Marshall Memo 289

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
June 8, 2009

In This Issue:

Quotes of the Week

"They teach us all, not just the ones who are already good."

A North Star Academy middle-school student in a June 5, 2009 roundtable discussion with U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan, referring to teachers at this high-achieving Newark, NJ school

"[S]tereotypes don't require evidence; they require only a lazy mind."

Ellis Cose in "Caricature Witness" in *Newsweek*, June 8, 2009 (p. 34), no free e-link

"The most successful chief executives are those who give their staff members space to be creative, and then put them through their paces – challenging their ideas by asking the toughest questions and demanding they back up their recommendations with supporting data."

Michael Bloomberg in "The First 1,000 Days" in *Newsweek*, May 25, 2009 (p. 45)

"Students are far more likely to embrace a rule or value when, instead of having an adult dictate that rule or value, they come to it through their most prized capacity – their ability to think."

Richard Weissbourd (see item #2)

"Trying to pursue data-driven reform without essential operational and performance data is a recipe for frustration."

Frederick Hess and Jon Fullerton (see item #7)

"A shiny new IT system will not fix a broken human system."

Frederick Hess and Jon Fullerton (*ibid.*)

"Differentiation is a lot of work!"

Kimberly Grimes and Dannelle Stevens (see item #4)

1. Sense and Nonsense on Grade Inflation

In this pointed letter to *Kappan*, Dowling College (NY) education professor Thomas Kelly says that Princeton University's recent decision to forbid professors from giving A's to more than 35 percent of the students in any given class "makes no sense and, worse, reflects a misunderstanding of the normal or 'bell' curve." The normal curve, explains Kelly, describes the most probable distribution of human attributes (e.g., height, weight, grades) when a group meets three conditions – none of which apply to Princeton classes:

• *The group is large* – Princeton is a relatively small college comprising a tiny fraction of college-age students.

• *The group is random* – Princeton students are far from being a random group; the college is highly selective.

• *The group is untreated* – Princeton students all receive the "treatment" of a first-class ivy-league education.

"It's unreasonable to expect their grades to be distributed as if they are a large, random, untreated group," concludes Kelly. "Yet, many professors believe their grades should be so distributed and indeed impose this 'random' distribution on this selected group to meet their misunderstood 'requirements' of the normal curve." To a lesser degree, says Kelly, this is true of all college students, since college graduates are a selected and treated 25 percent of the U.S. population.

Grades should never be curved (except in standardized tests), says Kelly. "Teachers should set criteria for grades and determine what achievement level equals mastery. The number of students who get A's should equal the number who mastered the criteria set for an A. If our instruction (i.e., treatment) is effective, that number should be high… We shouldn't be upset when most or even all of our students do well."

"Grade Inflation: Sense and Nonsense" by Thomas Kelly in *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 2009 (Vol. 90, #9, p. 696); this article can be purchased for $3.00 at http://www.pdkmembers.org/members_online/members/orders.asp?action=results&t=A&desc=Grade+Inflation%3A+Sense+and+Nonsense&text=&lname_1=&fname_1=&lname_2=&fname_2=&kw_1=&kw_2=&kw_3=&kw_4=&mn1=&yr1=&mn2=&yr2=&c1=

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2. Developing Moral Children

(Originally titled "The Schools We Mean to Be")

In this *Educational Leadership* article, Harvard professor and author Richard Weissbourd describes the feelings he and his wife have at a high school back-to-school night.

Two teachers take them through "the same dreary ritual" – their son's test scores, a comment about his being distracted and not listening, but still, he's "a good kid." Weissbourd is discouraged. "I don't sense that either of these teachers truly knows my son," he says. The boy had told then that he didn't like one of these teachers and regarded one of the classes as "hell," but neither teacher seems to be in touch with that.

But then a third teacher connects. She has specific compliments – their son isn't afraid to seem "dumb" asking questions, he gets along with a range of classmates, wants to be helpful, and never interrupts her or is rude. She echoes the other teachers' comment about his sometimes seeming distracted – but has a theory: it seems to happen when he is asked to do a repetitive task. This helps Weissbourd understand "something about my son that has been opaque to me." The teacher asks how the parents think the boy is doing and listens carefully. "I feel that we are in a common project together," says Weissbourd, "one that is academic but also moral – the project of raising a whole person and a good person. I have to resist the temptation to envelop her in a bear hug."

Many schools are trying to teach values, he says, but few are successful and "students tend to sniff out exactly how half-baked most character-education programs are." Weissbourd believes that's because schools aren't dealing with the heart of the matter – the nature of the *relationships* that schools establish and the one relationship that's most important in developing students' moral compass: between parent and child. He says that schools should be working to get teachers and parents "to examine their own values, moral abilities, and attitudes; reflect on the school as a moral environment; and strive together to ensure that students grow up to be good people…" In parent-teacher conferences, he suggests that parents start with a positive comment the child has made about the teacher and the teacher start with a strength the child is demonstrating in the classroom. This can kick off conferences with a completely different tone. It can also shift the conversation to *What are <u>we</u> going to do?*

Ideally (as happened in the case of the third conference Weissbourd described), teachers and parents mentor each other. "In the best relationships," he says, "both parents and teachers can be vulnerable and self-aware, thinking together about how they might better handle a child's trouble, and pooling their knowledge to understand the many interacting factors that may undermine a child's capacity for caring and responsibility." They might figure out, for example, how to handle a girl who is acting arrogant and entitled with other children (her every whim is catered to at home), or a boy who is surly and superior with his teacher (he's furious with his father, who has just left his wife for a much younger woman).

But it's difficult for teachers to open up and work closely with parents, especially at the high-school level. Teachers are stressed and overextended, and it's sometimes hard for teachers to see that parents who come across as arrogant and entitled are actually terrified about losing control over their child and handing over him or her to a stranger. The school's challenge is to bridge these chasms and help parents see beyond their own children's interests to the broader moral community. Weissbourd suggests that schools "clearly articulate their moral goals and expectations for both parents and students through moral charters – clear, visible statements of

a school's values… They need to live and breathe not only in classrooms, but also in every aspect of school life."

Weissbourd touts two character-development programs – the Child Development Project and Open Circle – in which teachers guide students in structured exercises to help them take others' perspectives, solve classroom problems, and develop values. "Students are far more likely to embrace a rule or value when, instead of having an adult dictate that rule or value, they come to it through their most prized capacity – their ability to think," he says. Well-structured community service programs also help, as does contact with moral exemplars – men and women of strong conviction who are working to improve the world.

"The Schools We Mean to Be" by Richard Weissbourd in *Educational Leadership*, May 2009 (Vol. 66, #8, p. 26-31); this article can be purchased at http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/current_issue.aspx

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3. Doing a Better Job with Environmental Education

(Originally titled "The Window Into Green")

In this *Educational Leadership* article, environmental educator Mike Weilbacher makes a passionate case for making U.S. students more eco-conscious. Typical high-school kids have a superficial knowledge of climate change and other issues, he says. They don't know where the garbage goes when it leaves their houses. They don't know the leading source of greenhouse emissions, nor why we recycle glass and aluminum when these are plentiful resources. And they may not know how they can truly help the planet.

There are four reasons this has come to pass, Weilbacher believes. First, students are "extraordinarily disconnected from the environment." Modern kids simply spend too much time indoors, and viewing screens is an almost full-time occupation. Second, science field trips and other hands-on experiences have been nixed by many schools in a false pursuit of NCLB test-score gains. Third, schools aren't systematic enough with the curriculum and too much depends on the luck of the draw. In his daughter's school, one fifth-grade teacher was "contagiously obsessed" with birds and bird-watching and the other had her class produce a play, with no cross-fertilization between the two. Finally, schools approach the resources in their communities – the zoo, museums, the aquarium, arboretums, children's gardens – as a Chinese menu. "They pick a field trip from column A and a lesson plan from Column B; toss in an occasional Earth Day assembly, litter pick-up, and letter to the president; and assume that their charges are now environmentally literate," says Weilbacher. "Students are graduating from our schools thinking that green is good. But we haven't given them the tools they need to become environmentally literate citizens." The four horsemen of the global apocalypse – warming, species loss, water scarcity, and population growth – are bearing down on us, he says. In the words of H.G. Wells, it's a "race between education and catastrophe."

Weilbacher cites several examples of promising programs: No Child Left Inside – http://www.nochildleftinside.org - to boost environmental learning; Green Charter Schools

adding substance to the curriculum; Environment as an Integrating Context for Learning to weave green content through different subject areas; and Wood Kindergartens, a European movement to structure full-day outdoor learning experiences for primary-grade children.

In a sidebar to this article, Weilbacher presents a thoughtful list of Big Ideas that every student should know about the environment:

- *Earth overflows with life*. Our planet has a huge number of creatures.
- *Each creature is uniquely adapted to its environment*. Every species evolved to possess an unique set of adaptations that enables it to survive and thrive in its ecosystem.
- *The web of life is interdependent*. Organisms evolve complex relationships, each depending on numerous other species for their survival.
- *Materials flow through ecosystems in cycles*. All creatures need water, air, and nutrients to survive, and these cycle and recycle. "The water we drink today is the same water we've always had and always will."
- *The sun is the ultimate source of energy flowing through ecosystems*. Food grows from sunlight energy; our houses are heated by fossil fuels created many millennia ago from ancient sunlight.
- *There is no waste in nature; everything is recycled*. Every waste product is used by other creatures.
- *We consume resources to live*. Kids should know where the garbage truck takes the trash, where water comes from, and how the nearest power plant makes electricity.
- *Conservation is the wise use of finite resources*. We have real needs – to eat, drink, have shelter, write – but can we use these resources sustainably?
- *Humans can have a profound effect on environmental systems*. Carbon dioxide, habitat loss, and so on.
- *Each of us can powerfully affect the fate of the natural world*. "Because each of us is directly plugged into the planet, the actions we take – or fail to take – profoundly influence earth's systems."

"The Window Into Green" by Mike Weilbacher in *Educational Leadership*, May 2009 (Vol. 66, #8, p. 38-44); http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/current_issue.aspx; the author can be reached at mike@dragonfly.org.

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4. A Five-Step Strategy for Differentiating Fourth-Grade Math

In this thoughtful *Kappan* article, Kimberly Grimes and Dannelle Stevens describe Grimes's frustration in her fourth-grade classroom: how can she cover the year's math curriculum when some students are having trouble mastering key concepts and others are eager to tackle algebra and rebel against busywork? Grimes decided that differentiated instruction was the answer and embarked on an action research project during the 2006-07 school year, implementing five key factors:

• *Student readiness* – Grimes gave a quick 3-6-problem pretest every day and had students correct their own papers and tell her how ready they felt to learn the new concept by imagining how well they can see through a car's front windshield:

- Glass – I can see clearly; I have a strong understanding of the math concept.
- Bug – The windshield is partly covered; I have some understanding but it's incomplete.
- Mud – The windshield is completely covered; I have no understanding of the concept.

At the beginning of the year, Grimes trained students in using these levels using everyday skills (soccer, baseball) on short pretests.

• *Flexible grouping* – Every day, Grimes placed students in readiness groups based on their glass/bug/mud self-assessments. Students shifted from group to group each day depending on their level of mastery. The goal was to get all students to "glass."

• *Student responsibility* – Students were responsible for correctly assessing their readiness on daily pretests. Students were then responsible for taking a task card (different at the glass, bug, and mud levels) and completing the assignment. Each card covered the concept of the day but challenged students at different levels.

• *Peer tutoring* – Students helped check each others' work, helped classmates figure out difficult concepts, and created math problems for review tests.

Grimes and Stevens report by the end of the year, there were significant gains in student achievement and motivation. Low-achieving students' average scores rose from 72% to 91% and high-achieving students' average rose from 88% to 99%. Throughout the class, self-efficacy improved as lower-achieving students adopted an "I can do it" attitude and expressed a desire to do well in math.

"Differentiation is a lot of work!" say the authors. "Taking the time to constantly assess, reassess, and adapt lesson plans to meet every student's needs can be time consuming." They suggest the following strategies:

- *Teach glass, bug, mud* (or a variation). Once it's taught with specific examples, self-assessment is easy. A key underlying message is that it's okay to say, "I don't know."
- *Start small*. Differentiate one lesson to see how it goes before expanding.
- *Assess daily*. It doesn't have to be a formal test, they say. The previous day's work can be used to see which level students are at.
- *Keep groups flexible*. After each assignment, some students should be moving to a different level, and nobody should be stuck at one level over time.
- *Use whole-class instruction when necessary*. And sometimes a mini-lesson for a small group of students is called for.
- *Don't start from scratch*. Teachers don't have to create all tasks and teaching materials themselves; textbooks, workbooks, and other materials are sometimes fine.

"Glass, Bug, Mud" by Kimberly Grimes and Dannelle Stevens in *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 2009 (Vol. 90, #9, p. 677-680); this article can be purchased for $5.00 at http://www.pdkmembers.org/members_online/members/orders.asp?action=results&t=A&desc=Glass%2C+Bug%2C+Mud&text=&lname_1=&fname_1=&lname_2=&fname_2=&kw_1=&kw_2=&kw_3=&kw_4=&mn1=&yr1=&mn2=&yr2=&c1=

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5. Preventing Last-Minute High-School Dropouts

In this *Kappan* article, Delaware principal Jeffrey Menzer and University of Delaware/Newark professor Robert Hampel analyze the phenomenon of high-school students who stay in school through their senior year and then fail to graduate. Over a three-year period in one Delaware high school, 155 seniors stumbled on the last lap. Some of them earned their diplomas by going to summer school or returning the next fall, but fully 12 percent of each class, having entered senior year, never got a diploma. What happened?

The authors looked at statistics and interviewed dropouts and found that the last-minute failures fall into four categories:

• *The lackadaisical* – These students don't participate actively in classes and fail to turn in homework or complete assignments. "They mistakenly believe they can be lazy and still pass," say Menzer and Hampel. Some make excuses – boring work, unfair teachers, overheated classrooms – but the root problem is clearly lack of motivation.

• *The overwhelmed* – Some students are dealing with all-consuming life experiences like returning from juvenile detention, being treated for drug addiction, or having a child. These students kept trying to make it to graduation, but some of them simply can't pull it off.

• *The struggler* – Most of these students don't quite qualify for special education and have been challenged academically throughout high school, and their luck runs out senior year, often in one course that proves to be their nemesis. Their parents are often ineffective in enforcing improvement plans and motivating their children to get over the bar.

• *The surprised* – These students fully expect to graduate but are blindsided by failing one course at the end of senior year. They've misjudged the teachers' expectations and don't have a sufficient buffer of credits. Almost all of these students attend summer school and earn their diploma.

After mulling over these findings, this high-school faculty concluded that they could do better at preventing last-minute failure and took a number of steps:

- Giving students and parents more information about graduation requirements and current status;
- Getting students and parents to use an online grade book to keep track of progress;
- Requiring all first-term seniors with an F in a required course to see their counselors, put in writing what they will do to pass, and return for a follow-up meeting;
- Setting up an after-school credit recovery program in which students work independently in self-paced online courses with teachers available to help out.
- Narrowing the range of electives for ninth graders and front-loading graduation requirement courses, including moving health and physical education courses to ninth grade so students could fulfill those graduation requirements early on.
- Setting up a "freshman seminar" in which teachers introduce their subjects through fun activities and teach decision-making and goal-setting skills and get students to plan a four-year program that will meet graduation standards;

- Providing professional development in differentiated instruction so more students are successful;
- Focusing on a schoolwide goal of improving instruction so there are fewer lackadaisical, overwhelmed, struggling, and surprised students; a rallying cry was promoting "an epidemic of learning" in the school.

"Lost at the Last Minute" by Jeffrey Menzer and Robert Hampel in *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 2009 (Vol. 90, #9, p. 660-664); this article can be purchased for $5.00 at http://www.pdkmembers.org/members_online/members/orders.asp?action=results&t=A&desc=Lost+at+the+Last+Minute&text=&lname_1=&fname_1=&lname_2=&fname_2=&kw_1=&kw_2=&kw_3=&kw_4=&mn1=&yr1=&mn2=&yr2=&c1=

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6. Three Types of School-District Culture – and Which Is Most Effective

In this *Kappan* article, Rutgers education professor William Firestone describes three distinct cultures in school districts:

• *Loosely coupled culture* – These districts lack a shared vision for teaching and learning, have few common goals, and don't use effective levers for coordinating what people do. Each school is pretty much on its own. Different central-office departments send conflicting messages to schools, and there is little curriculum coherence. Teachers are urged to do better, but they don't get timely information to help them improve.

• *Accountability culture* – Top-down control is much stronger in this culture. There is pressure to improve students' test scores, and the state curriculum frameworks and tests are the Bible with strong efforts to align instruction. Teachers are required to follow adopted curriculum programs and student assessment data are used to hold schools accountable. In this kind of school district, teaching is defined as "routine work with a well-defined knowledge base," says Firestone. "Expertise is centralized at the top of the hierarchy, and there is a belief that teachers don't need to be highly trained. Central administrators can monitor and supervise teachers." Principals are seen as enforcers of central office policies and are often caught between their bosses and their teachers.

• *Student learning culture* – These districts have a strong vision of student learning and instructional improvement, with an underlying assumption that all children can learn and achieve at high levels. Principals and teachers internalize this vision and hold themselves accountable, and there is space for creativity at the building level; there is a mix of standardization and flexibility. Teaching is seen as "a more complex and variable, requiring more discretion for teachers," says Firestone. "As a result, teachers are assumed to be more professional… teachers work alongside administrators to make critical decisions." There's a belief that teaching "requires problem solving in the classroom as well as the district office." Principals and teachers are involved in key curriculum and professional development decisions, and are given some discretion as they implement programs. Data use, curriculum, and professional development are better integrated, and school staff are trained in how this is

best done. Professional development is coherent, job-embedded, coordinated with the curriculum, and driven by student learning data.

Firestone believes that the third type of culture will produce better student achievement. But he says that it takes "a great deal of cognitive change" to create this kind of culture. Superintendents who are successful often use three techniques: sending staff to other districts that have a student learning culture; arranging visits within the district; and using formal authority and symbolic gestures (such as regularly visiting classrooms) to realign priorities.

"Accountability Nudges Districts Into Changes in Culture" by William Firestone in *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 2009 (Vol. 90, #9, p. 670-676); this article can be purchased for $5.00 at http://www.pdkmembers.org/members_online/members/orders.asp?action=results&t=A&desc=Accountability+Nudges+Districts&text=&lname_1=&fname_1=&lname_2=&fname_2=&kw_1=&kw_2=&kw_3=&kw_4=&mn1=&yr1=&mn2=&yr2=&c1=

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7. Using "Balanced Scorecards" in School Districts

Unlike FedEx, which knows the location of every package in its system, most school districts work with only two data points – year-end test scores and expenditures, say Frederick Hess and Jon Fullerton in this *Kappan* article. This results in an overly narrow focus, marginalizes many teachers who don't teach reading and math, and gives short shrift to hiring, operations, and financial practices that are essential to student achievement. "Trying to pursue data-driven reform without essential operational and performance data is a recipe for frustration," say Hess and Fullerton. "It's as if a CEO's management dashboard consisted of one item – the stock price. In fact, given the state of most student achievement data systems, the better analogy is to last year's stock price."

The "balanced scorecard" solves this problem, say the authors. Developed for the business world by Robert Kaplan and David Norton in the 1990s, this is a quick and comprehensive way of keeping track of key management data in real time. Here are six key data points that schools should have on the scorecard:

- Student outcomes – Giving teachers item-level interim assessment results so they can analyze whether all or most of their students missed the same items. In addition, it's helpful to have data on employment or enrollment status of students after high school.
- Instruction and curriculum – Knowing what professional development is provided for whom, when, for what length of time, and the outcomes. In addition, knowing which schools use which programs, how well are they implemented, at what cost, and with what results.
- Personnel – Knowing the quality of applicants for positions, how rapidly they are screened, placed, and prepared, and how well they perform on the job.
- People and things – This includes the number and location of staff positions, reporting relationships, and whether positions are filled, as well as district assets and materials (e.g., textbooks delivered).

- Customer satisfaction – Periodically tapping staff, parent, and student opinions on the quality of education.
- Finance and operations – Knowing if funds for programs are actually spent and who makes the decisions. Knowing how quickly can school personnel get the results to interim assessments, how user-friendly the data are, and how are teachers using them. Knowing how long does it take to process a supply request, how rapidly are supplies delivered to classrooms, and how expensive is the process.

"Collecting and employing these kinds of information will help professionals to fully use their skills; eliminate unnecessary or redundant tasks, programs, and personnel; and target resources where they're needed most," say Hess and Fullerton.

The authors present a hierarchy of data-use steps and say that schools are mostly at step 2 and need to improve their performance at steps 3-6:

- Step 1: Accurate collection of basic data;
- Step 2: Data linked across time;
- Step 3: Customer service and satisfaction data;
- Step 4: Data with sufficient granularity to illuminate performance within units of the organization;
- Step 5: Data connected across content areas, for example, do new teachers do better or worse than the teachers who came before them in terms of student achievement?
- Step 6: Providing data in real time.

For schools to move up this scale, Hess and Fullerton say that districts and school boards should put less emphasis on micromanaging processes (staffing formulas and class size, for example) and more on results. "Much of the data needed to measure and manage performance already is being collected and just waiting to be assembled by a skillful analyst," they say. "The key is not a new computer system, but a focus on outcomes, analysis, and the requisite political will and organizational skill. A shiny new IT system will not fix a broken human system."

"The Numbers We Need: Bringing Balanced Scorecards to Education Data" by Frederick Hess and Jon Fullerton in *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 2009 (Vol. 90, #9, p. 665-669); this article can be purchased for $5.00 at
http://www.pdkmembers.org/members_online/members/orders.asp?action=results&t=A&desc=The+Numbers+We+Need&text=&lname_1=&fname_1=&lname_2=&fname_2=&kw_1=&kw_2=&kw_3=&kw_4=&mn1=&yr1=&mn2=&yr2=&c1=

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8. Gender Differences in Math

In a study published June 1, 2009 in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, University of Wisconsin/Madison researchers Janet Mertz and Janet Hyde concluded that culture, not innate ability, accounts for differences in math achievement in males and females. Societal attitudes either discourage or encourage girls and young women to pursue the skills required to be successful in math. Some recent data from the U.S.:

- Girls at all grade levels now perform on a par with boys on standardized math tests.
- Girls are now taking high-school calculus at the same rate as boys.
- The percent of doctorates in mathematical sciences awarded to women has climbed from 5 percent in the 1950s to 30 percent in recent years.
- The gender gap in students considered mathematically gifted is narrowing.
- The variability in scores is as great among females as among males.

This has occurred as attitudes toward math achievement have gradually shifted. The previous belief that math ability was innate is giving way to work-hard-get-smart, the paradigm embraced by the highest-achieving countries in the world. "If you provide females with more educational opportunities and more job opportunities in fields that require advanced knowledge of math," says Mertz, "you're going to find more women learning and performing very well in mathematics."

Mertz and Hyde worry that most NCLB tests aren't putting enough emphasis on complex problem-solving. This will put U.S. students at a disadvantage internationally, they say.

"Culture, Not Biology, Underpins Math Gender Gap" by Janet Mertz and Janet Hyde, *Science Daily*, June 2, 2009 http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/06/090601182655.htm.

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9. Short Items:

a. A new report on teacher evaluation – The National Teacher Project has just issued a report taking school districts to task for not distinguishing between effective and ineffective teachers. It's titled "The Widget Effect: Our National Failure to Acknowledge and Act on Differences in Teacher Effectiveness." You can download an executive summary or the full report at http://widgeteffect.org/

Spotted in *Education Gadfly*, June 4, 2009 (Vol. 9, #20 p. 8)

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b. Open-source lessons – Teachers can share and develop resources with other educators at Open Education Commons: http://www.oercommons.org.

Spotted in *Tools for Schools*, May/June 2009 (Vol. 12, #4, p. 3)

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c. Discussion boards – This website created by the Teacher Leaders Network helps network teacher leaders nationwide: http://www.teacherleaders.org.

Spotted in *Tools for Schools*, May/June 2009 (Vol. 12, #4, p. 3)

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d. Online teacher discussion forum – Classroom 2.0 focuses on using digital tools to improve teaching and learning: http://www.classroom20.com.

Spotted in *Tools for Schools*, May/June 2009 (Vol. 12, #4, p. 7)

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Do you have feedback? Is anything missing?

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

About the Marshall Memo

Mission and focus:

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

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

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Publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

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