important information after reading a biography or autobiography (or for writing their own life story). Students are prompted to write on all six sides of a cube (which rotates with a *whoosh* sound), filling in information on the person's name, personal background, personality traits, significance, biggest obstacle, and important quotation. Check it out! http://readwritethink.org/materials/bio_cube/

"Creating Biographies With Bio-Cube" in *Reading Today*, August/September 2006 (Vol. 24, #1, p. 44), no e-link available

c. Getting boys to read – At this year's International Reading Association convention, a panel of authors who specialize in writing books for boys – David Shannon, Will Hobbs, Gordon Korman, Matthew Zbaracki, and Jon Scieszka – offered suggestions for getting boys to read more:

- "It always comes back to their interest and how you can tie in what they're reading with what they like," said Zbaracki.
- "Don't impose your tastes on boys," advised Scieszka. "Think, will they like it?"
- Shannon believes that we shouldn't put too much emphasis on literary quality. "If it gets kids to read, and it doesn't make them go out and hurt somebody, I'm for it," he said.

• "With some boys, you have to find a way to fit reading into their lives," said Korman. "With my 7-year-old, I can get him to do almost anything that will extend his bedtime."

Scieszka has created a "Guys Read" project to encourage boys to read. You can get more information at the website: http://www.guysread.com.

"Quotes from 'Guy' Authors" in *Reading Today*, August/September 2006 (Vol. 24, #1, p. 4), no e-link available

d. Encouraging young writers – *Weekly Reader* and *Read and Writing* magazines have a new website that encourages middle-school students to read, write, and share their creations: http://www.readandwriting.com/readandwriting. The site has suggestions on young adult literature, places to submit writing for publication, reading and writing activities and tips, and dozens of links to other reading and writing websites.

"News to Use" in *Middle Ground*, August 2006 (Vol. 10, #1, p. 6)

e. Earth photos from space – This website gives students and teachers access to this NASA program: http://www.earthkam.ucsd.edu. The website has digital images of the Earth taken by middle-school students who were given a chance to remotely control the camera in the International Space Station.

"News to Use" in *Middle Ground*, August 2006 (Vol. 10, #1, p. 7)

f. Creating for an international audience – iEarn is a non-profit network of 20,000+ schools in more than 115 countries. It lets teachers and students use the Internet and other new technologies to collaborate creating magazines, writing anthologies, websites, letter-writing campaigns, reports to government officials, art exhibits, workshops, performances, charity fundraising, and more. The site is http://www.iearn.org.

"News to Use" in *Middle Ground*, August 2006 (Vol. 10, #1, p. 7)

g. A family-involvement guide – "Taking a Closer Look: A Guide to Online Resources on Family Involvement" is available online from the Harvard Family Research Project: http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine/resources/guide/index.html. The guide includes Web links to research, information, programs, and tools about home-school relationships, parental leadership, and collective engagement for school improvement.

"News to Use" in *Middle Ground*, August 2006 (Vol. 10, #1, p. 6)

h. Safe in cyberspace – This website has numerous resources that teachers and parents can use to keep students safe online: http://staysafeonline.org/basics/educators.html.

"News to Use" in *Middle Ground*, August 2006 (Vol. 10, #1, p. 6)

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).

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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- Headlines for all issues
- What readers say
- About Kim Marshall (including links to articles)
- A free sample issue

Marshall Memo subscribers have access to the Members' Area of the website, which has:

- The current issue (in PDF or Word format)
- 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 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
Review of Educational Research
Teacher Magazine
Teachers College Record
Theory Into Practice
Times Educational Supplement