Marshall Memo 290

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
June 15, 2009

In This Issue:

Quotes of the Week

"We used to be 'Number 1' and still would be if the rest of the world hadn't had the audacity to recover from World War II."

Gerald Bracey on the U.S. graduation rate compared to other nations (see item #10)

"Increasing the literacy skills of students who enter ninth grade reading at the fourth-grade level cannot be done by a few teachers in a few subject areas. Every teacher, every period, every day must actively contribute to students' reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills."

Douglas Fisher, Sandi Everlove, and Nancy Frey (see item #4)

"The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker."

Helen Keller (quoted in item #2)

"At times, students were unable to move forward with their schoolwork for fear that they were not getting the answers they thought teachers wanted. Anxiety paralyzed them."

Adam Howard (see item #1)

"Zero-tolerance policies that school districts have are basically pushing the debt forward. We need to be more sophisticated."

Perri Klass (see item #9)

"I suggest that the mark of a strong teacher is one who is a problem finder and a problem solver, and that literacy coaches can help develop those skills."

Cathy Toll (see item #6)

1. Help for Privileged Students

(Originally titled "Unlearning the Lessons of Privilege")

In this powerful article in *Educational Leadership*, Colby College professor Adam Howard describes an incident at an affluent private school where he used to teach. The basketball team was losing badly in a state championship game against a team from a poor community. With 90 seconds left to play, some of his school's students began shaking the keys to their expensive homes and cars. "You beat us now," shouted one of the boys, "but you'll work for us later." Another boy jeered, "And clean my house!" The school's administration did nothing.

Howard was profoundly disturbed, especially since the school's mission statement called for developing "high moral character, integrity, and respect for others." He decided to conduct an ethnographic study in four schools to understand students' behavior and attitudes. Excellence was a central value in the schools. "Students and educators were really good at being good," says Howard. *Soto voce*, the schools encouraged a "win-at-all-costs attitude, unhealthy levels of stress, deception, competition, selfishness, and greed." Some unwritten lessons:

• *Do whatever it takes to win*. This manifested itself in putting down others, dominating class discussions, getting on the good side of adults, and cheating. Teachers unwittingly reinforced these behaviors.

• *People outside our social class are different*. Although students sometimes did service learning in a soup kitchen, they never really emerged from their bubble or developed mutual, respectful relationships with different people.

• *Getting ahead is a game*. This included currying favor with teachers and participating in the right mix of academic, athletic, and community activities. "Playing the game stifled the independent, critical thinking the schools claimed to encourage," says Howard. "At times, students were unable to move forward with their schoolwork for fear that they were not getting the answers they thought teachers wanted. Anxiety paralyzed them."

But Howard also found individual teachers who modeled and explicitly taught students better values. Specifically:

• A healthy acceptance of failure – This helped students feel safe to learn from mistakes.

• Honesty about shortcomings – These teachers talked about faults and what they learned from bad decisions.

• Openness to diverse perspectives – "Curriculums are not simply a collection of facts," says Howard. "Curriculums tell a story, from which students learn lessons about how to interact with others." Some teachers used works of literature, iconoclastic history books, films, and guest speakers to stretch students' horizons.

• Flow – Some students got deeply engaged in publishing a magazine, designing a virtual-reality game, or painting, not to polish their resume but for the sheer enjoyment of it.

• Collaboration – Working intensely with others (e.g., rehearsing a play) helped "build their capacity to imagine someone else's point of view and establish and maintain supportive relationships," says Howard.

• Building critical awareness – Well-chosen readings, journal-writing, simulation games, and reflection helped students become more thoughtful.

These levers can make a difference, says Howard, but students have an established sense of themselves, and teachers need to tap into that. "The better we understand our students' perspectives," he concludes, "the firmer footing we will have for transforming or unlearning the lessons of privilege."

"Unlearning the Lessons of Privilege" by Adam Howard in *Educational Leadership*, May 2009 (Vol. 66, #8, online only); this article is available at http://www.ascd.org/el; the author can be reached at Adam.Howard@colby.edu.

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2. Working Smart When Teaching Affluent Students About Social Justice

(Originally titled "Social Justice in the Suburbs")

In this thoughtful article in *Educational Leadership*, Boston University professor Scott Seider offers these suggestions for high-school courses that teach more fortunate American students about world hunger and disease:

• *Don't overwhelm students*. Hearing that thousands of people are dying every day from hunger, malnutrition, and disease can immobilize rather than empower affluent teens. A curriculum unit on world hunger should mention practical solutions such as micro-loans and the portable water purifier invented by Dean Kamen.

• *Don't freak students out*. When affluent students learn that millions of Americans live in poverty in housing projects and barrios, many become fearful that they themselves might wind up poor and homeless. "The majority became *less* supportive of policies that would equalize schooling between affluent and poor communities and *more* defensive of their own right to receive a superior education," says Seider. To counteract this, he suggests having students imagine themselves growing up in a homeless shelter or attending an under-resourced urban school. How would they cope? What kind of support would they need to reach the American Dream? He also suggests teaching about the work of social engineers like Geoffrey Canada.

• *"Radical" arguments can backfire*. Affluent students react negatively to in-your-face arguments like "The Singer Solution to World Poverty" (2000). Singer says that affluent people should donate *all* their surplus wealth to hunger relief organizations and forgo personal

luxuries. "After all," he writes, "a $1,000 suit could save five children's lives." Those who don't follow his suggestions need to admit that they are "failing to live a morally decent life," he concludes. One student called Singer "quite insane and moronic" and others had similarly angry reactions. Seider says that researchers call this *do-gooder derogation* – "the tendency of individuals to react with suspicion, trivialization, or resentment when they feel threatened by someone else's moral behavior." Teachers should present a more balanced perspective, perhaps mentioning philanthropists like Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.

Seider closes with a quote from Helen Keller: "The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker." He hopes that by teaching about social justice in a tactically intelligent way, educators can add to the ranks of those who are part of the solution, not part of the problem.

"Social Justice in the Suburbs" by Scott Seider in *Educational Leadership*, May 2009 (Vol. 66, #8, p. 54-58); this article can be purchased at http://www.ascd.org/el; the author can be reached at seider@bu.edu.

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3. Douglas Reeves on Teaching Social Responsibility

(Originally titled "Avoiding the Land Mines")

In his *Educational Leadership* column, author/consultant Douglas Reeves has three suggestions for how to teach social responsibility:

• *Teach behavior, not beliefs*. For example, sharing toys, taking turns, respecting others' feelings, and always doing one's best. "When these practices become habits," says Reeves, "they open the door for students to recognize that their actions influence others and their responsibilities are more important than their personal satisfaction."

• *Respect the corporate sector*. Social-responsibility classes shouldn't limit themselves to talking about nonprofits and government agencies, says Reeves. "One of the most socially responsible activities to which our students can aspire is creating or running a business that employs people, creating jobs and the financial security, housing, medical care, college opportunities, and other benefits that accompany those jobs."

• *Avoid political agendas*. Reeves suggests sticking to universal principles such as the Golden Rule, eradicating poverty, increasing literacy, and refusing to tolerate offensive ethnic jokes.

"Avoiding the Land Mines" by Douglas Reeves in *Educational Leadership*, May 2009 (Vol. 66, #8, p. 89-90); this article can be purchased at http://www.ascd.org/el; the author can be reached at DReeves@leadAndLearn.com.

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4. Shifting a Large High School's Culture from "Me" to "We"

In this *Principal Leadership* article, Douglas Fisher, Sandi Everlove, and Nancy Frey say that a common problem in high schools is that each teacher develops his or her own

classroom procedures, grading policies, and lesson plans. As a result, students "bounce from class to class trying to figure out what they are supposed to do instead of what they need to learn. This fractured approach rarely gives students enough practice with any one strategy, skill, routine, approach, or procedure to become expert in it." A prime offender is note-taking. Teachers agree that this is a key skill, but students have to adapt to different requirements in virtually every classroom. "Thinking deeply about what works for adults in a school and what works best for students is the first – and easiest – step in building a learning culture," say the authors. "The tough part is acting on this new knowledge."

They then describe a remarkable staff meeting at Hoover High School in San Diego. Groups of 6-8 teachers sit at tables, and each group is joined by two ELL students. Their teacher explains to the staff that the students have just read *The Pact: Three Young Men Make a Promise and Fulfill a Dream* by Sampson Davis, George Jenkins, and Rameck Hunt (Riverhead Books, 2002), which will be the schoolwide teacher readaloud selection for the next semester. Each student spends four minutes reading a passage from the book that was particularly meaningful to him or her and describes a personal connection the book made. Teachers jot notes on anything that will help them introduce the book to their classes. A timer goes off every four minutes, and the second student reads and speaks. Students then rotate to another table and begin again. Within an hour, 90 teachers have heard number of students read and give their impressions of the book.

"There's nothing more powerful than watching people in the act of learning," writes Everlove, who sat in on the meeting, "– teachers and students alike. It went beyond a culture of learning; it was more like a 'cult of learning.' My first thought was, How did this literacy cult get started? My second was, How can I join?"

What made this possible at Hoover High, say the authors, were the school's Professional Learning Communities. Each teacher participates in two kinds:

- *Course-alike PLCs* develop common interim assessments, review and analyze students' performance on the assessments, and plan reteaching and help for struggling students.
- *Cross-disciplinary PLCs* work on implementing the schoolwide literacy plan, planning anticipatory and background activities, reading aloud and shared reading, vocabulary development, graphic organizers, note-taking, and reciprocal teaching. Teachers also look at whether content-area literacy strategies are improving achievement across subject areas.

Attendance at PLC meetings is mandatory, and agendas come from a schoolwide literacy plan developed by the staff. "Increasing the literacy skills of students who enter ninth grade reading at the fourth-grade level cannot be done by a few teachers in a few subject areas," say Fisher, Everlove, and Frey "Every teacher, every period, every day must actively contribute to students' reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills." This school, they say, has been successful in shifting the culture of the school from "me" to "we."

"Not Just Another Literacy Meeting" by Douglas Fisher, Sandi Everlove, and Nancy Frey in *Principal Leadership*, May 2009 (Vol. 9, #9, p. 40-43), no e-link available; Fisher can be

reached at dfisher@mail.sdsu.edu, Everlove at sandi.everlove@gmail.com, and Frey at nfrey@mail.sdsu.edu.

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5. A Schoolwide, Community-Wide Reading Experience

In this *Principal Leadership* article, New Jersey high-school curriculum director Alyce Hunter describes how her district had all students, staff, and community members read a single book. During the 2005-06 school year, the district asked all students to read and discuss *Night*, Elie Wiesel's Holocaust memoir. Teachers had a summer workshop and met with Holocaust survivors, and that year there were countless discussions of the book across subject areas. But because students were only required to *read* the book, the instructional impact was uneven.

A year later, the district decided to try again and chose *Rocket Boys*, a true story by Homer Hickam, Jr. about teenagers in a West Virginia coal mining community who were inspired by the launching of *Sputnik* to build and launch a rocket of their own. The school piloted the book with different groups of students, who gave it a thumbs-up. When some teachers expressed concern that the book had been made into a movie (*October Sky*), those who had read the book assured them that the book was much better.

All systems were go, and the district purchased the book for every student, including incoming ninth graders, and for all staff members, including secretaries and other personnel. Copies were also distributed to public libraries along with audiotapes and Spanish translations. Teachers were asked to develop at least one lesson focusing on a central theme of the book, to collaborate on interdisciplinary units, and to report on how they used the book in their classrooms.

The book was required summer reading, and most students reported reading all or most of the book, not just watching the movie. When the 2007-08 year began, students encountered lessons on *Rocket Boys* in all their classes – rocketry and metallurgy in science, graphing the positions of various satellites in math, Virginia mountain music in music, and so on. One of the protagonists in the book visited the school, and the author sent a letter of appreciation and support. The community buzzed with conversations and e-mails about the book, and there was near-unanimous approval of the project.

The district was pleased and intends to repeat the experience. The only concerns are expense, finding another book that's suitable across the board, avoiding a book that's in the regular curriculum, and ensuring equitable classroom experiences for all students.

"Join the Literacy Club" by Alyce Hunter in *Principal Leadership*, May 2009 (Vol. 9, #9, p. 36-39), no e-link available; Hunter can be reached at ahunter@nac.net.

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6. Effective Use of Literacy Coaches in Secondary Schools

In this *Principal Leadership* article, literacy expert Cathy Toll has several suggestions for principals who want to invest in coaching, which she defines as job-embedded professional

development to help teachers build their capacity to make informed instructional decisions. Toll advises against using literacy coaches to work directly with students, at least at the middle- and high-school level. Her advice:

• *Engage the staff*. Successful literacy coaching depends on "conversations between trusting colleagues," says Toll. These are more likely to happen if staff members are involved in shaping the program and understand the coach's role up front. Many teachers would prefer that the money be spent on direct classroom services; one way to address this concern is to ask teachers to name their "points of pain" – things that make them feel unsuccessful at their jobs. "When you think of the kind of teaching you want to do, the understanding you want students to have, and the kind of classroom you want to have," principals might ask, "what gets in the way?" Teachers' responses might include:

- We can't get students to read the assigned materials.
- The textbooks are too difficult for students to read.
- Students do well in class discussions but not on exams.
- We can't capture students' interest.
- Students don't write well.
- Some students' English skills are weak.
- Kids are more interested in the Internet than my course material.

"A literacy coach does not make problems go away," says Toll, "but rather helps teachers become more flexible problem solvers. I suggest that the mark of a strong teacher is one who is a problem finder and a problem solver, and that literacy coaches can help develop those skills."

• *Help your coach develop*. It's not enough for coaches to have an expert knowledge of literacy and literacy instruction, says Toll. They also need "a refined set of skills and well-developed personal characteristics." Many coaches need support to be successful with a variety of teachers. It's important at the outset to look at different models of coaching, decide on one that fits the needs of the school, and patiently develop it.

• *Stick to the knitting*. "I strongly discourage schools from hiring literacy coaches if the goal is to have the coaches do supervisory duties that are really the duties of administrators," says Toll. "I also discourage literacy coaches from taking on the responsibility of trying to 'fix' dysfunctional relationships that exist among school staff members."

• *Take full advantage of the role*. If literacy coaches are pressured to raise test scores immediately, they will often resort to test-prep practices that limit their effectiveness, says Toll. If coaches are hired to enforce compliance with a commercial reading program, they won't improve teachers' problem-solving skills or build capacity. She believes that literacy coaches' role is to develop teachers' deeper skills and have a lasting impact on the quality of instruction.

• *Consider re-branding*. Some high-school content teachers believe that teaching reading and writing is the English department's job and resist being "helped" by a literacy coach. Toll suggests that principals may want to rename the position a "learning coach" and define the job as improving teaching and learning across the board, supporting teachers as they guide students through the reading and writing challenges unique to their content area.

• *Develop a coaching team*. Large high schools may want to hire several learning coaches, perhaps having them specialize by subject area or by skill (e.g., using digital media, using original source documents and popular media, making instruction culturally relevant, planning for more efficient use of classroom time, inquiry, and critical literacy). A team of coaches can share ideas and enhance one another's skills.

"Literacy Coaching: Suggestions for School Leaders" by Cathy Toll in *Principal Leadership*, May 2009 (Vol. 9, #9, p. 24-28), no e-link available; Toll is at ctoll@comcast.net.

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7. Hard Questions About Scripted Reading Programs

In this pointed *Kappan* article, education professors Seth Parsons and Ann Harrington pose several questions about "research-based" scripted reading programs:

• *Who conducted the research?* Educators need to look carefully at studies on the purported effectiveness of every program they consider, especially if it is conducted by those who developed the program.

• *What did the research show?* Did students make gains on assessments of reading comprehension and math problem-solving, not just on decoding, reading words on lists, and doing computation problems?

• *What should we expect from a literacy program?* "Educators should have higher expectations than just raising student scores," say Parsons and Harrington. "Schools also need to help students become 'thoughtfully literate', that is, developing students who are confident and motivated, who read and write for their own purposes, who embrace challenges and work collaboratively to accomplish shared goals, and who ask important questions and evaluate what they read." There is no single reading program that meets these ambitious goals, but a balanced approach to literacy will help.

• *Will this program help teachers learn to teach reading and writing better?* The answer for most scripted programs is no. Following a scripted program that stresses low-level skills does the opposite. "Since study after study points to teacher expertise as the critical variable in effective literacy instruction," says Richard Allington, "why would we purchase products that have little, if any, potential to develop teacher expertise?" What's needed is professional development that is on-going, relevant, structured, and responsive to teachers' needs. In addition, say Parsons and Harrington, "When teachers collaborate, engage in ongoing, reflective professional development, and use data to improve teaching practice, they can achieve significant growth in their students' reading achievement." When enough teachers work this way, a school can reach a "tipping point" and take off.

• *Is this a program I would want for my own children?* Few educators would tolerate "drill and kill" instruction for the children closest to them. "If we wouldn't consider teaching our own children or the children we love as we teach the children in the elementary schools where we work," conclude the authors, "then we shouldn't subject *any* children to such programs."

"Following the Script" by Seth Parsons and Ann Harrington in *Phi Delta Kappan*, June 2009 (Vol. 90, #10, p. 748-750); this article can be purchased at http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kappan.htm

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8. A Kentucky Teacher Shapes Middle-School Students' Behavior

In this *Principal Leadership* article, Paul Barnwell describes his rocky beginning as a teacher – and the techniques that have restored his faith in middle school students' humanity. "I'm no longer going to sit back and complain about how they can't work in groups, don't know how to communicate, can't learn, and can't be trusted to make good decisions," he says. Here's what he does:

• *Preemptive community building* – In the first month, Barnwell integrates team-building and communication activities into academic content. "I don't care if the team-building focus is perceived as touchy-feely," he says, "because the year-long benefits are worthwhile."

• *Appointments* – At the beginning of each semester, Barnwell has students get up and make twelve appointments with classmates. Throughout the semester he gives structured opportunities for students to work with their twelve partners on grammar, shared reading, and other academic projects. This widens students' friendship circles.

• *Music break* – Barnwell plays a three-minute song in the middle of each class and students are allowed to get up and socialize. If they aren't back in their seats when the song ends, they lose this privilege for a week.

• *Structured movement* – Sometimes Barnwell has students get up and work with someone who is wearing a similar-colored shirt. Again, this extends friendship bonds.

• *Modeling collaboration* – Barnwell switches classrooms with colleagues who have a particular skill to teach his students and vice-versa. "Students see and reap the benefits of adults working together," he says.

• *Interdisciplinary projects* – He sometimes creates cross-subject activities, having students choose partners and decide on a skit, poster, comic strip, or speech that integrates language arts with science or another subject.

• *Learning stations* – Once or twice during each teaching unit, Barnwell sets up 6-7 stations around the room, each focusing on a different academic task, for example, daily word work, a laptop activity, a partner read, or an artistic task. He then asks students to decide which five tasks are their priorities and make decisions on the sequence in which they will move through the stations. Students appreciate the freedom to move, interact, and make decisions.

• *Water* – Students raised money to get a water dispenser for the room and set up a protocol for water consumption during classes. "If I didn't believe students could handle drinking water in the classroom, then my expectations for behavior might be too low," he says.

Barnwell's eighth graders made a video to show what was going on in his classroom. "Mr. B," said one of the filmmakers, "with our video I'd like to show people how eighth graders can act. We're not that bad." Barnwell agrees. Eighth graders aren't bad. But they are

shaped by teachers' expectations and methods, and his own students' behavior and interactions have become vastly better since he instituted these simple changes in his classroom.

"Fostering Positive Behavior in Middle School Classrooms" by Paul Barnwell in *Principal Leadership*, May 2009 (Middle Level Edition, Vol. 9, #9, p. 32-34), no e-link available; Barnwell can be reached at paul.barnwell@shelby.kyschools.us.

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9. A Norwegian Approach to Dealing with Bullying

In this *New York Times* article, pediatrician Perri Klass remembers a Boston elementary-school boy saying he was being teased and beaten up by other students as he competed in a multi-school science fair. The bullying was so persistent that the boy's mother wondered if he should drop out of the competition. Klass encouraged the boy to stick with it and told the mother she should complain to the boy's teacher. In retrospect, Klass regrets that she didn't do three things: (a) Make more of a point of saying that bullying has long-range consequences and *can* be prevented if schools take the right approach; (b) Insist that the mother contact the principal and hold him accountable for putting a stop to the bullying (or calling the principal himself and following up to see if things improved); and (c) Focus more on the bullies, who will continue to cause problems (and have problems themselves) if things aren't dealt with properly.

Europe is ahead of the U.S. in this area, says Klass, who reports that the American Academy of Pediatricians is about to publish a policy statement on bullying in which it recommends that schools adopt a prevention model developed by Dan Olweus, a psychologist from the University of Bergen in Norway. The Olweus program addresses the issue at the schoolwide level, the classroom level, and with students who are bullied or engage in bullying. The program focuses especially on children who are bystanders when bullying happens, helping them realize that bullies have problems managing their behavior and bystanders have a responsibility to peers who are being victimized.

The first step a school should take, says Klass, is to survey students to find out where and when bullying is occurring (usually one in four children will report being involved in bullying, either as a victim or perpetrator; this includes rumors and social exclusion, a form of bullying more common among girls). A thorough survey can lead to immediate improvements – better supervision of an out-of-sight corner of the playground or the entrance hallway at dismissal time, for example. The next step is "activating the bystanders," which means changing the culture of the school through class discussions, parent meetings, and consistent responses to every incident to convey the message that bullying will not be tolerated.

But rules and rhetoric are not enough, says Klass. "Zero-tolerance policies that school districts have are basically pushing the debt forward. We need to be more sophisticated."

"At Last, Facing Down Bullies (and Their Enablers)" by Perri Klass in *The New York Times*, June 9, 2009; check out this link for a truly ugly, menacing picture of a child bully!

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/09/health/09klas.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=At%20Last,%20Facing%20Down%20Bullies%20(and%20Their%20Enablers)&st=cse

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10. What's the Best Way to Calculate the High-School Graduation Rate?

Graduation rates are a key metric for tracking educational success, both at the school and the national level, says researcher Gerald Bracey in this *Principal Leadership* article. "We used to be 'Number 1' and still would be if the rest of the world hadn't had the audacity to recover from World War II," he says.

Calculating the graduation rate of a school or district would seem to be pretty straightforward: just divide the number of ninth graders into the number of graduating seniors, right? Not so fast, says Bracey. There are a number of complicating factors:

- *The ninth-grade bulge* – Enrollment in this grade is usually higher because (a) some students who have been attending private and parochial schools transfer into public high schools, and (b) many ninth graders are held back. Thus, using ninth graders as the denominator systematically underestimates the proportion of graduates. The best way to take account of this is to use the average of eighth, ninth, and tenth-grade enrollments.
- *On-time graduation* – Not all schools report graduation statistics for students who take more than four years to graduate.
- *The definition of "diploma"* – Does a GED count?
- *Students who leave to attend private school*
- *Students who leave the state*
- *Students who are expelled*
- *Students who were taken off the rolls because they falsified information*
- *Home schooled students*
- *Students removed by child protective services*
- *Prison population*
- *Immigrants*
- *Military personnel*

"I doubt that we will ever have a completely accurate system to determine graduation and dropout rates short of implanting chips in kids' heads and tracking them," says Bracey, "but we can do better."

"Calculating Graduation Rates: We Can Do Better" by Gerald Bracey in *Principal Leadership*, May 2009 (Vol. 9, #9, p. 58-60), no e-link available

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11. Stopping "Summer Slide" in Baltimore Elementary Schools

In this *JESPAR* article, University of Wisconsin/Madison researchers Geoffrey Borman, Michael Goetz, and Maritza Dowling report on the impact of KindergARTen Camp, a six-week summer enrichment program in Baltimore featuring literacy, science, and fine arts for

inner-city students between their kindergarten and first-grade years. Not all summer programs are successful in counteracting summer loss in reading skills, but this one was. Students in the program made significant gains in reading proficiency as measured by the DRA and reading word lists – 16 percentile points above the control group. Parents raved about the program.

The authors believe that KindergARTen Camp is an effective model – and a better alternative to strictly remedial summer programs. It had some glitches – imperfect attendance by students and incomplete training for staff – and will do even better when these are ironed out.

"Halting the Summer Achievement Slide: A Randomized Field Trial of the KindergARTen Summer Camp" by Geoffrey Borman, Michael Goetz, and Maritza Dowling in *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, April-June 2009 (Vol. 14, #2, p. 133-147), no e-link; Borman can be reached at gborman@education.wisc.edu.

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12. Children's Book Recommendations

In this regular *Reading Today* feature, former language arts teacher David Richardson highly recommends these children's books:

• *When the Whistle Blows* by Fran Cannon Slayton (Philomel, 2009), ages 12 and up. Set in a post-World War II railroad town, this novel is about a boy growing up, his relationship to his father, football, pranks, and secret societies.

• *Rhyming Dust Bunnies* by Jan Thomas (Atheneum 2009), ages 3 and up. Dust bunnies play with rhyming words while a partner tries to warn them about vacuum cleaners and brooms.

• *A Penguin Story* by Antoinette Portis (HarperCollins, 2009), ages 2-8. A curious little penguin named Edna sets out to find colors other than white, black, and blue and discovers much more.

• *The Dog Days of Charlotte Hayes* by Marlane Kennedy (Greenwillow, 2009), ages 10 and up. A girl who doesn't like dogs tries to find a new home for a lovable St. Bernard.

• *Louie!* By Will Hillenbrand (Philomel, 2009) ages 2-10. A pig who paints is the main character in this humorous book, which Richardson says is a good companion to any Madeline book.

• *Alien Feast (Chronicles of the First Invasion)* by Michael Simmons, illustrated by George O'Connor (Roaring Brook Press, 2008), ages 12 and up. This fast-paced novel has aliens who don't eat feet, wickedly selfish step-parents, an eccentric uncle, a budding romance, and a plot to take over the world.

• *Henry the Impatient Heron* by Dona Love, illustrated by Christina Walk (Sylvan Dell, 2008), ages 5 and up. Henry the heron has trouble standing still waiting to catch his food and finds a solution. Richardson says this book has lots of science information as well as being a good readaloud for antsy children.

• *Duck! Rabbit!* By Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Tom Lichtenheld (Chronicle, 2009), all ages. This book plays with ambiguous illustrations (is it a duck or is it a rabbit?).

"You Have to Read This Book!" by David Richardson in *Reading Today*, June/July 2009 (Vol. 26, #6, p. 24), no e-link available

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13. Short Item:

National Writing Day – October 20, 2009 has been declared National Writing Day by the National Council of Teachers of English. Between now and then, educators, students, and others are invited to submit pieces of writing to be included in the National Gallery of Writing, which will be searchable online. Communities can create their own sections within this collection of how writing is used in our society. For more information, please see http://www.ncte.org/action/dayonwriting.

"Celebrate Writing on October 20" in *Principal Leadership*, May 2009 (Vol. 9, #9, p. 8)

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Do you have feedback? Is anything missing?

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

About the Marshall Memo

Mission and focus:

This weekly memo is designed to keep principals, teachers, superintendents, and others very well-informed on current research and effective practices in K-12 education. Kim Marshall, drawing on 37 years' experience as a teacher, principal, central office administrator, and writer, lightens the load of busy educators by serving as their "designated reader."

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

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