Marshall Memo 354

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
October 4, 2010

In This Issue:

Quotes of the Week

"In every case, [differentiation] seemed to complicate teachers' work, requiring them to procure and assemble multiple sets of materials. I saw frustrated teachers trying to provide materials that matched each student's or group's presumed ability level, interest, preferred 'modality,' and learning style. The attempt often devolved into a frantically assembled collection of worksheets, coloring exercises, and specious 'kinesthetic' activities."

Mike Schmoker (see item #2)

"Helping students learn how to distinguish truth from falsehood, how to judge the credibility of sources, how to reason rigorously, how to make ethical choices, and how to deal with ambiguities that characterize human affairs is vital to our success as a nation. Not surprisingly, these very abilities are needed – and much valued – by employers."

Jim Haas in "A Question of Values: Are We Learning for Earning – or for Living?" in *Education Week*, Sept. 29, 2010 (Vol. 30, #5, p. 28), http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/09/29/05haas.h30.html

"If there is one thing that traditional special education has taught us, it's that staying compliant does not necessarily lead to improved student learning."

Austin Buffum, Mike Mattos, and Chris Weber (see item #6)

"It is a disgrace that we are still teaching girls that they should be onlookers in a world where boys do interesting things. Too many females on screen are inaction figures: watching, waiting, applauding, and baring flesh."

Julia Baird (see item #10)

1. Is Differentiation Undermining Effective Curriculum and Instruction?

In this trenchant *Education Week* commentary article, author/consultant Mike Schmoker takes on one of the current shibboleths of American education – differentiation. He says that several years ago he asked a differentiation guru for evidence that differentiation is effective, and after numerous requests, she conceded there was no solid research or school data backing it up. Schmoker says this is why differentiation isn't on any research-based lists of effective educational practices or interventions.

What exactly *is* differentiation? Schmoker says it's based on the belief that students learn best when they are grouped by ability, personal interests, or "learning styles." Eminent researchers (Bryan Goodwin of McREL, John Hattie of New Zealand, and Daniel Willingham of the University of Virginia) and hundreds of studies have shown that this premise is fundamentally wrong, says Schmoker. Differentiation has become one of the most widely adopted instructional orthodoxies of our time based "largely on enthusiasm and a certain superficial logic."

As Schmoker has visited classrooms around the country, he has seen differentiation causing problems for teachers. "In every case," he says, "it seemed to complicate teachers' work, requiring them to procure and assemble multiple sets of materials. I saw frustrated teachers trying to provide materials that matched each student's or group's presumed ability level, interest, preferred 'modality,' and learning style. The attempt often devolved into a frantically assembled collection of worksheets, coloring exercises, and specious 'kinesthetic' activities… With so many groups to teach, instructors found it almost impossible to provide sustained, properly executed lessons for every child or group…"

Most disturbingly, Schmoker has seen differentiation insidiously reducing expectations for some students. "In English, 'creative' students made things or drew pictures," he says. "'Analytic' students got to read and write."

So what does Schmoker propose? "Three simple things matter more than all else if we want better schools," he says:

• A coherent, content-rich, guaranteed curriculum, so that the subject matter and intellectual skills that are taught in each classroom "don't depend on which teacher a student happens to get."

• Students reading, discussing, arguing, and writing about what they read every day, across the curriculum. "We aren't even close to that now," says Schmoker.

• Well-taught lessons, which include a clear, curriculum-based objective, a quick diagnostic assessment, and several cycles of instruction, guided practice, checks for

understanding, and ongoing adjustments to instruction. "Solid research demonstrates that students learn as much as four times as quickly from such lessons," says Schmoker.

These three basics are what we should be focusing on in classrooms, he concludes. "They should… be education's near-exclusive focus, our highest priority for at least a period of years – or until they are satisfactorily and routinely implemented. Then we can innovate – judiciously – starting with pilots and sensible monitoring before we expand promiscuously on the basis of superficial appeal."

"When Pedagogic Fads Trump Priorities" by Mike Schmoker in *Education Week*, Sept. 29, 2010 (Vol. 30, #5, p. 22-23),
http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/09/29/05schmoker.h30.html

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2. The Truth About Getting a College Degree

"Ask middle and high school students if they plan to graduate from college," write Northwestern University professor James Rosenbaum, postdoctoral fellow Jennifer Stephan, and University of Maryland professor Janet Rosenbaum in this *American Educator* article, "and the vast majority will likely answer yes. Even students whose grades are below average or downright abysmal will nod their heads and say they sincerely believe they will not only gain admission to college, but will earn a four-year degree."

But this isn't what happens. With open enrollment at so many institutions, many young Americans go to college, but less than half of high-school students aiming for a degree are successful, and for students with weak academic records, the college graduation rate is under 20 percent. Rosenbaum, Stephan, and Rosenbaum say that "with our good intentions, we actually mislead the youth who most need our guidance… [W]ithholding potentially discouraging information from youth appears to be a widespread societal problem – not a problem limited to the education field."

Take adolescent health. "Abstinence only" sex education programs have been ineffective in promoting abstinence, but condom use among program participants who become sexually active is drastically lower than it is among non-program youth because (a) students were encouraged to follow a narrow, idealized course of action, (b) the programs withhold information about the high failure rates of abstinence programs, and (c) program leaders persist with their idealized programs instead of alternative sex education programs with better outcomes.

Rosenbaum, Stephan, and Rosenbaum believe that leveling with students about college is analogous. "Somehow, across fields, we must find a way of being honest with our youth without crushing their dreams," they say. "Long term, knowing the truth is the only way to accomplish one's goals." They go on to identify three elements in the college-for-all bandwagon that are potentially harmful:

• *Idealizing the bachelor's degree* – Students are told that a college degree has a million-dollar career payoff, that a degree guarantees higher earnings, that high earnings signal good jobs, that a bachelor's degree leads to better jobs than an associate's degree, and that

unsuccessful bachelor's degree candidates never return to get an associate's degree. Each of these is misleading, say the authors, and each discourages students from considering alternative backup options. What's not being said is:

- Some B.A. graduates will earn less than most associate's degree recipients.
- Future earnings are not the best criterion for choosing college majors and first jobs – other conditions are at least as important for life and work satisfaction.
- These myths keep students from allowing for college interruptions due to work or family concerns; planning a sequence of certificate, associate's degree, then bachelor's degree might provide backup options.
- Low-achieving students are rarely warned that they have a low probability of getting a B.A.

In a sidebar within the article, University of the District of Columbia history professor Chris Myers Asch describes a career talk being given by a dynamic young professor to an urban middle-school class. He asked students what they wanted to be when they grew up, and one girl answered excitedly, "Nurse!" "Nurse?" the professor asked with disappointment in his voice. "How about doctor? Don't you want to shoot high?" The girl's face fell, and Asch was incensed. "Not only was he wrong on a practical level – this country faces a serious nurse shortage – but he exemplified the haughty disdain with which many educators and policymakers view careers that do not require a bachelor's or advanced degree."

• *The idea that college is as easy as high school* – Nowadays, most high-school counselors are reluctant to discourage students from attending college – they're uncomfortable with being gatekeepers for fear of being branded as racists and/or having low expectations of students. Counselors tend to present an oversimplified picture of open admissions, and students don't get the full story about the difference between passing state high-school tests and being college-ready, that college remedial courses don't count toward graduation, and the struggles of many students who went to college ahead of them. Studies have shown that students with poor grades (C or below) had less than a 20 percent chance of earning a college degree in 10 years after leaving high school. Knowing these statistics might motivate many high-school students to work harder for good grades – and might convince those with low grades to pursue other options.

• *Stigma-free college remediation* – The unrealistic B.A. goals presented to students by community colleges collide with many students' poor academic skills. Over two-thirds of community college students are directed into remedial courses to bring their achievement up to the level required by B.A.-transfer programs. In some urban areas, the remediation rate is over 90 percent. With so many students in remedial courses, community colleges see it in their interests to reduce the stigma – remediation has become the new normal. Students don't feel uncomfortable with their status (and don't study for placement tests before arriving), but none of those remedial students are earning college credit. And the track record is poor: one recent study found that only 29 percent of students in remedial reading courses and 17 percent in remedial math courses successfully completed their sequence of remedial courses. They were in a dead-end street.

"Youth should have dreams," say the authors, "but if school staff feel compelled to withhold crucial information to preserve those dreams, that is not kindness; it is deception that does great harm."

What is a better plan? Rosenbaum, Stephan, and Rosenbaum make the case for students with low achievement taking a step-by-step approach to their career ladders: completing the courses needed to obtain a certificate; considering high-quality private occupational colleges that match them with appropriate occupational programs that don't require college-level achievement in math or writing; following a similar course in a community college; and other pathways. "The B.A.-for-all movement," they say, "conveys an unnecessarily narrow vision of success, which inadvertently fails to identify intervening degrees that lead to desirable careers with fewer obstacles, shorter timetables, and a greater likelihood of success." They can also increase the odds of eventually earning a conventional bachelor's degree.

"Beyond One-Size-Fits-All College Dreams: Alternative Pathways to Desirable Careers" by James Rosenbaum, Jennifer Stephan, and Janet Rosenbaum in *American Educator*, Fall 2010 (Vol. 34, #3, p. 2-13) http://www.aft.org/pdfs/americaneducator/fall2010/Rosenbaum.pdf

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3. An Early Warning System to Prevent Student Failure

(Originally titled "Flagged for Success")

In this *Educational Leadership* article, author/consultant Robyn Jackson describes how she was often surprised to find her high-school English students slipping into failure half way through a grading period. The problem was that it was sometimes too late to pull the student up. She tried anticipating students' learning problems and building graphic organizers and other learning aids into the curriculum, but this still didn't prevent some students from sliding below mastery.

So Jackson invented a system of "red flags" to trigger immediate help for needy students before they became mired in failure. For example, any student who scored below 75 on a test or quiz went into her intervention cycle (lunch time, after school) and got progressively more intensive interventions until he or she moved above the mastery threshold. She tells the story of three students who made dramatic progress as a result of being "flagged". Here are Jackson's suggested guidelines for red flags:

• There should be clear criteria for being below mastery – for example, falling below a specific average grade or a certain cutoff score on a quiz.

• Red flags should be hard to ignore. "Establish red flags that are easy to recognize and hard to miss," Jackson advises.

• Red flags should precipitate action. "The moment a student triggers a red flag, you must be ready to apply an intervention," she says. "If you wait, you will lose the opportunity to quickly get the student back on track."

• Red flags should focus on academics, not behavior. Jackson advocates separate interventions for behavior issues.

"Flagged for Success" by Robyn Jackson in *Educational Leadership*, October 2010 (Vol. 68, #2, p. 18-21)
http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct10/vol68/num02/Flagged-for-Success.aspx
Jackson can be reached at robyn@mindstepsinc.com.

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4. Boosting Middle-School Students' Academic Vocabulary

(Originally titled "The Words Students Need")

"When students enter middle school, they encounter increasingly difficult textbooks and instructional materials," say literacy experts Joshua Lawrence, Claire White, and Catherine Snow in this *Educational Leadership* article. "Many students begin to struggle with reading comprehension because they lack the vocabulary to understand academic text." The authors say that middle-school students need a systematic schoolwide vocabulary program if they are to become proficient at reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

But which words should be taught? Not the common words that all students know, say Lawrence, White, and Snow. Not content-specific words that students will learn in their science, social studies, and math classes. The schoolwide program should teach general academic vocabulary - words like *distribute, conclusion, proceed, logical, obtain, acquire, retain, exclude, attribute, assume, capacity, enable, perspective, relevant, perceive, component, restrict, generate, distinct, assess, alter, amend,* and *contrast*. Students will encounter words like these in many academic contexts across subject areas. A good source for such words is the Academic Word list – http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist/information.aspx. Another list that presents the 86,800 most frequently used English words, in rank order, is available at http://www.wordcount.org/main.php.

Two other websites that help support students' morphological skills and word learning strategies are the Visuword Online Graphical Dictionary – http://www.visuwords.com/search (this one is wild!) - and WordSift - http://www.wordsift.com.

For information about Word Generation, a middle-school academic vocabulary development program, see http://wordgeneration.org. [For more on this program, see Marshall Memo 224, article 3.]

"The Words Students Need" by Joshua Lawrence, Claire White, and Catherine Snow in *Educational Leadership*, October 2010 (Vol. 68, #2, p. 22-26); this article can be purchased at http://www.ascd.org. The authors can be reached at Joshua_lawrence@gse.harvard.edu, cwhite@serpinstitute.org, and catherine_snow@gse.harvard.edu.

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5. Avoiding the Pitfalls and Doing RTI Right

(Originally titled "The Why Behind RTI")

In this *Educational Leadership* article, veteran educators Austin Buffum, Mike Mattos, and Chris Weber say too many schools are implementing Response to Intervention (RTI) in ways that will not improve teaching and learning:

• Test score focus – This mindset leads districts to create rigid pacing guides to get teachers to cover standards. "Such thinking makes total sense if the goal is to *teach* all the material before the state assessments," say the authors, "but it makes no sense if the goal is to have all students *learn* essential standards." Another result of a test-prep mentality is concentrating on the "bubble" students and ignoring the needs of other students.

• Mindless implementation – When schools and districts are required to "do" RTI, they tend to follow implementation checklists and timelines and miss its essence – continuous assessment, immediate intervention, and constant improvement of teaching and learning.

• Legal compliance – Districts that see RTI as a way of staying within the law get bogged down in paperwork and don't serve all students. "If there is one thing that traditional special education has taught us," say Buffum, Mattos, and Weber, "it's that staying compliant does not necessarily lead to improved student learning – in fact, the opposite is more often the case."

• A deficit model – In too many schools, students who have difficulty in regular-education classes are referred for special education. "RTI is built on a polar opposite approach," say the authors: "When a student struggles, we assume that we are not teaching him or her correctly."

"Schools cannot succeed by doing the right things for the wrong reasons," say Buffum, Mattos, and Weber. They suggest three basic questions educators should focus on:

• *What is the fundamental purpose of our school?* It's not to provide jobs for adults or administer tests. It's to provide every student with the skills and knowledge to be an intelligent, responsible, self-sufficient person with the knowledge and quality of character to live a happy, rewarding adult life.

• *What knowledge and skills will our children need?* Far more than is contained in current state standards, say the authors. They need to be able to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, compare and contrast, and manipulate and apply information. They need to be able to learn, unlearn, and relearn to be prepared for success in the 21st century.

• *What must we do to make learning a reality for every student?* Provide every student with targeted instruction and the time necessary to learn – which is the essence of RTI. Here's what should happen at each tier:

- Tier 1 – Giving every student highly effective teaching of a rigorous grade-level curriculum, focused on the standards that all students must master. For this to happen, teacher teams need to identify the most essential standards, unpack them into discrete learning targets, identify the prior knowledge and skills needed to master those targets, create assessments to measure mastery, plan units, and teach content, process and product to meet all students' needs in whole-group, small-group, and individual settings. Teachers need to use common assessments to see which Tier 1 instructional practices are effective and ineffective.
- Tier 2 – Using ongoing assessments to identify students who need additional support and delivering small-group help that is timely, structured, focused on the cause of

students' struggles, and delivered by a trained professional. Some Tier 2 instruction might happen before Tier 1 to bring lagging students up to par.

- Tier 3 – This intensive, individualized support is given to students most in need in addition to core instruction, not in place of it. "It is unlikely that a single program will meet the needs of a student in Tier 3," say Buffum, Mattos, and Weber, "as many of these students are like knots, with multiple difficulties that tangle together to form a lump of failure." A problem-solving team is needed to figure out how to help these students. If it's effective, very few of these students will need special education.

"The Why Behind RTI" by Austin Buffum, Mike Mattos, and Chris Weber in *Educational Leadership*, October 2010 (Vol. 68, #2, p. 10-16),
http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct10/vol68/num02/The-Why-Behind-RTI.aspx
The authors are available at austinbuffum@cox.net, mikemattos@me.com, and chrisaweber@me.com.

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6. Comparing Implementation of *Everyday Mathematics* and *Investigations*

In this *American Educational Research Journal* article, University of Pittsburgh professor Mary Kay Stein and research associate Julia Kaufman report on a two-year study of the implementation of two standards-based math programs – *Everyday Mathematics* in a New York City sub-district and *Investigations* in another urban district. Observing 48 classrooms and interviewing teachers, the study found that teachers' implementation of *Investigations* was significantly better in terms of teachers maintaining high levels of cognitive demand, paying attention to student thinking, and encouraging students' mathematical reasoning independent of the teacher. The study intentionally didn't look at student learning results because the authors' focus was on problems that can occur *as materials are implemented*.

Stein and Kaufman set out to find the reasons that *Investigations* was more successfully implemented. Was it the curriculum itself, teacher capacity, or professional development and support? To analyze this, they laid out the steps a curriculum task goes through as it is implemented by a teacher:

- The task as it appears in the curriculum materials
  ⬇
- The task as it is set up in the classroom
  ⬇
- The task as it is enacted in the classroom
  ⬇
- Student learning

In many classrooms, there is slippage at the set-up and enactment steps – that is, the task may have high cognitive demand but the demand is reduced as the teacher sets it up and implements it with students. To implement curriculum materials *effectively*, say Stein and Kaufman, a teacher must:

- Maintain cognitive demand;
- Attend to student thinking and use student responses to shape the lesson;
- Make students accountable for using and justifying mathematical reasoning.

The authors believe that *Investigations* does a better job of guiding teachers to do these as they implement curriculum. "In a nutshell," they write, "the *Investigations* curriculum offers more support to teachers than does the *EM* curriculum, where 'support' is defined as additional information written specifically *for teachers* in order to help them better understand and teach the lessons." One of the key factors is helping teachers focus on the big mathematical ideas of each lesson.

But what about teacher capacity? Stein and Kaufman looked at teachers' training, experience, and math knowledge and found that these were not the decisive factors in high-quality curriculum implementation. Rather, it was the quality of the materials themselves and the professional development and support that were provided. "Our findings debunk the conventional wisdom that only high-capacity teachers can use *Investigations* in a high-quality way and that teachers with more limited capacity might be able to use *Everyday Mathematics* in a high-quality way," conclude the authors. "More interestingly, our findings suggest that how a teacher uses a curriculum may be more important than the education, experience, and knowledge that he or she brings to the table… Specifically, our data suggest that curricula may operate as a teaching tool that supports and enhances teacher practice, which might then further influence teachers' skilled use of that tool."

"Selecting and Supporting the Use of Mathematics Curricula at Scale" by Mary Kay Stein and Julia Kaufman in *American Educational Research Journal*, September 2010 (Vol. 47, #3, p. 663-693), no e-link available; the authors can be reached at mkstein@pitt.edu and juliak@pitt.edu.

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7. Working to Counteract Fourth-Grade Slump

In this *JESPAR* article, Jean Stockard of the University of Oregon and the National Institute for Direct Instruction reports on a study comparing the impact of Direct Instruction, Open Court, and a mixed reading curriculum (used in first grade) on the same students' achievement in fifth grade. The goal of the study was to see which curriculum successfully combated "fourth-grade slump" – the well-documented tendency of low-SES students to lose ground compared to their more advantaged peers after third grade. The study, conducted in Baltimore City Public Schools, found that children who had Direct Instruction in first grade did significantly better in reading vocabulary and comprehension than the other two groups when they reached fifth grade.

"Promoting Reading Achievement and Countering the 'Fourth-Grade Slump': The Impact of Direct Instruction on Reading Achievement in Fifth Grade" by Jean Stockard in *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk* (*JESPAR*), July-September 2010 (Vol. 15, #3, p. 218-240), no e-link available; Stockard is at jstockard@nifdi.org

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8. Essential Questions for High-School Civic Education

In this *Harvard Educational Review* article, Beth Rubin and Brian Hayes of Rutgers/ State University of New Jersey describe a year-long research project that involved a new approach to civic learning in high-school social studies classrooms. Here are some of the Essential Questions that were generated for the course:

• Government (topics include branches of government, federal system, political ideology, electoral politics, and civic participation):

- What purpose does government serve?
- What is a good American citizen?
- Am I a good American citizen?

• Economics (topics include basic terms, capitalism, the stock market, the Great Depression, industrialization, the role of government, economic reforms, world economy, personal economics):

- What do Americans owe each other?
- Why are some Americans rich and some poor?
- Is the American economy fair?

• Conflict and resolution (topics include World War I and II, the Cold War, Vietnam, Korea, the Gulf and Iraq wars, the War on Terror, and genocide):

- What is America's role in the world?
- Why does the U.S. go to war?
- When should it go to war?
- Can nations cooperate?

• Movement of people (topics include immigration, migration, Native Americans, African Americans, internment, contemporary challenges):

- Who is an American?
- Why do people come to America?
- How do different groups define their American identities?

• Social change (topics include race, the civil rights movement, Latino rights movement, gender and women's rights movement, social protest):

- Are all Americans equal?
- How do Americans make social change?
- Who has the power to make change?
- What forces shape society?

"'No Backpacks' versus 'Drugs and Murder': The Promise and Complexity of Youth Civic Action Research" by Beth Rubin and Brian Hayes in *Harvard Educational Review*, Fall 2010 (Vol. 80, #3, p. 352-378), no e-link available

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9. Teachers Who Cross the Line to Sexual Misconduct

In this *Teachers College Record* article, Purdue University professor Tara Star Johnson analyzes educator sexual misconduct in secondary schools. She describes two female teachers,

Hannah and Kim, who had affairs with male students, and compares them with Mary Kay Letourneau and Heather Ingram, two highly publicized teachers whose backgrounds and experiences were similar.

Johnson describes how each teacher attempted to save a student from academic failure and in the process, the student flirted, the teachers didn't discourage it, and the teacher fell in love. The teacher then allowed (and sometimes created) increasingly intimate scenarios, setting the stage for physical contact, which the students initiated.

Two prevalent myths are unhelpful, says Johnson: that not talking about sexual feelings will make the elephant go away, and that surveillance and rules forbidding any form of touching will prevent educator sexual misconduct. The second is especially ironic, she says, since in her two case studies, "A heightened emotional connection was the gateway to misconduct."

In her previous work, Johnson has studied and given workshops on the sexual dynamics that pre-service female teachers experience in high-school English classes. Teachers aren't supposed to have bodies or desires because, says Johnson, "education is supposed to be about transferring knowledge to students' minds." But in the real world, young female teachers have to deal with a "consciousness of their bodies as the object of students' (and colleagues') gaze, handling literature discussions or student writing that includes references to sex and sexuality, dealing with students' flirtatious behavior, and finally, theorizing their own feelings of attraction toward some students." Previously, she thought that as long as teachers were mindful that *the line cannot EVER EVER be crossed*, allowing some elements of sexual content into the classroom "had pleasurable and productive possibilities."

But Johnson kept being asked the same question: *How do we know where the line is?* She found the usual answers – "It depends" and "The line is actually a gray area" – less than satisfactory and decided to focus on the borderline between potentially productive sexual dynamics in classrooms and educator misconduct. Using her case studies, she zeroed in on how in each case the line between "teacher" and "lover" was crossed. Johnson presents this list of observations and suggestions for educators:

• Sexual feelings in secondary classrooms are inevitable. Students get crushes on teachers, adults are drawn to some students, and there's often electricity in the air. Denying that these feelings exist creates a climate that makes misconduct *more* likely to occur. Johnson quotes Cavanagh (2007): "The mandate of silence, censorship, and innocence allows for the possibility of abuse and sexual danger even as it claims to protect and sanctify the allegedly innocent child or teen… there is nothing like silence, negation, and innocence to excite and romanticize sexual and professional prohibitions." The point is to clearly draw the line at inappropriate words and contact. In her case studies, this line was in the early stages of flirtation.

• Publicly humiliating a flirtatious student is not the right approach, but appropriate limits have to be set. Teachers need to steer clear of what Johnson calls a "pushmepullyou" dynamic with students – flirtatious back-and-forth that encourages students to think there might be romantic interest on the part of the adult.

• Teachers need to be clearly warned about the possibility of becoming emotionally involved with a student and how doing so could destroy them professionally. The tipping point in Johnson's case studies came when the teachers went from "loving the boys *as students* whom they perceived to be in need of saving to loving them *as partners* in romantic relationships."

• Educators have a lot to learn from psychoanalysis, where there is a well-developed conceptual framework for dealing with forbidden feelings. "Counselors are educated about the psychoanalytic concept of transference, in which patients transfer their issues or strong feelings onto their therapist, as well as its corollary, counter-transference, in which therapists develop strong feelings for the analysand because he or she represents a mirror of their own issues," says Johnson. "[T]herapists have language to talk about them, which I think is important. Their rules and consequences for crossing the line are no less stringent than teachers', but a level of awareness and preparedness exists that, if paralleled in education, might help teachers navigate those slippery slopes."

• Finally, Johnson recommends a program called SMART – Sexual Misconduct Awareness and Response Training developed by Education Misconduct Solutions. More information at http://www.wylie3solutions.org/.

"Crossing the Line: When Pedagogic Relationships Go Awry" by Tara Star Johnson in *Teachers College Record*, August 2010 (Vol. 112, #8, p. 2021-2066), no e-link available

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10. What Movies and TV Are Doing to Girls

In this *Newsweek* column, Julia Baird presents an array of statistics on the paucity of strong female characters in the movies and cartoons that children watch – *Finding Nemo, Madagascar, Ice Age, Toy Story*. Yes, there are some, but they tend to be sidekicks, says Baird – the ditzy, amnesiac Dory in *Nemo* and the cute cowgirl in *Toy Story*. *The Princess and the Frog*, which introduced the first African-American heroine, was an exception. "Even creepier," Baird continues, "is the fact that many of the female characters are scantily clad, and hot (the Little Mermaid wasn't always depicted popping out of a tiny bikini top)."

A recent Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism study of 122 family films released between 2006 and 2009 found that only 29 percent of characters were female, a quarter of the female characters were depicted in "sexy, tight, and alluring attire", and a fifth had impossibly slim waists. Who's writing and producing these films and cartoons? Currently, only seven percent of directors, 13 percent of writers, and 20 percent of producers are female.

Isn't this all harmless entertainment that has little real effect on kids? Reflect on another statistic: children under seven have an average of 20 DVDs in their homes, and half watch at least one a day. And this: actress Geena Davis, who commissioned the Annenberg study, cites research that the more television a girl watches, the fewer options she believes she has in life, and the more TV a boy watches, the more sexist his views become. "The more we see female characters who are hypersexual, one-dimensional eye candy," says Davis, "sidelined, or not even there, the more it affects the way boys and girls think about girls."

Baird's conclusion: "It is a disgrace that we are still teaching girls that they should be onlookers in a world where boys do interesting things. Too many females on screen are inaction figures: watching, waiting, applauding, and baring flesh."

"The Shame of Family Flicks" by Julia Baird in *Newsweek*, Oct. 4, 2010 (p. 22)
http://www.newsweek.com/2010/09/22/why-family-films-are-so-sexist.html
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11. Short Items:

a. ELL resources website – Colorin Colorado is a bilingual website geared toward Spanish speakers with dozens of downloadable resources for teachers, parents, and librarians, including leveled book lists, tip sheets, and a 92-page tool kit for reaching out to Latino parents: http://www.colorincolorado.org.

"Double Take" in *Educational Leadership*, October 2010 (Vol. 68, #2, p. 9)
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b. Report on tiered interventions in high school – This brief item in *Educational Leadership* flags a new report from the National High School Center, the National Center on Response to Intervention, and the Center on Instruction: *Tiered Interventions in High Schools: Using Preliminary 'Lessons Learned' to Guide Ongoing Discussion*. It's available at http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/documents/HSTII_LessonsLearned.pdf.

"Double Take" in *Educational Leadership*, October 2010 (Vol. 68, #2, 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

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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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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.

Website:

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

- How to subscribe or renew
- A detailed rationale for the Marshall Memo
- Publications (with a count of articles from each)
- Article selection criteria
- Topics (with a count of articles from each)
- Headlines for all issues
- 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
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
Teachers College Record
The Atlantic Monthly
The Chronicle of Higher Education
The Language Educator
The Learning Principal
The New Yorker
The Reading Teacher
Theory Into Practice
Tools for Schools