Marshall Memo 84

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
April 25, 2005

In This Issue:

Quotes of the Week

"In school, students often face considerable anxiety and sometimes harsh penalties if they make mistakes. In [computer] games, the best way to learn is to plunge in, make mistakes, lose your life, and then reboot so you can try again."

Henry Jenkins (see item #1)

"[I]f novice law students were assigned to try single-handedly multimillion-dollar antitrust cases, or recent medical graduates were required to conduct open-heart surgery, attrition rates in those professions would be no better than education's."

Alan Bersin, San Diego superintendent (see item #2)

"Growth in student achievement, reflected in multiple indicators, must be the outcome measure we use to gauge productivity in public education. Of every program in place, and every reform proposed, we must ask: Does it improve student achievement?"

Alan Bersin (*ibid*.)

"[P]eople don't change when you tell them they should, but when they tell themselves they must."

Thomas Friedman, *New York Times*, April 7, 2005 (p. A27)

"I don't like it when people ease up on me. I know when it's my fault and I need to step up and change my game."

Marquis Rodriguez, 12, Roxbury Preparatory Charter School student (item #9)

"I knew nothing. I was ready to teach."

Sarah Field, first-year teacher (see item #10)

1. What Educators Can Learn From Electronic Games

M.I.T. professor Henry Jenkins is an expert on the computer games that many kids find so fascinating (32 percent of students admit playing them during class). What is it that leads some youngsters to stay up until dawn trying to master the next level in a challenging game when they give up on a difficult homework assignment after only a few minutes? Why is it that the worst thing a kid can say about a homework assignment is that it's too hard, while the worst thing that's said about a game is that it's too easy? Jenkins believes that educators have a lot to learn from the incredible holding power of these games. Here is his list:

• *Intrinsic motivation* – Kids play electronic games for their own sake, not for external rewards like money or grades. Activities that are intrinsically motivating help kids develop a sense of themselves as learners, as experts in ever more specialized domains of knowledge, as people who can start a conversation with a stranger and hold their own. Playing Pokémon, says Jenkins, asks kids to learn a much more extensive vocabulary than they do in most classrooms and succeeds by "putting it into action as they immediately transform abstract concepts and classifications into elements in the game. They are motivated to master this content because they are actually engaging in something they want to do – an activity that their peer culture values."

• *Hard fun* – The best commercial games, says Seymour Papert, have the crucial element of challenge. Why do kids find difficult games so enjoyable when the same kids often find difficult school work so frustrating? "At their best," theorizes Jenkins, "games put kids in charge of their own learning and, at the same time, make them conscious of the learning process itself by presenting challenges they need to work through or around."

• *A lower threat of failure* – "In school," says Jenkins, "students often face considerable anxiety and sometimes harsh penalties if they make mistakes. In games, the best way to learn is to plunge in, make mistakes, lose your life, and then reboot so you can try again. Thus, games encourage exploration and experimentation. They do not give us answers that they ask us to memorize; instead, they ask us to make our own discoveries and then apply what we learn to new contexts."

• *A sense of engagement through immersion* – In stark contrast to the often sterile prose of textbooks, games allow kids to "move about and have some stake in the

events that unfold there. They can manipulate variables and see the consequences of their choices."

• *Early success, escalating challenge* – Games are deliberately designed to allow kids to succeed at the beginning and then encounter increasing levels of difficulty without being too overwhelmed. "As it happens," says Jenkins, "this sense of always being challenged and on the verge of succeeding is also a powerful motivation for learning."

• *Learning linked to goals and roles* – Those who design educational games always start by asking the content experts, "What does the information allow you to do?" Jenkins says that most textbooks never address this question. "Games motivate learning by setting clear goals or allowing players to set their own goals. Games not only provide a rationale for learning but also create a context in which players immediately use what they learn to solve a compelling problem that has real consequences within the virtual world of the game."

• *A social context connecting kids to others who share their interests* – Kids who love electronic games are constantly sharing evaluations, experiences, tips, and knowledge with their peers. Jenkins says this "metagaming" parallels what we know about peer-to-peer teaching: "The act of sharing what we know solidifies our own understanding and also provides a sense of empowerment and expertise."

• *Multimodal* – Games include text, photographs, graphics, and moving images and allow players to assume multiple roles. This makes games an ideal learning platform for different learning styles and helps solidify understanding as players process information in many different modalities.

• *Supportive of early steps into a new domain* – "Games not only provide a virtual environment for rehearsing skills and mastering knowledge," says Jenkins, "but also provide a framework that motivates additional research and learning. Players seek out additional information that helps them flesh out the micro-world."

How could these insights be put to work in classrooms? Some teachers already use simulations and games, and programs like the Model United Nations take the concepts to a highly sophisticated, real-world level. Jenkins and his colleagues at M.I.T. are working on games that get students much more deeply involved in the school curriculum. In *Revolution*, which is geared to the secondary school U.S. history curriculum, students assume the roles of townsfolk in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia just before the American Revolution – each with a specific class, race, gender, and political identity. The incidents and characters in the game come from actual news

reports in the *Virginia Gazette*, and students can read original source documents as they prepare to play. After the game, they can go back to the documents and see what actually occurred in the 1770s. Another game is *Civilization III*, a commercial strategy game in which players "shape the growth and development of a historical civilization, negotiating trade agreements or plunging the civilization into war." Both games parallel state social studies standards and develop concepts and vocabulary (such as *monarchy* and *monotheism*) needed for high-stakes tests – but in a fun, challenging, and highly interactive format.

"Getting Into the Game" by Henry Jenkins in *Educational Leadership*, April 2005 (Vol. 62, #7, p. 48-51, no e-link available

2. San Diego's Superintendent on the Barriers to Improvement

In this *Education Week* commentary piece, San Diego superintendent Alan Bersin bemoans the compromises that have been made in major school districts on teacher work rules. School districts, he argues, do not "harness self-interest in support of the common good;" they fail to use flexibility, competition, incentives, efficiency, and innovation the way other sectors of the economy do. "A fundamental question we have to ask about our large school systems," he writes, "is whether they are primarily sources of employment for adults or education for children… [S]triking the right balance between the needs of students and the interests of teachers is among the central challenges facing public education today." He goes on to identify five areas that he believes are most in need of change:

• *Lack of support of new teachers* – Bersin slams "rigid seniority systems and anachronistic personnel systems" that assign first-year teachers to the toughest classrooms, resulting in half of beginning teachers leaving the profession within the first five years on the job. "[I]f novice law students were assigned to try single-handedly multimillion-dollar antitrust cases, or recent medical graduates were required to conduct open-heart surgery, attrition rates in those professions would be no better than education's," he says. Other professions have "a continuum of study, mentoring, and experience that prepares practitioners for solving the hardest cases. The absence of this in education is a major handicap."

• *Blaming the victim* – Bersin believes that the absence of a shared professional knowledge base leads many educators straight to the belief that students, not teachers, are the problem. "We point to students' absence of motivation and their low socioeconomic standing or family dysfunction as prime reasons for the system's

failure," he writes. "Cold opposition follows any suggestion that teachers must improve their practice for student achievement to improve, or that substantial changes in teachers' education and training are needed."

• *Not looking at student outcomes* – Bersin regrets that management rarely has the ability to evaluate teachers or administrators on improvements in student achievement. "Teachers don't fail," he writes; "only their students do."

• *The wrong model of change* – Bersin says that attempts to dislodge this deeply entrenched belief system are often stopped dead in their tracks by a "collaborative model of reform" in which any stakeholder has a veto over any agreement. "The result has been paralysis and virtual immunity to systemic change," says Bersin, "all in the interests of… 'superficial congeniality.'" He doesn't see any way we can avoid "significant conflict, struggle, and tumult" if the unacceptable status quo is to be changed.

• *The wrong bottom line* – The guiding principle, he concludes, must be to focus unrelentingly on teaching and learning: "Growth in student achievement, reflected in multiple indicators, must be the outcome measure we use to gauge productivity in public education. Of every program in place, and every reform proposed, we must ask: Does it improve student achievement?"

"Making Schools Productive: The Point of Accountability and the Key to Renewal" by Alan Bersin in *Education Week*, Apr. 20, 2005 (Vol. 24, #32, p. 40, 30)
http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2005/04/20/32bersin.h24.html

3. Helping English Learners Succeed

In this round-up of research on English language learning, *American School Board Journal* leads off with a crucial finding: learning English *well* is what makes the difference in ELL students' future success. They are more likely to finish high school and enroll in college if they speak English *very well*, while students who do not speak English well are more likely to be retained, drop out, and never attend college.

But learning English at this level of proficiency takes time. A study by the American Educational Research Association (AERA) found that children who entered school with little or no English language skills could learn "playground English" and basic reading and spelling equal to those of native English speakers in two years. But even this depended on:

- Skilled, explicit instruction in phonics and the recognition of spoken sounds;
- Frequent in-class assessments;

- Daily practice reading in English.
- Learning vocabulary in context, especially through visual and context clues (e.g., pictures and labels) and "conversations, stories, science experiments, and other vocabulary-building activities" (not by memorizing lists of new words, which is largely ineffective).
- Lessons in English grammar and word order, which often differ from their native language; English learners benefit from the same kind of beginning reading instruction as native speakers, but they need more of it.
- Immediate intervention to correct pronunciation and other errors.

Learning "academic English" – the level of proficiency needed to understand textbooks and do well on standardized tests (words like *ecosystem* and *equation*) – takes longer, often 5-8 years.

What is the best way for English learners to acquire the new language? Research is increasingly negative about the English-only approach. The kind of crash one-year immersion course used by some schools (and required by a handful of states) is not producing the hoped-for gains, whereas giving students English as a Second Language (ESL) support for two or three years, followed by English immersion, seems to teach English more quickly and improve overall academic performance.

UCLA researcher Kris Gutierrez reached similar conclusions, finding that "subtractive" programs (using only English, not the native language, for classroom learning and tests) generally produce negative results, while "additive" programs (allowing students to use their native language while they learn English) result in students mastering English more quickly and achieving better in schools.

The affective side of learning English is also important. Kama Einhorn, a specialist in teaching techniques and teacher training, recommends giving ELL students "a little shelter from the storm," including the following:

- Pair English learners with English-speaking buddies for school tours, social conversations, and paired learning.
- Give English learners picture dictionaries and label classroom items in both English and their native language.
- Teach English-speaking students some basic vocabulary in the ELL students' native language and incorporate classroom learning about the ELL students' culture and community in daily lessons.
- Provide translators for parents at school meetings and during home visits.
- Correct language errors in a helpful, non-threatening way.

- Keep ELL students in the mainstream, making lessons challenging but achievable.

"English Spoken Here" by Susan Black in *American School Board Journal*, May 2005 (Vol. 192, #5, p. 36-38), no e-link available

4. School Uniforms: Do They Make Any Difference At All?

University of Missouri researcher David Brunsma has spent a decade studying the impact of school uniforms and recently published a book on the subject (*The School Uniform Movement and What It Tells Us About American Education: A Symbolic Crusade*). His conclusion: uniforms have no impact on student behavior or achievement. In an interview with *Teacher Magazine*, Brunsma elaborated:

• Schools are adopting uniform policies based on nothing more than anecdotal evidence. There is no solid research to support academic or behavioral benefits.

• Brunsma thinks the original impetus for uniforms may have come in the 1980s when public school educators heard that Catholic schools were outperforming public schools and jumped to the conclusion that uniforms were an important factor in their success. [See Marshall Memo 81, #3 on "selection bias."]

• Since then, three factors have spurred the uniform juggernaut: (a) it strikes people as a common-sensical, low-cost reform and that will make a difference in schools; (b) people are afraid of the diversity of public school students and uniforms, says Brunsma, are "an attempt to assert some kind of control in the face of uncertainties… For all our talk of diversity, we don't like the work behind the word, which is to actually make diversity a strength;" and (c) corporate clothiers are offering incentives for schools to buy their uniforms.

• Uniforms are now much more common in high-poverty schools than more affluent suburban and private schools. "It's no longer a marker of elite status," notes Brunsma. "It's become a marker of disadvantage."

• Educators who swear that they see improvements after students begin to wear uniforms are not delusional, he says. "Perceptions aren't reality. Perceptions sometimes are important interpretations of reality, but often they can mask deeper issues. Because teachers know this policy is being implemented from the top down and they know the desired outcome, it's like putting on rose-colored glasses. You're trying to make it work, so you're going to say it works, and you're going to see the good things."

• Brunsma sarcastically dismisses the argument that uniforms make it easier for parents to dress their children in the morning: "If that's why the district wants to pursue this, to make their parents' morning time easier, then OK," he says.

• Even in a school with uniformly-dressed students, there are subtle distinctions between those of different SES levels: some parents can afford more than one uniform while other students wear the same uniform day after day and are teased for looking rumpled.

• Brunsma also takes issue with the argument that, even if requiring uniforms doesn't make much difference, it's a harmless innovation. "It's fairly problematic," he argues, "because it's diverting our attention from much more fundamental aspects of public education."

"Clothes-Minded" by Samantha Stainburn in *Teacher Magazine*, May/June 2005 (Vol. XVI, #6, p. 14-15),
http://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2005/05/01/06interview.h16.html

5. Smoothing the Transition from Middle to High School

Georgia professor Nancy Mizelle offers the following advice on how to improve the difficult transition from middle to high school:

• *A challenging, supportive middle school program* – Students whose middle schools "cut them too much slack" have a much more difficult time adjusting to high school. The best middle school preparation is academic rigor, being given increasing responsibility, and lots of social and family support.

• *Vertical teaming* – It's a huge help when teachers and administrators from the high school and feeder middle schools meet to align curriculum expectations and plan the transition.

• *Comprehensive information* – This should include a spring orientation in which high-school counselors, students, and administrators meet incoming ninth graders and answer questions from them and their parents; student shadowing in which incoming students spend a day with a ninth grader; a day for incoming students to tour the high school; summer study skills classes; a beginning-of-the-year orientation in which new ninth graders get to walk through their day; and on-going support such as a freshman skills program and monthly meetings with a school administrator.

• *Involving parents* – This should begin in middle school and continue through the transition process and include meeting with counselors to discuss course selection and visiting the high school during transition time.

• *Social support* – The move to high school can disrupt peer networks, so the high school should give incoming students opportunities to develop relationships with older students and other incoming students through e-mail pen pal programs, freshman group meetings with counselors, and summer social events.

"Moving Out of Middle School" by Nancy Mizelle in *Educational Leadership*, April 2005 (Vol. 62, #7, p. 56-60), no e-link available

6. An Illinois High School's Freshman Advisory Program

Three years ago Maine East, a large, diverse high school outside Chicago, had a 37 percent failure rate in its freshman class, as well as a number of other non-academic problems. The school decided to launch a Freshman Advisory program led by carefully chosen mentors from the sophomore, junior, and senior classes. The plan was for weekly advisory sessions to replace a freshman study hall, supervised by teachers in lieu of other duties (such as monitoring the cafeteria). The three themes of this continuing program are:

• *Attachment* – This involves a service learning project, such as sending 5,400 cards to U.S. troops in Iraq last year.

• *Achievement* – Mentors teach study skills, time management, stress management, strategies for reading, note taking, and test taking. Mentors get monthly reports on their students' current status, as well as the content being covered in freshman courses. Mentors know enough to be able to see through the common excuse, "I have no homework."

• *Awareness* – Mentors address topics such as depression, substance abuse, dating violence, the media's influence on gender image and concept, and other keys to healthy development.

In the three years since the program began, the freshman failure rate has fallen to 23 percent and there has been a small increase in participation in extracurricular activities. Faculty skepticism and student resistance melted away, and the program now enjoys across-the-board support.

"Easing the Transition to High School" by Joan Lampert in *Educational Leadership*, April 2005 (Vol. 62, #7, p. 61-63), no e-link available

7. Better Training and Support for Substitute Teachers Pays Off

Here's a shocking statistic: between kindergarten and high-school graduation,

the average student spends more than 180 days – a full academic year – being taught by substitutes. Spurred by this fact – and the daily hassles of getting decent subs – the Fulton County schools (outside Atlanta, Georgia) decided to make a major priority of improving the quality of instruction that students receive from substitute teachers. The district based its training on a model developed by the Utah State University Substitute Training Institute, which surveyed 500 districts to gather best practices. The model consists of:

- Conducting mandatory training for substitutes before they are employed; (Fulton County holds two training sessions each month from August through April, with participation limited to 60 in each session; the training focuses on classroom management, teaching strategies, preparation, professional behavior, legal issues, and fill-in activities. The sessions consist of interactive discussions of actual classroom scenarios facilitated by experienced teachers. Fulton County has found that the smaller the class size in its training sessions, the more effective substitutes are on the job.)
- Requiring prospective substitutes to pay a fee for the training;
- Requiring substitutes to participate in job shadowing before employment;
- Paying trained substitute teachers more and putting them on a preferential calling list;
- Inviting substitutes to district professional development opportunities;
- Giving various forms of recognition to effective substitutes.

Fulton County also asks its schools to greet each sub with a personalized name tag and directions to the teachers' lounge, cafeteria, and other need-to-know locations, appoint a student ambassador in each classroom to help out, and thank them for their service at the end of the day.

Has all this helped? Since beginning the program, Fulton County has more people applying for substitute positions than they can place. The number of incidents leading to investigations and possible litigation has gone down. Classroom teachers are leaving better and more up-to-date lesson plans because they find that substitutes are actually implementing them. And substitute retention is over 75 percent.

"No Substitute for Training" by Blaine Sorenson in *American School Board Journal*, May 2005 (Vol. 192, #5, p. 46-47, 63), no e-link available

8. Test Prep Strategies Immediately Prior to Major Exams

This month's "Question from the Real World" to Doug Reeves is about test prep: What is appropriate for principals, teachers, parents, and students in the month before a major test? Reeves offers the following advice:

• *Replicate the test environment as closely as possible.* This includes not only the format of test items but also classroom conditions. "If students are not permitted to ask for help, take breaks, or talk during the real test," says Reeves, "then the practice test should be the same. If the regular classroom teacher is not present during the real test, then during practice tests teachers should switch classrooms. If bulletin boards must be covered and chalkboards must be blank, then follow the same procedures. This sort of environmental replication is designed to *reduce student stress and anxiety* – a key factor in test performance – so that when they take the real test, it does not seem to be such a strange and alien experience."

• *Practice effective test taking strategies.* For example, using the process of elimination and crossing out wrong answers before selecting the right one, creating an outline and graphic organizer on a writing test, and reading comprehension questions before reading the passage.

• *Give immediate feedback.* Reeves notes admiringly that some schools give students feedback on practice tests *the same day* so students and teachers can focus on the areas that need the most attention.

• *Analyze distracters.* Students might be asked to put test questions on a poster and analyze each possible answer. This is a good critical thinking exercise that helps students think like a test writer and understand the process of eliminating wrong answers.

• *Emphasize good nutrition.* Eating the right foods and drinking enough water influence students' mental performance – but students should be getting in the habit of good nutrition all the time, not just on the day of the big test.

"Questions and Answers from the Real World" by Douglas Reeves in *Center for Performance Assessment Monthly E-Mail Newsletter*, April 2005

9. A Boys' After-School Reading Group

This *Boston Globe* article gives us a glimpse of an all-boys reading group that meets once a week at Roxbury Preparatory Charter School in Boston. Dinah Shepherd, a teacher at this coeducational middle school, runs the group every Thursday afternoon over doughnuts and pizza. Students begin by "checking in" (reporting on

how they've done during the last week) and then dive into a discussion of their current book (last week it was *Down These Mean Streets* by Piri Thomas). Shepard picks "tough" books that don't remind students of the stereotype that reading is a "prissy" activity.

Shepherd's sessions sometimes have moments of silliness, but the boys are mostly focused on trying to improve their vocabulary and reading fluency. "If my reading ain't good," says Dino Fernandes, "I won't be able to get into a good high school. That influenced me to succeed." Shepherd sees real progress but pushes the boys to do better and doesn't tolerate misbehavior or meanness. "They get that if you're hard on them, you're expecting them to go somewhere," she says. The boys see the discipline as tough love. "I don't like it when people ease up on me," says Marquis Rodriguez. "I know when it's my fault and I need to step up and change my game."

"Roxbury Prep Boys Grow with Books" by Paysha Stockton in *The Boston Globe*, April 24, 2005 (p. B7, 9)

10. A First-Year Teacher's Furry Epiphany

As a novice teacher in a third-grade classroom in Texas, Sarah Field had her share of struggles, but what frustrated her most was the way one boy, Enrique, sat looking straight up the entire school day. Field was baffled. "I simply could not get him to look at me. I'd heard of kids sleeping, talking, fighting during class, but not this. I made every effort to get Enrique's attention, to no avail. I tried group work, Jeopardy games, timeouts, and parent phone calls. Enrique would look at the board for five seconds, then, as if a magnetic force was pulling on his eyeballs, he'd tilt his head upward. Is he praying? I wondered. Is he asking some higher power for a way out of this godforsaken classroom?... Maybe he has neck problems, I hypothesized. But Enrique never looked up during PE or lunch. Maybe I'm ugly? The way things were going, this seemed the most likely explanation."

Then one sunny day, Enrique was looking down and doing his work like the other kids, "curved over his pencil and paper like a beautiful question mark." Stunned, Field asked him what he was doing.

"I'm doing my assignment, Miss," he replied.

"But why aren't you looking at the ceiling?" Field imagined what his response might be: "They fixed my neck" or "You got a better haircut" or "The Lord has forsaken us all."

Instead, he said, "The tarantula's gone."

Field was speechless.

"I used to look up at the tarantula in the air conditioning vent. Now it went away."

"There was a tarantula in the air conditioning vent?"

"Yes, Miss!" The other students chimed in that it was true and when the air conditioner was running, the tarantula's furry legs would vibrate.

Reflecting on her cluelessness about Enrique's heavenward gaze, Field remembered her father's long-ago advice: "The more you think you know, the less you know." The incident was a turning point. "I knew nothing," she thought. "I was ready to teach."

"Learning to Crawl" by Sarah Field in *Teacher Magazine*, May/June 2005 (Vol. XVI, #6, p. 52), http://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2005/05/01/06crawl.h16.html

11. Short Items:

a. Poetry websites – The ReadWriteThink website of the International Reading Association has an area devoted to poetry that has numerous resources. Check out http://www.readwritethink.org/student_mat/student_material.asp?id=53.
The Academy of American Poets also has a website at http://www.poets.org, as does the Favorite Poem project at http://www.favoritepoem.org. Also check out Online Poetry Classroom at http://www.onlinepoetryclassroom.org and Poetry Teachers.com at http://www.poetryteachers.com.

Spotted in *Reading Today*, April/May 2005 (Vol. 22, #5, p. 48)

b. Leveled books website – The publisher Heinemann now has a website with a searchable database of 14,000 children's books leveled on the Fountas/Pinnell scale of reading difficulty. For $15 an individual teacher can buy 20 logins for a school year; there are also rates for schools of different sizes. Check out this website for more details: http://www.fountasandpinnellleveledbooks.com/marketing/Order.aspx

Spotted in *Reading Today*, April/May 2005 (Vol. 22, #5, p. 35)

c. Book excerpt – In the current *Teacher Magazine*, there is a poignant excerpt from Samuel Freedman's new book about his mother (*Who She Was: My Search for My Mother's Life*, Simon & Schuster, 2005). This passage (which is available in full via the link below) tells about his mother's induction into the honors program at Morris High

School in the Bronx and the impact of one teacher's comment about her pudginess. Good reading!

"Books: The Promise of Youth" by Samuel Freedman in *Teacher Magazine*, May/June 2005 (Vol. XVI, #6, p. 54-55), http://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2005/05/01/06excerpt.h16.html

d. Turn off the TV week – This is the national week to encourage people to take the plunge and try to live (for just one week) without their usual television fare. The website for ideas and suggestions is http://www.tvturnoff.org/index.htm.

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 best practices in K-12 education. Kim Marshall, drawing on 35 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 39 carefully-chosen publications (see list to the right), sifts through scores of articles each week, and selects 5-10 that have the greatest potential to improve teaching, leadership, and learning. He then writes a brief summary of each article, pulls out several striking quotes, provide e-links to full articles when available, and e-mails the memo to subscribers every Monday (with occasional breaks; there were 50 issues in 2003-04).

Subscriptions:

Individual subscriptions are $50 for the school year ($25 for a half-year, beginning late January). Rates decline steeply for multiple readers within the same organization. See the website for these rates and information on paying by check or credit card.

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Publications covered:

(those read this week are underlined)

American Educational Research Journal
American Educator
American School Board Journal
ASCD SmartBrief
Atlantic Monthly
Bay State Banner
Boston Globe
CommonWealth Magazine
District Administration
Ed. Magazine (Harvard School of Education)
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Update (ASCD)
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Harper's
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
Journal of Staff Development
Middle School Journal
NASSP Bulletin
New York Times
New Yorker
Newsweek
PEN Weekly NewsBlast
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal Magazine
Principal Leadership
Psychology Today
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
Teachers College Record
Teacher Magazine

E-links will be provided whenever possible.