Marshall Memo 656

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
October 10, 2016

In This Issue:

Quotes of the Week

"We notice flaws in others more easily than flaws in ourselves."

Buster Benson (see item #3)

"I view the presence of distracted students on laptops in the classroom just as I view cheating – as a problem that can help us take a closer look at our teaching and make better decisions about it."

James Lang (see item #5)

"Instead of pushing screens away, let's put them into the hands of adults and children to use *together* to learn and grow."

Lisa Guernsey and Michael Levine in "Nurturing Young Readers: How Digital Media Can Promote Literacy Instead of Undermining It" in *American Educator*, Fall 2016 (Vol. 40, #3, p. 23-28, 44), http://www.aft.org/ae/fall2016/guernsey_levine

"School leaders are expected to be visibly in charge, always on top of their game, doing the right things to advance the school, and exuding confidence and command."

David Holmes (see item #4)

"Friendships, heart-to-heart discussions, and humor can sideline day-to-day stresses and provide emotional sustenance and enjoyment."

David Holmes (*ibid.*)

"My job was to steer students' enthusiasms to the shore of the required curriculum."

Steven Levy (quoted by Carol Ann Tomlinson in "Lesson Plans Well Served" in *Educational Leadership*, October 2016 (Vol. 74, #2, p. 89-90)

1. The Impact of a Major Incentive-Pay Program

In this *Teachers College Record* article, Girija Kaimal (Drexel University) and Will Jordan (Temple University) report on their analysis of a 4-year incentive pay program implemented in 12 urban charter schools. The program was designed to address problems with previous educator incentive models. Here are its key components:

- The goal was to improve student achievement by increasing teacher quality and principal effectiveness.
- The theory of action was that cash incentives supplementing educators' regular salaries would "spark" schoolwide improvement by motivating educators toward excellence.
- Representatives from each school were trained and then sent to explain the model to colleagues back in their schools.
- Educators in the 12 schools were provided with professional development aimed at improving teaching and learning.
- Some teachers were released from their classrooms to serve as master and mentor teachers for all staff and provided training and support on implementing new instructional strategies in classrooms.
- Master teachers received a salary augmentation of $10,000, mentor teachers an extra $5,000, for the duration of the study.
- Teachers' cash incentives were based on value-added measures of improvement in student achievement and four classroom evaluation visits a year scored using the Danielson rubric.
- Positive ratings for educators were converted into cash rewards; the incentive pool had a maximum of $750 for teaching assistants, $2,300 for teachers, and $4,000 for principals.
- Principals could receive additional cash payments up to $4,000 when there was evidence of schoolwide improvement.
- Teachers were surveyed on their perceptions of the incentive program.

What were the results? "The key takeaway from our study," say Kaimal and Jordan, "is that incentivizing teachers through such a model is not effective." Student achievement in the 12 schools improved marginally, but there was virtually no difference between those schools and others in the district that didn't implement an incentive program. In addition, it's impossible to tease out the role of financial incentives from the impact of professional development, mentoring, and other initiatives taking place in the schools.

The authors list several other reasons for the disappointing outcomes of this ambitious and expensive initiative:

- There was widespread confusion about the complexities of the incentive system and extremely uneven implementation of the program in different schools due to ineffective explanations to teachers, uneven support, and high turnover in leaders and teachers.
- Some of the master and mentor teachers were not well received by their colleagues, either because of a non-transparent selection process or because they were not credible instructionally.
- Teachers and principals were pleased when they received cash payments, but regarded them as bonuses for a job well done, not incentives to improve their performance in the future.
- For teachers, the incentives weren't large enough to incentivize improvement or even to stay in their schools. Many teachers remained for only a few years and then went on to better-paying jobs in other schools.
- There was tremendous pressure on teachers in the testing grades (3rd through 8th) to improve their students' scores since schoolwide cash awards depended on the value-added data from those grades.
- Sustainability was a major issue; several schools dropped out of the program because they were no longer able to raise funds to pay for the financial incentives.

"Throughout the study," say Kaimal and Jordan, "principals consistently said that money did not motivate them to work harder in a high-needs school or to change their practices to raise student achievement and that they therefore found the idea of pay for performance problematic." As for classroom teachers, the authors found: "While payouts were appreciated, there were other priorities and values that motivated teachers to perfect their craft including commitments to teaching, and ongoing institutional supports."

The only positive outcome identified in the study was that some teachers received high-quality professional development and classroom support and a few deserving teachers had the opportunity to move up the career ladder and support their colleagues as master teachers or mentors.

"Do Incentive-Based Programs Improve Teacher Quality and Student Achievement? An Analysis of Implementation in 12 Urban Charter Schools" by Girija Kaimal and Will Jordan in *Teachers College Record*, July 2016 (Vol. 118, #7, p. 1-34), available for purchase at http://www.tcrecord.org/ExecSummary.asp?contentid=20450; Kaimal can be reached at gk27@drexel.edu, Jordan at will.jordan@temple.edu.

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2. Does More Experience Continue to Make Teachers Better?

In this article in *American Educator*, Tara Kini and Anne Podolsky (Learning Policy Institute) summarize their research report on the relationship between teachers' years of experience and their impact on students:

- Teaching experience is positively associated with student achievement gains throughout a teacher's career.
- As teachers gain experience, their students do better on standardized tests and also on other measures of success, including attendance.
- Gains in effectiveness are most rapid at the beginning of teachers' careers, but effectiveness continues to improve significantly into the second and often the third decade of classroom work.
- More-experienced teachers also contribute to improving student results for their colleagues and school.
- Teachers' effectiveness increases more rapidly when they are well prepared up front, carefully selected, teach in a supportive and collegial working environment, and receive intensive mentoring and helpful supervision and evaluation.
- Teachers' effectiveness also improves more rapidly when teachers accumulate experience in the same grade level, subject, or district.
- Of course not every experienced teacher is more effective, not every inexperienced teacher is less effective, and the passage of years doesn't improve every teacher.

Several policy implications from this research:

- Create conditions of strong collegial relationships and professional working conditions.
- Maximize the time teachers spend at one grade level or subject area.
- Equitably distribute more-experienced teachers and avoid concentrations of novice teachers in high-need schools so students aren't subjected to a revolving door of inexperienced instructors.

"Teaching Experience and Teacher Effectiveness" by Tara Kini and Anne Podolsky in *American Educator*, Fall 2016 (Vol. 40, #3, p. 3), http://www.aft.org/ae/fall2016/notebook; the authors' full report, "Does Teaching Experience Increase Teacher Effectiveness? A Review of the Research," is available at http://bit.ly/2e0yNOr.

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3. A New Way of Understanding Flaws in Our Thinking

In this *Better Humans* article, Buster Benson says he likes Wikipedia's list of 175 cognitive biases but finds it overwhelming. He spent a recent paternity leave curating and consolidating the list under four basic challenges we all face:

• *Cognitive challenge #1: Information overload* – It's easy to miss useful and important information because:

- We are drawn to information that confirms our existing beliefs.
- We tend to notice things that were recently loaded into memory or repeated often.
- We tend to remember what's bizarre, funny, visually striking, and anthropomorphic.
- We notice when something has changed, even when the change isn't significant.
- We notice flaws in others more easily than flaws in ourselves.

Examples: Distinction bias, confirmation bias, selective perception, expectation bias, ostrich effect, experimenter's bias, bias blind spot.

• *Cognitive challenge #2: The struggle to make meaning* – "The world is very confusing," says Benson, "and we end up seeing only a tiny sliver of it, but we need to make some sense of it in order to survive… [W]e connect the dots, fill in the gaps with stuff we already think we know, and update our mental models of the world." In the process:

- We fill in characteristics from stereotypes, generalities, and prior histories.
- We're most likely to imagine things and people we're familiar with or fond of.
- We find stories and patterns even in sparse data.
- We simplify probabilities and numbers to make them easier to process.
- We think we know what others are thinking, including that they know what we know and that they're thinking about us as much as we're thinking about ourselves.
- We project our current mindset and assumptions onto the past and future.

Examples: Confabulation, anecdotal fallacy, gambler's fallacy, ultimate attribution error, stereotyping, authority bias, bandwagon effect, placebo effect, halo effect, in-group bias, Murphy's Law, curse of knowledge, spotlight effect, hindsight bias, rosy retrospective.

• *Cognitive challenge #3: The need to make quick decisions* – "We're constrained by time and information, and yet we can't let that paralyze us," says Benton. "With every piece of new information, we need to do our best to assess our ability to affect the situation, apply it to decisions, simulate the future to predict what might happen next, and otherwise act on our new insights." That leads to several cognitive biases:

- The need to be confident in our ability to make an impact and feel like what we do is important.
- We favor immediate, relatable things in front of us over things that are delayed and distant.
- We're motivated to complete tasks in which we've already invested time and energy.
- We're motivated to preserve our autonomy and status in a group and avoid irreversible decisions.
- We favor options that appear simple or that have more-complete information over complex, ambiguous options.

Examples: Overconfidence effect, egocentric bias, illusion of control, Lake Wobegon effect, fundamental attribution error, sunk cost fallacy, loss aversion, zero-risk bias, status quo bias, rhyme-as-reason effect, Occam's razor, less-is-better effect.

• *Cognitive challenge #4: Deciding what to remember* – Given information overload, we need to constantly make bets and trade-offs around what we try to remember and what we can afford to forget. In the process:

- We edit and reinforce some memories after the fact.
- We discard specifics to form generalities.
- We reduce events and lists to their key elements.
- We store memories differently based on what was going on when we experienced them.

Examples: Suggestibility, false memory, implicit stereotypes, prejudice, negativity bias, misinformation effect, recency effect, testing effect, next-in-line effect, tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon, Google effect.

"Nothing we do can make the four problems go away (until we have a way to expand our minds' computational power and memory storage to match that of the universe)," Benson concludes, "but if we accept that we are permanently biased, but that there's room for improvement, confirmation bias will continue to help us find evidence that supports this, which will ultimately lead us to better understanding ourselves."

"Cognitive Bias Cheat Sheet – Because Thinking Is Hard" by Buster Benson, in Better Humans, https://betterhumans.coach.me/cognitive-bias-cheat-sheet-55a472476b18#.3ly4x9t7f

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4. Mastering the Social-Emotional Side of School Leadership

"School leaders are expected to be visibly in charge, always on top of their game, doing the right things to advance the school, and exuding confidence and command," says David Holmes (Community School, Idaho) in this article in *Independent School*. But the pressures of the job take their toll, and too many principals have an abbreviated tenure – five or fewer years, which is considered suboptimal. Holmes believes the loneliness of the principalship – not having a chance to share anxieties, insecurities, and fears because it might be taken as a sign of weakness or incompetence – plays a major part in turnover. Not having someone to talk to and/or the social-emotional skills to deal effectively with stresses can lead to:

- Unhealthy habits – poor sleep patterns, insufficient exercise, alcohol abuse;
- Acting out in anger and frustration;
- Developing a pattern of avoidance;
- Not making good use of sources of emotional sustenance like friends, colleagues, and loved ones.

The bottom line, says Holmes, is that what's healthy for the principal is healthy for the school. He suggests ten rules for school leaders to manage their inner lives and remain effective, confident, enthusiastic, and satisfied with their work:

• *Accept what cannot be changed*. "You need to do this in order to deter a pattern of complaining that is so easy to begin," says Holmes. "The discipline of dealing with 'what is,' not what you wish things to be, is an important principle."

• *Sometimes you need to vent*. This should be done with someone you can trust and who doesn't have a direct stake in your work. In almost all cases, this is not your spouse or partner.

• *Don't take it personally*. It's easier to handle in-your-face emotional complaints, criticisms, and venting when you believe it's about the other person, not you.

• *Accept that the job is intense*. School leadership is uniquely demanding, but try to be as healthy as possible, both physically and psychologically. One strategy is to have a non-school "subplot" to your life – for example, writing, mindfulness, or becoming proficient at a sport.

• *Develop friendships with a few trusted colleagues*. "There is nothing like a good laugh," says Holmes. "Friendships, heart-to-heart discussions, and humor can sideline day-to-day stresses and provide emotional sustenance and enjoyment."

• *Engage in professional reading and writing*. "Days filled with administrative tasks and problem solving will ultimately wear you down," says Holmes. The key is to read about what others are doing in the field, put your own stresses and anxieties in a wider frame of reference, and carry those insights into your work.

• *Get enough sleep*. "Whether it is makeup sleep on Sunday morning or a regular schedule of seven hours," says Holmes, "leaders must play the 'long game,' and sleep is fundamental to longevity."

• *Attend to your family*. "If family life is tension-filled or infused with resentment, you carry this with you every day," says Holmes, "– and it will affect both your family life and your ability to lead the school."

• *Adopt a posture of fearlessness*. Rather than allowing yourself to be paralyzed worrying what can go wrong, say to yourself: *I am on the right course; there are inherent risks, but the odds are with me; wise people around me agree with what we are doing; and no matter what happens, I can live with the consequences*.

• *If necessary, get help*. Not all problems can be solved alone, and there are times when a leadership coach, a psychologist, a cardiologist, or an addiction counselor is essential.

"The Inner Life of School Leaders" by David Holmes in *Independent School*, Fall 2016 (Vol. 76, #1, p. 52-56), no e-link available

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5. Should We Ban Laptops from Classrooms?

"Too many of our students are distracted by devices," says James Lang (Assumption College) in this article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. "We all know this." But is trying to stop students from using laptops, tablets, and cell phones during class the answer? Using devices for polling and research is fine, he believes, but there are two reasons for concern about laptops. First, research suggests that students take better notes when they write with a pen because most write more slowly than they type, forcing them to process information more thoughtfully and write down only what's most important. "To take effective notes on paper," says Lang, "I have to be actively engaged with the material, and that exercise deepens my learning."

Second, with laptops open in class, it's tempting for students to look at online material, shop, play games, do e-mail, and immerse themselves in social media. Lang is resigned to a certain amount of off-task behavior ("If students choose to distract themselves in my classroom, they will find a way to do so whether they have a laptop or not"), but laptop screens are visible to students sitting nearby, which can keep them from paying attention.

These two problems have led a number of instructors to ban laptops from their classrooms – but they immediately get pushback from students who need devices as an accommodation. Is it right to make exceptions for some students to use laptops in class, drawing everyone's attention to their disability?

This dilemma – along with the fact that electronic devices are here to stay – makes Lang dubious about a blanket policy of keeping them out of classrooms. "I view the presence

of distracted students on laptops in the classroom just as I view cheating," he says, "– as a problem that can help us take a closer look at our teaching and make better decisions about it. When half the students in your class plagiarize your 10-year-old essay assignment on the death penalty, it's time to craft a new assignment. Likewise, when you have a sea of distracted students while you are reading slides from the front of the room, it may be time to explore some new teaching techniques… The classroom should serve as an active laboratory of learning, a place where students engage with the course material through multiple cognitive streams."

Lang suggests explaining to students up front when laptops are useful tools and when they should be closed, all depending on the kind of learning that's taking place. Specifically:

- In the opening 10 minutes of each class, laptops are closed as students recap what was learned in the previous class.
- During lectures, laptops are open for detailed note-taking. To deal with the problem of students mechanically transcribing lectures on their laptops, Lang believes students should be explicitly taught how to take high-quality notes: "We as instructors could use the presence of laptops in the classroom as an opportunity to help students better understand how to learn, how to take notes (whether by hand or on a device), and how to learn from the process of taking notes."
- When students are discussing and debating with each other and working in groups, laptops are closed.
- When students are solving problems, laptops are used to capture key information.
- When the class is discussing the meaning of those issues, laptops are closed.
- When students are writing in class – projects, practice essays, etc. – laptops are open.
- When students are giving each other feedback on their products, laptops are closed.
- During the last 10 minutes of class, laptops are closed as students hand-write one main concept from the class and a few students share what they wrote.

Lang believes this approach has two major benefits. First, it gets instructors thinking more strategically about what students are doing in each class and why. Is that lecture necessary, or could students get the same information from a text or video? Is there enough active learning time? Are the opening and closing segments used most effectively?

Second, he believes this strategic use of laptops leads instructors to be more explicit with students about what's going on. "I am convinced that a majority of students' complaints about their courses arise because they misunderstand the purpose of so much of what happens in the classroom," he says. "Explain the reasons for what you are doing and what they are doing… Such transparent talk doesn't require much time, but it makes the classroom more like a learning community than like a magician performing for his mystified audience."

"Banning Laptops Is Not the Answer" by James Lang in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 7, 2016 (Vol. LXIII, #6, p. A30-31), http://bit.ly/2dZXRoL; Lang can be reached at lang@assumption.edu.

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6. Getting Students Reading and Responding at Four Levels of Rigor

(Originally titled "Pursuing the Depths of Knowledge")

"Good teachers resist the idea of 'teaching to the test,'" says Nancy Boyles (Southern Connecticut State University) in this article in *Educational Leadership*. "But aligning literacy instruction with assessment isn't teaching to the test if that assessment is a valid measure of our students' performance. If the test is rigorous – if it demands deep levels of knowledge – then alignment means asking ourselves, 'How can we plan for this rigor in our instruction?'"

Teachers' challenge is preparing students for the kind of rigor in Common Core-era assessments. Looking at the six levels of Bloom's Taxonomy – *remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create* – is unhelpful, says Boyles. That approach has even resulted in creative but decidedly non-rigorous projects like "Draw a map of your ideal bedroom." A better approach, says Boyles, is using Webb's depth-of-knowledge levels, all four of which are important to rigorous comprehension:

• *Level 1: Recall and reproduction* – Recalling facts and locating information in the text to answer questions about *who, what, when, where, why,* and *how*. Answers at this level are either right or wrong. Some sample PARCC and Smarter Balanced test items:

- What is the meaning of *trudged* as it is used in paragraph 10 of this folk tale?
- Which sentence from the folk tale helps the reader understanding the meaning of *trudged*?

What most commonly goes wrong at this level is students not going back to the text and finding the exact information. Rigor at this level, says Boyles, is "in maintaining high expectations for all learners and in providing honest, specific, and immediate feedback."

• *Level 2: Skills and concepts* – Students need to make some decisions about how to approach the problem or activity, for example:

- What is the meaning of the quote, "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind"?
- Which words *best* describe the character _____?

The rigor here is teachers explaining, modeling, and practicing. For students, the rigor is achieving independence, which involves the teacher gradually releasing responsibility.

• *Level 3: Strategic thinking and reasoning* – This involves using logic and evidence to think more abstractly about a text. Sample questions:

- What is the theme (or main idea) of the passage? Use details from the text to support your answer.
- What effect does the author create by using the phrase _____?
- What is the most likely reason the author included a map of _____?
- Which details from the text are irrelevant to the author's claim?

Many students need practice at inferring – zeroing in on the main idea as they start reading, thinking about the author's intent, understanding the external and internal structure of texts, and thinking critically about what they're reading.

• *Level 4: Extended thinking* – Integrating information from multiple sources. Some sample items:

- A central idea of these articles is _____. Provide two pieces of evidence from different sources that support this idea and explain how each example supports it.
- Which source most likely has the most useful information about _____? Explain why this source is likely to be more helpful.
- Compare and contrast the way the author develops the central idea of ____ in the two texts we read. Use details from both sources to support your explanation.

To prepare students for questions like these, teachers need to plan lessons that ask students to make connections between two or more sources – including video, audio recordings, illustrations, and more. "But just including text-to-text lessons is not enough," says Boyles. "A good text connection lesson will ask students to tap into a key similarity or difference between the sources, raising a question that brings students to a deeper knowledge of both texts through that connection point."

"Pursuing the Depths of Knowledge" by Nancy Boyles in *Educational Leadership*, October 2016 (Vol. 74, #2, p. 46-50), available for purchase at http://bit.ly/2dVtRsI; Boyles can be reached at nancyboyles@comcast.net.

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7. Mock Trials in a New York City Classroom

In this article in *American Educator*, New York City teacher David Sherrin describes how his high-school students hold mock trials, sometimes in city courtrooms. Here are some trials he's used over the last decade:

- The Rwanda genocide trial of Athanase Seromba, a Catholic priest who allegedly participated in Hutu massacres of the Tutsi;
- The trial of Galileo for his heresy against Catholic dogma;
- The trial of Martin Luther for his revolutionary teachings;
- The trial of Holocaust perpetrators;
- The trial of Tom Robinson in *To Kill a Mockingbird*;
- The trial of characters in *The Pearl*.

"My passion for mock trials runs deep," says Sherrin "As a mock trial day approaches, I teach in top gear, filled with adrenaline and excitement, more than at any other point in the year. The reasons are multiple: students are performing and their knowledge is public; the outcome depends entirely on their work, but it is based on my effective participation and scaffolding; students are taking on roles of historical or literary characters; outside partners, friends, and family are involved; and the students are engaging in some of the most challenging and multifaceted intellectual work we can provide."

Sherrin believes there are several elements that make mock trials so rigorous: They are intellectually challenging and highly engaging; they are authentic, with students studying primary-source documents; they immerse students in the legal world – witnesses, evidence, opening and closing statements, direct and cross-examination; students' work is visible and can be assessed on multiple dimensions; the role-playing gets students out of their chairs, collaborating and imagining what was going on in the minds of key protagonists; students need

to read texts even more closely than normal, breaking them down and looking for what is and isn't there; and finally, students need to figure out the answers to questions the teacher hasn't asked. "In short," says Sherrin, "mock trials incorporate all of what great social studies teachers look for – claim, counterclaim, selection of evidence, use of evidence, perspective, and sourcing/bias – and put it into a tantalizing package."

Here are the steps he uses to prepare for each mock trial (he does two to three each school year):

- Choosing and teaching a story that reflects a central moment in human history;
- Selecting a defendant who brings out moral complexities, who can reasonably be found guilty or not guilty, and whose case is accessible to students;
- Choosing witnesses who were involved in the actual case rather than imaginary characters or people from another era;
- Creating affidavits and exhibits that lend themselves to detailed analysis;
- Assigning students to the various roles, differentiating for strengths and weaknesses.

"A Day In Court: How Mock Trials Bring Learning to Life" by David Sherrin in *American Educator*, Fall 2016 (Vol. 40, #3, p. 32-37), http://www.aft.org/ae/fall2016/sherrin; Sherrin's new book is *Judging for Themselves: Using Mock Trials to Bring Social Studies and English to Life* (Routledge, 2016).

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8. Making Museum Visits an Integral Part of a Creative Curriculum

(Originally titled "When Curriculum Meets Art")

In this article in *Educational Leadership*, Nicola Giardina describes how she and her colleagues at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art work with city teachers to get students connecting classic works of art, the curriculum, and real-life experiences. "Their lessons," says Giardina, "fulfill the Common Core's demands for rigorous content and application of knowledge through higher-order thinking skills, while also inspiring joy, curiosity, and imagination."

One of the products of this school-museum collaboration is a framework for planning arts-integrated lessons called The Pyramid of Inquiry. By observing students as they interacted with the Museum's artworks, Giardina identified an arc of discussion from initial observation ("I see a person") to evidence-based inference ("He looks sad because his head is hanging down") to interpretation ("I think this work is about the suffering of mankind"). From these observations, museum educators mapped backward to suggest the types of questions and activities teachers could use to elicit increasingly sophisticated student responses:

• *Observation* is the foundation of the pyramid. After an open-ended prompt like "What do you notice?" students look closely at the object and/or sketch it.

• *Evidence-based inference* is the next level. Teachers might prompt students by asking, "What's going on in this painting?" or students might get involved in a movement activity to imitate the painting's character and infer how he or she feels.

• *Interpretation* is the culminating phase. The teacher might ask a big question like "What do you think the artist's message or intent is?" or engage students in an art-making activity to express in a different way what the work means to them.

Giardina says that although the Pyramid was designed for museum visits, the basic sequence can be used by teachers back in their classrooms:

- Step 1: Begin with the curriculum and select works of art on a topic, theme, or essential question.
- Step 2: Get to know the works of art, develop your own questions, research, and engage in the inquiry process that students will experience.
- Step 3: Develop a plan following the Pyramid of Inquiry framework to engage students in close looking and discussion about each art object with open-ended questions or activities – perhaps "I see, I think, I wonder." And finally, ask questions like "What do you think is the overall message of this painting?" to challenge students to synthesize their observations and inferences.

"When Curriculum Meets Art" by Nicola Giardina in *Educational Leadership*, October 2016 (Vol. 74, #2, p. 70-74), available for purchase at http://bit.ly/2dEFvHL; Giardina can be reached at Nicola.giardina@metmuseum.org.

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9. Mindfulness in Schools

In this *Time Magazine* article, Mandy Oaklander reports on the spread of mindfulness programs in U.S. schools. "That mindfulness is taking place alongside math in elementary school says something about the stressed-out state of kids' brains these days," says Oaklander. "Educators increasingly believe that mindfulness can be an antidote to three of the biggest mental-health challenges that kids face: anxiety, trouble paying attention, and bullying." A robust body of research shows that for adults, practicing yoga, meditation, and deep-breathing exercises can reduce stress, ease anxiety, improve sleep, prevent illness, reduce depression, and even mitigate pain. Can there be similar benefits when K-12 students learn how to monitor their bodies and emotions and better communicate their feelings to others – especially young people afflicted by ADHD, anxiety, and depression?

"These are not niceties," contends Patrick Tolan of the University of Virginia. "These are critical capabilities. If children today don't learn how to take care of themselves, it's going to have an enormous impact on our health care costs and the health of our nation." Lisa Flook of the University of Wisconsin has done preliminary research showing the positive effects of mindfulness training in schools. "A body of work shows there are these innate pro-social and altruistic qualities present from a very early age in children," she says. "This is a way of nurturing the seeds of kindness in children." Randye Semple of the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine agrees: "There's an almost immediate calming effect of mindfulness practice. Essentially, mindfulness is attention training. We're showing them that attention can be increased, that it can be ramped up and it can be trained." Researchers are finding that calm breathing triggers the part of the nervous system that's the opposite of the

fight-or-flight response, slowing heart rate, lowering blood pressure, and getting kids to focus on what is happening in the moment.

There's been pushback on mindfulness, with some parents complaining that it's teaching Buddhism and has no place in schools. One program in Canton, Ohio was discontinued because of parental objections. "I don't think any of us deny that most of these general practices and concepts come from Buddhism," says Semple. "But we're not teaching Buddhism. We're teaching kids how to pay attention." Jennings believes these programs are "100% secular" and hopes they'll be widely implemented.

"The Mindful Classroom" by Mandy Oaklander in *Time Magazine*, October 3, 2016 (Vol. 188, #13, p. 44-47), no e-link available

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10. Short Items:

a. Student shadowing – This site http://shadowastudent.org has details on how to take part in this program, shadowing a student in your own school for a day to get insights on what school is like from the student's point of view.

"Resources: Shadow a Student Challenge" in *American Educator*, Fall 2016 (Vol. 40, #3, p. 40)

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b. Inspiring apps – PBS affiliate KQED reached out to tech-savvy librarians and compiled their recommendations for highly effective smartphone apps. The result is "Librarian Approved: 30 Ed-Tech Apps to Inspire Creativity and Creation": https://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2016/06/22/librarian-approved-30-ed-tech-apps-to-inspire-creativity-and-creation/

"Resources: Apps to Inspire" in *American Educator*, Fall 2016 (Vol. 40, #3, p. 40)

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c. World War II activities – A team of 18 teachers has launched this award-winning collection of classroom activities on World War II, "Understanding Sacrifice" (for grade 6 up): www.abmceducation.org

"Resources: Understanding Sacrifice" in *American Educator*, Fall 2016 (Vol. 40, #3, p. 40)

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If you have feedback or suggestions,
***please e-mail* kim.marshall48@gmail.com**

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 45 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).

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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
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
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher
Go Teach
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Educational Review
Independent School
Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy
Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk (JESPAR)
Journal of Staff Development
Kappa Delta Pi Record
Knowledge Quest
Literacy Today
Middle School Journal
Peabody Journal of Education
Perspectives
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal
Principal Leadership
Principal's Research Review
Reading Research Quarterly
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 Journal of the Learning Sciences
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 Magazine
Wharton Leadership Digest