Marshall Memo 235

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
May 19, 2008

In This Issue:

Quotes of the Week

"What could be better than to help our children find and be successful at a job they love to do?"

John Bendt (see item #7)

"There is so much more to preparing a citizen than merely running students like lemmings through a three-year succession of history survey courses."

Kevin St. Jarre (see item #9)

"I'm getting much better eye contact. It's been like renewing an acquaintance with an old friend."

Richard Friedman, Michigan law professor, after banning laptops in his classes; "The Laptop Gets Booted" by Matthew Philips in *Newsweek*, May 19, 2008 (p. 10)

"If you're so boring that students are zoning out, you ought to rethink if you should be teaching."

Stephen Bainbridge, UCLA law professor, who nonetheless admits that he occasionally flips the "kill switch" that turns off Wi-Fi in his classroom (*ibid.*)

"Who better to assume responsibility and leadership in bullying reduction?"

Sheri Bauman, referring to elementary school counselors (see item #8)

1. Twelve Symptoms of a School in Decline – and What Can Be Done

"One of the most important strategies for stopping school decline is recognizing its signs early on and promptly applying appropriate interventions," says University of Virginia/ Charlottesville professor Daniel Duke in this *Kappan* article. Here is Duke's helpful list, with suggested interventions for each symptom:

• *Symptom #1: Lack of leadership* – The principal is not providing focus and direction around addressing key priorities. Duke says that he and his colleagues combed the literature and even placed an ad in *Education Week* and didn't find a single school that was turned around by teachers taking the initiative and spontaneously organizing themselves. There is no substitute, says Duke, "for capable leaders when it comes to reversing the downward slide in performance."

• *Symptom #2: More rules and harsher punishments* – Schools in decline often experience more student behavior problems, sending them into a downward spiral of increasingly harsh disciplinary measures and loss of instructional time and trusting relationships. The principal and leadership team need to address student discipline problems with comprehensive, effective programs that combine firmness with caring and concern.

• *Symptom #3: Lost focus* – The school lacks clear academic priorities. "If everything seems to be a priority," says Duke, "the concentration of time and resources on critical elements of the school program is apt to be inadequate." The cold, hard fact, he says, "is that some subjects and teaching functions are more important than others when dealing with a drop in student achievement." In many underperforming schools, focusing on reading and student attendance may pay the biggest dividends across all subject areas.

• *Symptom #4: Poor alignment* – Classroom instruction is not lined up with state standards and tests, and students are blindsided by some items on high-stakes tests. Grade-level teacher teams need to meet regularly to ensure that their content aligns to external standards and prepares students to be successful in the next grade.

• *Symptom #5: Inadequate monitoring of progress* – Teachers rush through the district's required curriculum and pacing guides and don't take time to do interim assessments of students' progress and help them when they don't understand. "As a consequence," says Duke, "students may go weeks or even months without grasping key concepts and skills. In certain subjects, such as mathematics, the result can be disastrous." Effective use of in-the-moment classroom assessments and less-frequent interim assessments, all aligned with state curriculum standards, helps teachers spot deficits and provides targeted help.

• *Symptom #6: Ineffective staff development* – "Schools that begin to decline are frequently the recipients of one-shot inservice programs and staff development that is only

tangentially related to core academic concerns," says Duke. "When teachers complain about irrelevant workshops and useless staff development, school leaders need to take heed." The answer is a sustained staff development focus on a key aspect of the curriculum, informed by student assessment results and teacher-defined needs, preferably using a consistent consultant or trainer over time.

• *Symptom #7: Lower staff expectations* – Teachers increasingly give up on struggling students and don't hold themselves to high standards of professional practice. The principal and leadership team need to make standards and expectations clear and involve staff in regular, informative assessments of student achievement.

• *Symptom #8: Undifferentiated assistance* – Non-I.E.P. students who are having difficulty are assigned to generic supplementary programs with a lot of repetition and extended practice. Such programs are often boring for students and, if they are scheduled as pullouts during regular class time, students fall further behind in the regular curriculum. A better approach is to make a systematic effort to diagnose students' learning problems and knowledge deficits – and follow up with differentiated help.

• *Symptom #9: Rigid daily schedule* – The inflexibility of the daily schedule prevents students from getting timely and targeted help, and some students get help while their classmates are moving forward with new material. The solution is modifying the schedule so that struggling students can have extended learning time, for example, using double blocks for core subjects or extended hours on certain days for extra help. Creative scheduling can also give teacher teams time to collaborate on curriculum, analyzing assessments, and professional development.

• *Symptom #10: Hasty hiring* – "It is tempting for principals in declining schools to approach the hiring process fatalistically," says Duke. They assume that the best teachers won't apply for vacancies, and they cut corners and settle for "warm bodies." Principals must clean house, counseling out or moving out ineffective teachers and those who do not embrace the new vision, and work hard to hire top-notch teachers for every vacancy. It's better to use a long-term substitute while continuing a search rather than hiring someone who is not effective with students.

• *Symptom #11: Increased class size* – Class sizes mushroom, making it difficult for even the best teachers to be productive. In addition, higher-achieving students may flee as the school's reputation declines. The principal needs to use the schedule and other tactics to keep class size as low as possible, especially in core subjects like reading.

• *Symptom #12: Overreliance on untrained helpers* – Programs to help struggling students are often staffed by volunteers, teacher aides, and unqualified personnel. The principal and leadership team need to look critically at all supplementary programs, especially their staffing, and if they are not producing results, improve or eliminate them.

"Diagnosing School Decline" by Daniel Duke in *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 2008 (Vol. 89, #9, p. 667-671), no e-link available

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2. Four Recommendations for Turning Around Underperforming Schools

This *Education Week* article gives a quick summary of a new report from the federal government's Institute of Education Sciences on turning around chronically low-performing schools. From the report itself (see below for the link), here are the main points:

• *Recommendation 1: Signal the need for dramatic change with strong leadership.*
- A change in leadership practices in the school is essential. Because the current school leader may be enmeshed in past strategies, a new leader can immediately signal change.
- If there is no change in leadership, the existing leader can signal change by radically altering leadership practices.
- The school leader must be the instructional leader, highly visible in classrooms.
- Publicly announce changes and anticipated actions.

• *Recommendation 2: Maintain a consistent focus on improving instruction.*
- Examine school-level data on student achievement to identify specific gaps in student learning.
- Have teachers use formative data about individual students to analyze their instruction in light of student progress toward standards.
- Establish priority areas for instructional focus and make necessary changes in those areas to strengthen teaching and improve student learning.
- Arrange for targeted professional development based on analyses of achievement and instruction, differentiated according to teacher needs and the subject areas targeted for instructional improvement.
- Have staff collaboratively conduct a comprehensive curriculum review to ensure that the curriculum aligns with state and local standards and meets the needs of all students in the school. Be sure to involve teachers in the review.
- Ensure that all school leaders and instructional staff monitor progress regularly, and systematically make adjustments to strengthen teaching and student learning.

• *Recommendation 3: Engineer some "quick wins" early in the turnaround process.*
- Start with a goal that is important, can be achieved quickly, and will provide visible improvement.
- Develop a strategy for accomplishing the goal that can be implemented quickly – for example, the school already has the authority and resources to implement the strategy.
- Consider some common goals for quick wins, such as changing the school's use of time, improving access to resources and the physical facilities, and improving discipline.

• *Recommendation 4: Build a committed staff.*
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the staff. Identify staff who are not fully committed to the school turnaround goals or who do not have the qualifications to carry them out.
- Redeploy staff members who have valuable skills but are not effective in their current role.
- Replace staff members who actively resist the school's turnaround efforts.

- Recruit new staff who have the needed specialized skills and competencies for positions in the school – such as interventionists, reading specialists, mentors and instructional coaches.

"IES Offers 'Practice Guide' on School Turnarounds" by Debra Viadero in *Education Week*, May 14, 2008 (Vol. 278, #37, p. 4); the full report, "Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools," is at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/Turnaround_pg_04181.pdf

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3. Preparing Students for New 21st-Century Literacies

In this *Theory Into Practice* article, Ohio State University educators Richard Selfe and Cynthia Selfe argue that secondary English language arts teachers need to broaden their repertoire and get students involved in a wider range of "composing modalities" – blogs, digital video, digital audio, and podcasting. Why?

• *Reason #1*: We learn about, act in, and understand the world using multiple channels of communication, say the Selfes; "This and future generations will undoubtedly use such exchanges to learn, remember, think, and act in the world," drawing on multiple intelligences and multiple learning styles.

• *Reason #2*: Literacies are not static; they emerge, change, and accumulate around us. "The traditional language skills of reading and writing," write the authors, "are converging with new multimodal composing practices and feeding off each other in ways that make learning in all content areas both exciting and challenging for students and teachers from kindergarten to college." Traditional writing skills are still vital, but students also need to be literate and proficient in other ways.

• *Reason #3*: Workplace demands are changing around us. Last year, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills convened a coalition of teachers, industry and public-sector representatives, library groups, educational providers, and government officials to outline the skills that adults will need to be successful in the decades ahead. Here is their list:

- Information and communication skills, including media literacy;
- Thinking and problem-solving skills, including critical thinking; systems thinking; problem identification, formulation, and solution; creativity and intellectual curiosity;
- Interpersonal and self-direction skills: collaboration, self-direction, accountability, adaptability, and social responsibility;
- Global awareness;
- Financial, economic, and business literacy; entrepreneurial skills to enhance workplace productivity and career options;
- Civic literacy.

In short, just being proficient at reading and writing is not enough! Employees need to be "educated deeply and widely, and prepared to function effectively and critically in digital and trans-national communication environments. They must also be able and willing to work across

conventional linguistic and geopolitical borders, to compose not only with words, but also with still and moving images, sound and music, animation and multimedia texts.

• *Reason #4:* Global communication networks are changing around us. New software and hardware applications are making it possible for corporations, governments, non-governmental organizations, and individuals to communicate using multiple channels. "If we are not educating students to be effective and literate actors within such communicative environments," write the Selfes, "… we are not educating them to assume their role as literate, global citizens in the 21st century."

The authors then suggest a curriculum unit in which students work on public service announcements (PSAs) aimed at persuading an audience of a particular message (for example, that global warming is a problem that must be addressed immediately). PSAs are an ideal project because they are short; have a specific purpose; are aimed at a particular audience; students can conduct research on a single issue and produce multiple PSAs in different formats; the content of each PSA can be compared across media and modalities; there are many exemplars available, including from the Ad Council, http://www.adcouncil.org and the National Youth Anti-Drug Campaign, http://www.mediacampaign.org/mg/television.html; and PSAs can be composed with relatively inexpensive software. Here are the steps students might follow:

- Identify a larger social project of interest (e.g., reducing dropout rates, decreasing cruelty to animals, preventing gun violence at home).
- Conduct library research on the chosen topic and write a short research paper.
- Teachers and students collect, read/watch/listen to, and analyze PSAs of various kinds focusing on conventions, formats, and organization, looking for models.
- Students create a draft of a print PSA focused on their issue, show it to classmates, and get suggestions for improvement, then revise and improve it.
- Students create an audio PSA focused on their issue, air it to classmates, and get feedback and suggestions, and do a revision.
- Students create a video PSA and get feedback. A sample PSA can be viewed at http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/selfe2/ChrisLeePSA.mov. Others can be viewed at http://edcommunity.apple.com/ali.story.php?itemID=195 and http://edcommunity.apple.com/ali/story/php?itemID=153.
- Students compare their PSAs and think about which modality was most effective, considering the purpose and audience.

The Selfes close with these practical pointers for the PSA unit: Start small, perhaps using only one modality; go low-tech at first; have students work in teams; take an inventory of the expertise of members of the class , for example, in Microsoft Word, Photoshop, digital still camera, iMovie and Movie Maker (video editing software), digital video camera, Audacity (audio editing software), and digital audio recorder); and invite experts in to help.

"'Convince Me!' Valuing Multimodal Literacies and Composing Public Service Announcements" by Richard Selfe and Cynthia Selfe in *Theory Into Practice*, Spring 2008 (Vol. 47, #2, p. 83-92), no e-link available; the authors can be contacted at selfe.2@osu.edu.

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4. The Importance of Teaching Advanced Vocabulary to Young Children

In this *Harvard Education Letter* article, writer Laura Pappano reports on several new insights on early vocabulary acquisition:

• Primary-grade students can grasp more advanced words, and enjoy learning them, even if they can't read or sound them out. Researchers now believe that learning new words isn't like learning math skills, where easier steps need to be mastered before more advanced steps. "Words are not related hierarchically," says Isabel Beck, a University of Pittsburgh professor who is a leading thinker in the field. "You can know *saturated* before you know *soak*." And there's no reason that a young student can't learn *dashed* or *raced* or *scampered* before learning *run*.

• More challenging words serve as a reservoir for conceptual understanding and help students become better readers down the road. For students who come to school with less robust vocabularies, learning advanced words helps close the achievement gap.

• Researchers are still debating which words should be learned in the early grades, and how many words should be taught each week. But there's a consensus on Beck's approach to sorting words into Tier 1 – common words like *farm* and *zoo*, which children acquire on their own and don't need to be taught; Tier 2 – more advanced words that higher-SES students tend to pick up but lower-SES students really need to learn to close the vocabulary gap; and Tier 3 – more technical words from particular fields like medicine or engineering. Tier 2 is the crucial area, and researchers recommend teaching these systematically, perhaps culling them from reading materials to which students are exposed in their classrooms. Here are more examples:
Tier 1 – School, mother, tiny, huge, walk, unhappy, laugh, beautiful, animals, birthday, clock, baby.
Tier 2 – Avoid, vanished, evade, exhausted, longed, urgent, jubilant, crafty, gratitude, resemble, coincidence, absurd.
Tier 3 – Temperature, hibernate, migrate, saddle, magnet, prescription, python, wildflower, acrobat, wheat, peninsula, isotope.

• For students to learn Tier 2 words, says Beck, it's essential they grasp the underlying concept – for example, that *saturate* and *drench* both have to do with wetness – and that teachers explain new words using words that are not harder than the target word.

• To master a new Tier 2 word, children need to be exposed to it between 13 and 15 times, in different contexts and at different times, with as many visual and other cues and as much physical activity and acting out as possible. "A lot of kids have a really shallow grasp of a lot of words," says Harvard education professor Nonie Lesaux. "It's not that they don't have language, but their depth of word knowledge is too limited to be good readers. You need a good understanding of a word so when you come across it in context, you can conjure up some

idea about that word. When [students] have one very narrow definition of a word, that just doesn't give them enough traction when they are reading independently."

• Building high-level vocabulary is especially important for English language learners. Diane August, a researcher at the Center for Applied Linguistics, says that without Tier 2 words, ELLs can't understand their textbooks. "What drives what I am doing is giving kids access to content," she says.

"Small Kids, Big Words: Research-Based Strategies for Building Vocabulary from Pre-K to Grade 3" by Laura Pappano in *Harvard Education Letter*, May/June 2008 (Vol. 24, #3, p. 4-7); this article is available at http://www.edletter.org/insights/bigwords.shtml

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5. Are One-to-One Laptop Programs Effective?

In this article in the *Harvard Education Letter*, writer Colleen Gillard gives a status report on schools, districts, and states that have embarked on one-to-one student laptop programs. "It's all about equity, access, and opportunity," says Claudia Mansfield Sutton of the American Association of School Administrators. "If a child can only use the computer lab once or twice a week, how can he or she compete?"

In a nationwide survey, *America's Digital Schools 2008*, eighty percent of educators with one-to-one laptop programs said they saw "moderate to significant" academic gains. Laptops seem to be most effective in improving students' writing: a 2005 study in Maine found that laptop users' writing scores were 75 percent higher than those of non-laptop users. Laptops have also been linked to higher student attendance, better discipline, and more small-group instruction and project-based learning – and laptops are popular with students, teachers, and parents. Andrew Zucker, author of *Transforming Schools with Technology* (Harvard Education Press, 2008), cites these highlights from a survey of teachers using laptops:

- Student engagement – "I saw excitement and willingness to work, and the quality of the work was greatly improved," says a Michigan teacher.
- Greater classroom flexibility – This is much better than having to schedule or wait for time in the school's computer lab.
- Quick feedback to students – Certain learning programs give rapid feedback, especially helpful for struggling students.
- Access to up-to-date information – "It's like having an interactive textbook that never becomes obsolete," says a Maine teacher.
- Enhanced professional productivity – Teachers can design and create materials, prepare lesson plans, diagnose student weaknesses, and communicate with colleagues, parents, and students.

But so far, laptops don't have a strong track record test for improving scores. A 2007 study of 21 middle schools in Texas found "no significant effects" on reading, math, and writing scores. "The jury is still out on whether or not [one-to-one programs] add value in student achievement the way it is traditionally measured," said Cheryl Lemke, a California

consultant. Some districts have canceled laptop programs, including Chesterfield County, Virginia, and Liverpool Central Schools, New York, finding it difficult to justify the roughly $1,500-per-student expense.

Part of the problem may be implementation glitches, say some experts. Bette Manchester, director of Maine's $35 million middle-school laptop program, says some schools flounder because of weak leadership, inadequate teacher training, and poor execution. "People don't realize that it's more about teaching and learning than technology," she says. "They get into trouble when they don't have concrete strategies for implementation [or] clear and specific goals about what they want the technology to do." Zucker points out the key challenges of introducing laptops:

- Adjusting instructional practices – This includes more sharing and collaboration among teachers.
- Developing new lessons – Teachers have to re-tool previous material to make optimal use of laptops and the Internet.
- Rethinking classroom management – Teachers must be vigilant about students accessing inappropriate material, and also have to deal with students who forget their laptops and nitty-gritty issues like charging batteries.

Clearly, professional development is crucial. "Until teachers buy into it, nothing else matters," says Jeanne Hayes, author of the *America's Digital Schools 2008* report. In-school technical support is also vital so that minor repairs and software glitches are handled quickly. Clearly defined equipment-use protocols are also important to minimize loss, theft, and breakage.

Mark Edwards, a superintendent in North Carolina, suggests the following implementation pointers:

- Expect initial push-back, especially on cost.
- Begin by visiting successful one-to-one programs in other schools.
- Customize the program to the needs of your school or district.
- Form an implementation team early in the process to plan and execute a smooth transition. The team should include administrators, teachers, financial people, public relations, human resources, technical support, curriculum, and facilities.
- Begin professional development early and differentiate it according to subject areas and levels of expertise.
- Once the program has been launched, the team should continue to meet semi-annually and monitor how things are going.
- Organize and fund collaborative preparation time with in-house technical and curriculum support people.

"'Equity, Access, and Opportunity' – Despite Challenges, More Districts Adopt One-to-One Laptop Programs" by Colleen Gillard in *Harvard Education Letter*, May/June 2008 (Vol. 24, #3, p. 1-3); this article can be purchased at:
http://www.edletter.org/current/index.shtml#laptoprograms

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6. Who Are the Most Famous Americans?

In this *Kappan* article, education professors Sam Wineburg and Chauncey Monte-Sano share the results of a survey in which they asked 2,000 high-school juniors and seniors from all 50 states to jot down the five "most famous Americans in history" (excluding Presidents). Students were then asked to list the five most famous women in American history (excluding First Ladies). Below is a composite list of the most commonly named people. Note that, because the first list could include men and women, while the second list was limited to women, the composite list is somewhat tilted toward women:

1. Martin Luther King, Jr. – named by 67 percent
2. Rosa Parks – 60 percent
3. Harriet Tubman – 44 percent
4. Susan B. Anthony – 34 percent
5. Benjamin Franklin – 29 percent
6. Amelia Earhart – 23 percent
7. Oprah Winfrey – 22 percent
8. Marilyn Monroe – 19 percent
9. Thomas Edison – 18 percent
10. Albert Einstein – 16 percent

(Betsy Ross – 12 percent, Henry Ford – 10 percent)

Wineburg and Monte-Sano were struck by the fact that the first three names on the list are African Americans, with Martin Luther King, Jr. named by an overwhelming 67 percent of students, while the first white person on the list (Susan B. Anthony) was named by only 34 percent. Choices didn't vary much by the region of the U.S. where students lived, but there were differences by race: black students' top ten consisted of nine black figures and one white, whereas white students' top ten had six whites and four blacks.

To what degree are students' choices influenced by recent changes in U.S. history textbooks and the advent of Black History Month as a fixture in school calendars? To find out, Wineburg and Monte-Sano asked 2,000 over-45 adults to answer the same two questions. Here are the results:

1. Benjamin Franklin – 37 percent
2. Martin Luther King, Jr. – 36 percent
3. Rosa Parks – 30 percent
4. Thomas Edison – 30 percent
5. Susan B. Anthony – 29 percent
6. Betsy Ross – 26 percent
7. Oprah Winfrey – 19 percent
8. Amelia Earhart – 17 percent
9. Harriet Tubman – 16 percent
10. Henry Ford – 16 percent

(Marilyn Monroe – 12 percent, Albert Einstein – 9 percent)

The two lists are strikingly similar: while the rankings are different, of the top ten people on each list, eight are identical, and African Americans are as prominent on the adult list as they are on the students'.

Such a confluence of opinion reflects major shifts in public opinion over the last four decades, say the authors. What emerged is the opposite of the "fragmentation, resegregation, and tribalization" that Arthur Schlesinger warned about in his best-selling book, *The Disuniting of America*. "[D]ifferent generations and different races congregated around five or six common names with astounding consistency," say Wineburg and Monte-Sano. The people who come to the fore are those who acted to expand rights, alleviate misery, rectify injustice, and promote freedom. The fact that Americans, young and old… put these figures at the top of their lists seems to be deeply symbolic of the national story we now tell ourselves about who we are – and perhaps who we aspire to be."

"Who Is a Famous American? Charting Historical Memory Across the Generations" by Sam Wineburg and Chauncey Monte-Sano in *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 2008 (Vol. 89, #9, p. 643-648); the "back story" of this study is at http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/k_v89/k0805oe1.htm, and an expanded list of the most famous Americans is at http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/k_v89/k0805oe2.htm

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7. Preparing in High School for the World of Work

In this *Education Week* article, career expert John Bendt bemoans the fact that so few high-school students think about what they will do when they enter the work world – and that most are naïve about the workplace skills they will need. "As a result," Bendt writes, "they have little understanding of the workplace, and no action plan to prepare for a happy and successful future."

Bendt suggests that high school counselors and other staff focus on getting several key messages across to all students and parents. "Huge rewards can be gained by students who become proactive career planners," he says. "What could be better than to help our children find and be successful at a job they love to do?"

• *Work at something you love*. Exploring different options helps students find the areas they are most likely to find interesting and fulfilling. Once they have zeroed in on those, they can think about the "hard" and "soft" skills needed to be successful and plan their courses accordingly.

• *Develop marketable skills*. Extracurricular activities and part-time jobs can help build important workplace skills, including verbal and written communication, ability to listen and relate to co-workers, teamwork, problem-solving, the ability to be organized and use time efficiently, plan, organize, and set priorities, and the ability to persuade and resolve conflicts.

• *Build a portfolio*. Part-time jobs and extracurricular activities let high-school students build a resume and collect letters of recommendation that will be helpful down the line.

• *Locate mentors*. Exploring occupations gets students engaged in mentoring relationships with adults working in the field.

• *Save time, save money*. College students who are unsure of their career direction and spend an extra year in college incur a double financial penalty – the cost of the year in college, and the loss of a year's salary – between $57,048 and $96,056, depending on the type of college and the starting salary.

"Why Is Career Planning a Low Priority in High Schools?" by John Bendt in *Education Week*, May 14, 2008 (Vol. 27, #37, p. 25); this article is available to subscribers only.

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8. Counselors as Key Leaders in Anti-Bullying Efforts

In this *Elementary School Journal* article, University of Arizona professor Sheri Bauman says that bullying has three key characteristics: the bully intends to do harm; the bullying occurs more than once; and there is a power imbalance between the bully and victim. While all schools aim to be safe places for children, both physically and psychologically, many educators are less than effective at identifying and combating bullying. As one anonymous teacher said in a survey, "we are not addressing the whole problem. Children reflect the values and behavior they see in their homes, on television, in video games, and in the behaviors of famous personalities and world leaders." When children see adults, family members, even teachers and school administrators using bullying and intimidation tactics, some are likely to follow suit. In addition, many adults are ambivalent about bullying, regarding it as "not that bad" – a rite of passage. Some even believe that victims of bullying bring it on themselves and deserve what they get.

Experts say that there needs to be a point person if anti-bullying efforts are going to get traction, and Bauman believes that the person ideally situated to play this role, at least in elementary schools, is the counselor. "Contemporary school counselors already are school leaders, consultants to other staff and to the larger community, classroom educators, parent educators, and individual and group counselors," she writes. "They can collect and use data and are instrumental in establishing and maintaining a positive school climate. They are consensus builders and facilitators of task groups. Who better to assume responsibility and leadership in bullying reduction?"

Bauman says that counselors, if given clear responsibility by the principal, can play a number of roles: Providing colleagues with a clear definition of bullying and its various forms (physical, verbal, and relational); making the case for eliminating bullying; doing staff training to address all-too-common "rite of passage" attitudes; educating staff on the signs of bullying and the most effective interventions; alerting staff to ineffective ways of dealing with bullying (especially peer mediation, which doesn't work because of the power imbalance in bullying situations); monitoring supervision of unstructured times, when bullying is most likely to occur; tracking data to see when and where bullying is occurring and what's working and what isn't; and, of course, providing one-on-one and small-group counseling to students involved in bullying.

"The Role of Elementary School Counselors in Reducing School Bullying" by Sheri Bauman in *Elementary School Journal*, May 2008 (Vol. 108, #5, p. 362-375), no e-link available

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9. A Cry for Broader, Deeper High-School Social Studies

"There is so much more to preparing a citizen than merely running students like lemmings through a three-year succession of history survey courses," says Maine high-school teacher Kevin St. Jarre in this provocative *Kappan* article. Contending that students need rigorous content in economics, sociology, psychology, civics, ethics, philosophy, and international studies, he writes, "Pure history, without any of the other social sciences, is a laundry list, a phone directory, a time line… History is a record, not an analysis. These other disciplines provide the *lenses* we need for the analysis of history."

St. Jarre is also critical of high-school electives such as *The Vietnam War* and *Middle Eastern History*. "Often," he writes, "these courses reflect the pet subjects of the teachers who design them and believe that they meet the 'Ah, cool!' test. When we create course-work that is centered not on what standards we are helping students meet, but instead on what we consider to be 'cool,' we are once again thinking more of ourselves than of our students."

If we don't beef up high-school social studies, St. Jarre concludes, "our nation will continue down the path of Super Bowl politics: we vote for 'our' party as a way of rooting for the home team, not because we have any understanding of the world around us… Teaching social studies really can be a life-and-death issue, and popular ignorance of the social sciences can have tragic outcomes for human beings."

"Reinventing Social Studies" by Kevin St. Jarre in *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 2008 (Vol. 89, #9, p. 649-653), no e-link available; this issue of *Kappan* has several rebuttals to St. Jarre's article, and his rejoinder.

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10. Information on Child Sexual Abuse

In this comprehensive *Elementary School Journal* article (which specialists may want to read in its entirety), Lisa Hinkelman and Michele Bruno of Ohio State University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania provide detailed information on what constitutes sexual abuse, its effects on children, victims' difficulty disclosing abuse, what school personnel should watch for, and how they should respond when tell-tale signs appear and/or students disclose abuse. Some of the most haunting parts of the article are examples of children daring to disclose little bits of information to school staff and watching their reactions – and staff not believing the child or second-guessing themselves and not reporting the abuse.

Hinkelman and Bruno share alarming statistics on the frequency of abuse: researchers believe that 20-33 percent of girls and 10-16 percent of boys are sexually abused before they reach 18. The most vulnerable ages are 8-12, and the average age of first abuse is 9.6 for girls and 9.9 for boys. This means that in a class of 25 students, nearly five may be sexual abuse victims, and in an average school counselor's caseload of 477 students, 95 may be victims.

[And in a school staff of 45, as many as nine might have been abuse victims earlier in their lives.]

"Identification and Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse: The Role of Elementary School Professionals" by Lisa Hinkelman and Michelle Bruno in *Elementary School Journal*, May 2008 (Vol. 108, #5, p. 376-391), no e-link available

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11. Short Item:

Arts websites – This article in *Theory Into Practice* identifies three websites for access to art materials for classrooms:

- Gateway to Educational Materials (sponsored by the NEA): http://www.thegateway.org.
- ArtsEdge from the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts: http://www.artsedge.org.
- Curriki from Sun Micro Systems: http://www.curriki.org.

Spotted in "Flipping the Field Trip: Bringing the Art Museum to the Classroom" by Kris Wetterlund in *Theory Into Practice*, Spring 2008 (Vol. 47, #2, p. 110-117), no e-link available

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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).

Subscriptions:

Individual subscriptions are $50 for the school year. Rates decline steeply for multiple readers within the same organization. See the website for these rates and information on paying by check or credit card.

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 School Board Journal
ASCD, CEC SmartBriefs, Daily EdNews
Atlantic Monthly
Catalyst Chicago
CommonWealth Magazine
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
NASSP Bulletin
New York Times
New Yorker
Newsweek
PEN Weekly NewsBlast
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal
Principal Leadership
Principal's Research Review
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
Teacher Magazine (online)
Teachers College Record
TESOL Quarterly
The Reading Teacher
Theory Into Practice
Tools for Schools/The Learning Principal