Marshall Memo 231

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
April 21, 2008

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Quotes of the Week

"It is not enough to hire and retain the brightest teachers – they must also believe that they can successfully meet the challenges of the task at hand."

Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (see item #1)

"Today, about two-thirds of schools and school districts are invested in a system of professional learning that hinders, rather than promotes, great teaching for every student, every day."

Stephanie Hirsch and Joellen Killion (see item #2)

"Effective professional learning is like a time-release capsule; its contents cannot be absorbed in a single day or week, but must be infused into the system over time to yield desired results in student achievement."

Stephanie Hirsch and Joellen Killion (*ibid.*)

"I don't ask them to believe. I ask them to do."

Stefanie Holzman, principal, on her approach to staff when she took over a struggling Long Beach, CA school in 2000 (*The Learning Principal*, April 2008, Vol. 3, #7, p. 2)

"It's really hard to concentrate on math when people are whispering 'faggot' in my ear."

An unnamed student speaking to documentary filmmaker Debra Chasnoff, *American School Board Journal*, May 2008 (Vol. 195, #5, p. 12)

1. How a Sense of Efficacy Affects Teaching and Learning

In this important article in *Principal*, Nancy Protheroe of the Educational Research Service explores the concept of teachers' sense of efficacy, defined as "confidence in their ability to promote students' learning." Protheroe quotes Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy on the importance of efficacy: "It is not enough to hire and retain the brightest teachers – they must also believe that they can successfully meet the challenges of the task at hand."

Thirty years ago, researchers at Rand Corp. measured efficacy by asking teachers how much they agreed with each of these statements:

- "If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students."
- "When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment." (Armor et al., 1976)

Does teachers' sense of efficacy affect the quality of their teaching and the achievement of their students? It appears that it does. According to one study, teachers with a stronger sense of efficacy:

- Tend to exhibit greater levels of planning and organization;
- Are more open to new ideas and more willing to experiment with new methods;
- Are more persistent and resilient when things don't go smoothly;
- Are less critical of students when they make mistakes;
- Are less inclined to refer a challenging student for special education.

In short, says researcher Anita Woolfolk, "Teachers who set high goals, who persist, who try another strategy when one approach is found wanting – in other words, teachers who have a high sense of efficacy and act on it – are more likely to have students who learn." (Shaughnessy, 2004)

Recent research has split the concept of teacher efficacy into two independent belief systems: (a) General teaching efficacy – a belief about the power of teaching to reach difficult children; and (b) Personal teaching efficacy – confidence in one's own ability to make a difference. It's possible for a teacher to believe that schools can make a difference, but doubt his or her own ability to boost student achievement.

How does a sense of efficacy – or a lack of it – take shape? There appear to be three avenues: (a) Personal experience – whether or not teachers see gains in student learning during their own student teaching and early years in the classroom; (b) Vicarious experiences –

watching other teachers use successful approaches that seem transferable; and (c) Social persuasion – pep talks or feedback that spotlight effective classroom practices and provide specific suggestions on ways to improve, all within a school climate that socializes new teachers to reach out for help and believe they can and will make a difference. Of course the second and third lose their impact if the ideas don't pan out in a teacher's own classroom.

Picking up on the third point, researchers have found that some schools have a *collective* sense of efficacy – a shared belief that the faculty as a whole can have a positive effect on achievement and succeed with even the most difficult students. Teachers who work in schools with a can-do, we-can-make-a-difference culture are more willing to accept challenging goals and less likely to give up easily. "In contrast," writes Protheroe, "teachers in a school characterized by a low level of collective efficacy are less likely to accept responsibility for students' low performance and more likely to point to student risk factors, such as poverty and limited knowledge of English, as causes." Recent research indicates that schools with high collective efficacy have better parent-teacher relationships, more collegial sharing, and higher student achievement.

What can principals do to build a sense of efficacy? Researchers have identified a number of leadership activities:

- Inspiring group purpose and developing a shared vision centered on student achievement;
- Explicitly promoting the idea of individual, school-wide, and global teacher efficacy;
- Highlighting effective teaching practices in the school that are producing student gains;
- Supporting mastery experiences for teachers through thoughtfully designed staff development activities and action research projects;
- Facilitating study groups that discuss "subtle but powerful" changes in teaching styles and strategies that produce results;
- Modeling behaviors such as risk-taking and cooperation.

"Teacher Efficacy: What Is It and Does It Matter?" by Nancy Protheroe in *Principal*, May/June 2008 (Vol. 87, #5, p. 42-45), no e-link; the author can be reached at nprotheroe@ers.org.

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2. The Ingredients of Effective Professional Development

"Today, about two-thirds of schools and school districts are invested in a system of professional learning that hinders, rather than promotes, great teaching for every student, every day," write Stephanie Hirsch and Joellen Killion of the National Staff Development Council in this *Education Week* article. Ineffective practices include focusing on individual rather than team-based or schoolwide learning; increasing the number of staff-development days rather than restructuring the workday; and creating isolated staff-development plans rather than embedding them in school and district improvement plans. "This approach ensures that only some teachers and their students benefit," write Hirsch and Killion, "not all teachers and all students."

The way to reach teachers, improve classroom practices, and boost student learning, they say, is to provide effective school-based, collaborative adult learning experiences keyed to student learning. Successful U.S. schools, and schools in high-performing countries abroad, have these ingredients and make good use of instructional coaches, regular classroom visits by principals, mentoring, and peer observation.

"Effective professional learning is like a time-release capsule," say Hirsch and Killion. "Its contents cannot be absorbed in a single day or week, but must be infused into the system over time to yield desired results in student achievement." This depends on teachers meeting regularly in grade-level or content-area teams and taking joint responsibility for the achievement of all the students they serve. "Learning teams follow a cycle of continuous improvement that begins with examining student data to determine the areas of greatest need, pinpointing areas where adult learning is necessary, engaging in study to address these needs, developing powerful lessons and assessments, applying new strategies in the classroom, reflecting on their impact, and repeating the cycle as necessary."

"Making Every Educator a Learning Educator" by Stephanie Hirsch and Joellen Killion in *Education Week*, April 16, 2008 (Vol. 27, #33, p. 24-25); available to subscribers only

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3. Transactional Strategies Instruction for Reading

In this helpful article in *The Reading Teacher*, Syracuse University professor Rachel Brown describes Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI), a research-based approach to teaching reading comprehension. TSI emerged from studies of what proficient readers do: they tap their academic and nonacademic knowledge; monitor their comprehension; are motivated to keep trying even when confronted with challenging texts; make connections and inferences based on background knowledge; predict what will happen next; visualize text content; self-question when they are confused or curious about content; summarize the gist of what they are reading; and problem-solve and clarify as they read, using "fix-it" strategies like skipping, guessing, sounding out, using context or picture clues, or rereading.

Transactional Strategies Instruction has four dimensions, each with a list of key teaching moves that should be used in context (versus being taught in isolation) in large-group, small-group, and one-on-one settings:

• Explicit teaching of strategies:

- Teachers explain that good readers are strategy users.
- Teachers share their personal experiences with strategy use.
- Teachers point out the importance of thinking while reading.
- Teachers teach students to coordinate their use of several research-based strategies.
- Teachers emphasize the role of personal choice, effort, and persistence in enacting strategies.
- Teachers motivate students' strategy use by showing how applying strategies improves comprehension.

- Teachers highlight the vital role of prior knowledge activation and connection in comprehension.
- Teachers emphasize how students' knowledge of their strengths and needs as readers can inform the strategic choices they make.
- Teachers stress that good readers set goals for reading, monitor their comprehension, use strategies to overcome difficulties, and evaluate their progress toward goals.

• Gradual release of responsibility:
- Teachers promote independent strategy use by shifting responsibility for using strategies to students as quickly as possible.
- Teachers explain the benefits of strategy use in general and the value of using specific strategies.
- Teachers describe when (before, during, or after) and where (with fiction or nonfiction texts) to apply strategies.
- Teachers mentally model (e.g., think-aloud) to make their thinking apparent to students.
- Teachers explain and model how interpretations are made using comprehension strategies.
- Teachers assist students by (a) cueing them to choose strategies that make sense in the context; (b) clarifying through re-explanations; (c) seizing teachable moments; (d) modeling use of strategies repeatedly; and (e) tailoring instruction and tasks to meet students' needs and understandings.
- Teachers provide guided and independent practice so that students learn to use strategies when cued by a diverse array of goals, needs, task demands, and texts.

• Collaborative learning:
- Teachers cue students to support their interpretations by asking, "What makes you say so?" or asking them to use strategies to support their claims, so that less proficient students can observe the processes of more capable peers.
- Teachers and students construct meaning together.
- Teachers serve as discussion facilitators, not directors.
- Teachers avoid scripted lessons. They establish *a priori* objectives, identify one or two focal strategies for a given lesson, and prearrange where and when to explain and model them. However, the teacher is flexible in meeting set goals depending on the needs of students and the flow of the interpretive discussion.

• Interpretive discussion:
- Teachers frequently ask, "What are you thinking?" and "What are you feeling?"
- Teachers do not direct students toward one "correct" interpretation.
- Teachers promote extended dialogues among participants rather than fostering recitation-style interactions.
- Teachers prepare students for discussion by explaining, modeling, and establishing guidelines for active, equitable, and considerate participation in interpretive discussions.

- Teachers refrain from adding interpretive responses to minimize the impact of their statements on students' comments.
- Teachers do not say, "You're right" or "That's wrong." Instead, they restate students' comments to encourage additional responses.

"The Road Not Yet Taken: A Transactional Strategies Approach to Comprehension Instruction" by Rachel Brown in *The Reading Teacher*, April 2008 (Vol. 61, #7, p. 538-547), no e-link available; the author can be reached at rfbrown@syr.edu.

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4. Five Elements in Students' Motivation to Read

In this column in *Reading Today*, Karen Douglas of the International Reading Association sums up the research on students' motivation to read. There are five dimensions, all of which can interact to produce a high level of motivation, which is key to increasing reading proficiency:

- Intrinsic motivation – students' enjoyment of reading and their desire to read;
- Perceived autonomy – the degree to which students can decide what they read;
- Self-efficacy – students' beliefs that they are capable of reading well;
- Collaboration – getting social support by working with peers and discussing texts;
- Mastery goal pursuit – students' desire to really understand what they are reading.

"Motivation and Comprehension" by Karen Douglas in *Reading Today*, April/May 2008 (Vol. 25, #5, p. 38), no e-link available

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5. Using Read-Alouds in High-School ELL Classes

In this article in *Reading Today*, New Jersey ESL teacher Alejandra Varela argues that reading material aloud to high-school ELL students is an excellent use of classroom time. "When do ELLs, who are mostly taking content-area classes in their native language, have the opportunity to hear a piece of literature read by a person in real time?" she asks. "When do ELLs have the opportunity to hear literary pieces read with excellent intonation and pronunciation, and with the appropriate pauses to allow them to cognitively process what they have heard?" She has the following suggestions for getting the most mileage from read-alouds:

- Use a variety of material – books, stories, poems, and non-fiction articles (for example, on current events).
- Select passages that you can read in a short amount of time.
- If you use longer passages, break them up over two or three days.
- Choose material connected to the subject you are covering that week.
- Select read-alouds that allow ELLs to use their prior knowledge by brainstorming and scaffolding; fairy tales work well for this.
- Read the material before you read it to your students, highlighting words that will cause difficulty for your students and using synonyms or cognates as necessary.

- Enhance the reading experience by introducing a few vocabulary words.
- Show your passion for literature by reading with enthusiasm; this can be contagious.
- Don't miss the opportunity to teach a grammatical point during a read-aloud.
- Use read-alouds to ask open-ended questions, teach reading comprehension strategies, generate writing prompts, and launch mini-projects.
- Encourage your students to bring books they would like you to read (spell out your criteria up front).
- Use the Internet to find good short stories and other material. Here are some sites:

• http://wiredforbooks.org
• http://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/childrenindex.html.
• http://www.everythingesl.net/inservices/elementary_sites_ells_71638.php
• http://www.penguinputnam.com/static/packages/us/yreaders/aesop/index.html
• http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/fimbles/comfycorner/story10.shtml
• http://www.magickeys.com/books/index.html#books
• http://www.goodnightstories.com/stories.htm

"Read-Alouds Helpful in High-School ESL Classes" by Alejandra Varela in *Reading Today*, April/May 2008 (Vol. 25, #5, p. 21), no e-link available

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6. Websites Where Students Can Post Their Own Book Reviews

In this *Reading Today* article, educator Jacquie McTaggart suggests a way to boost students' motivation to write book reports: have them post their reviews online. Children of any grade level can write reviews for publication, she says, which "encourages reluctant readers, strengthens self-confidence, rewards interest, and promotes a positive attitude toward literature." Here are some websites:

• The Seminole County Public Library sorts recommended children's books by category and welcomes reviews: http://www.scpl.lib.fl.us/kids/kids_booklists.html.

• Stories from the Web, a British site, is organized by age group; students can review any book from the title list: http://www.storiesfromtheweb.org/sfwhomepage.htm.

• Ann Arbor District Library, featuring book reviews written by students: http://www.worldofreading.org.

• Teen Ink (only for teenagers) accepts reviews, fiction, nonfiction, poetry, opinions, and sports articles: http://teenink.com (submissions to Submissions@TeenInk.com).

• KidsBookShelf accepts reviews, poems, and short stories; all submissions must use the online form: http://www.kidsbookshelf.com.

• Book Hooks posts reviews, stories, poems, and drawings prepared in response to books: http://www.bookhooks.com.

• Writers' Window publishes students' original work: http://english.unitecnology.ac.nz/writers/.

"Appeal to Students' Pride with Online Book Reviews" by Jacquie McTaggart in *Reading Today*, April/May 2008 (Vol. 25, #5, p. 46), no e-link available

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7. Keys to an Effective Early Childhood Literacy Program

In this article in *Principal*, six Illinois educators draw on their first-hand experiences to suggest steps for getting the best possible results in an early childhood literacy program:

• *Decide which skills should be taught*. According to the National Early Literacy Panel, these include: phonological awareness (spoken language is composed of smaller sound units that can be manipulated); alphabet knowledge (printed letters represent sounds in our spoken language, and they can be combined to make words, which can be assembled into sentences); name writing and invented spelling (crayons, markers, pencils, and keyboards can create the individual printed symbols that combine to represent each child's spoken name); concepts about print (we read letters and words from left to right and from the top of a page to the bottom, and from the front of a book to the back); and oral language (fluent readers have strong vocabularies and knowledge they can draw on while they read).

• *Create or adopt an early literacy and language development model*. This includes clarity on the skills to be taught, collaboration with university and other outside helpers, time for regular collaborative planning and assessment, and a structure for problem analysis, generating alternatives, implementing the plan, and evaluating progress.

• *Develop universal (Tier 1) curriculum and instruction*. This includes decisions on the core curriculum, ways it is supplemented, the scope and sequence of instruction, and ways of involving all parents.

• *Provide training and support for the Tier 1 program*. This should be based on an inventory conducted by teachers (one tool is the Early Language and Literacy Checklist Observation) to pinpoint their own resource and training needs. Teachers then implement core literacy experiences for all students and monitor their progress.

• *Decide which students need Tier 2 instruction*. The authors recommend assessing students' mastery of essential early literacy and language skills with the Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs – see link in item 13a below) conducted three times a year (perhaps in September, January, and May). Students who score below a particular level (perhaps the 25th percentile) and show slower-than-average growth are candidates for more-intensive Tier 2 instruction.

• *Deliver special instruction to Tier 2 students*. Students struggling in any area of the IGDIs should receive intensive, explicit, individual and small-group help and practice, along with suggestions to parents for support at home.

• *Monitor progress and modify intervention*. Based on daily and weekly performance checks of targeted skills, Tier-2 students might be moved back into Tier 1 instruction or placed in Tier 3.

• *Design and implement Tier 3 interventions for struggling students*. These are more intensive, take place in smaller groups, often involve specialized staff, and systematically target areas that need development in daily sessions.

• *Monitor and continue examining Tier 3 options on an individual basis*. Teachers collaborate to find solutions for struggling students.

• *Communicate with elementary schools about outcomes for individual children, groups of children, and the entire program*. Passing along IGDI and other data and seeking feedback on students' progress is important to continuous improvement of pre-school programs.

"Project ELI: Improving Early Literacy Outcomes" by Robin Miller Young, Lynette Chandler, LuAnn Shields, Pam Laubenstein, Jill Butts, and Kristine Black in *Principal*, May/June 2008 (Vol. 87, #5, p. 14-20), no e-link available. Young can be reached at Robin_MillerYoung@ipsd.org, and Chandler at lchandler@niu.edu.

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8. The Value of Play for Early-Childhood Students with Special Needs

In this article in *Principal*, University of Nevada professor Ann Bingham quotes Lev Vygotsky on the value of unstructured, fun pre-school activities: "Play creates a zone of proximal development for the child. In play the child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller then himself."

Bingham believes that play is especially helpful for 3-5-year-old students with disabilities or developmental delays. Specifically:

- Play is an important way for children to learn and practice new behaviors.
- Play is a functional behavior that contributes to the child's quality of life.
- Play provides opportunities for children to spontaneously and creatively explore their environment, act out their thinking, and assume the roles and perspectives of others.
- Play is self-sustaining because it is satisfying.
- Play is a rich opportunity for teaching cognitive, communicative, social, motor, and adaptive skills.

For example, a block center can help students in the following areas:

- Cognition: identifying the colors and shapes of blocks;
- Communication: requesting blocks and commenting on them;
- Fine motor: stacking blocks;
- Gross motor: knocking over and kicking blocks;
- Self-help: cleaning up blocks;
- Social-emotional: sharing blocks and taking turns;
- Preliteracy: recognizing letters on blocks, arranging blocks into letters, and writing about the activity;
- Prenumeracy: counting blocks.

"The Value of Play Interventions" by Ann Bingham in *Principal*, May/June 2008 (Vol. 87, #5, p. 22-28), no e-link available; the author can be reached at abingham@unr.edu.

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9. How Principals Can Support Student Teachers

In this *Principal* article, Kent State University professor Steven Turner lists ten ways that principals can maximize the benefits of the student-teaching experience:

- *Select effective mentor teachers*. Mentors should have at least five years of teaching experience and a proven track record of student achievement. "The old custom of assigning a student teacher to enhance the instructional skills of a weak staff member has rarely proved successful," says Turner.
- *Interview student teachers*. This is best done with the mentor teacher to see if each student teacher is a good fit.
- *Set up good mentor-supervisor communication*. This includes providing the university supervisor with detailed information on student-teacher responsibilities, schedules, policies, and procedures for feedback.
- *Tell student teachers about school policies and procedures*. This includes staff dress code, student discipline, confidentiality, special education, and handling sensitive documents.
- *Expect the best, plan for the worst*. Some student teachers struggle, and the school should have a plan for early intervention when this happens.
- *If things go sour, involve the university supervisor*.
- *Integrate student teachers into the school community*. This could include attending faculty meetings, proctoring exams, and tutoring students.
- *Stay involved*. Principals might attend mentor/student teacher/supervisor meetings, observe student teachers in action, and look at lesson plans.
- *Monitor the essentials*. Although the mentor teacher bears primary responsibility, the principals should check on whether student teachers are getting three essentials from their experience: (a) Learning about how students learn; (b) Constructing and modifying their personal identity as a teacher; and (c) Learning how to integrate classroom management and effective instruction.
- *Conduct exit interviews*. Talking to both the student teacher and the mentor teacher at the end of each cycle provides valuable information for improving the experience for future student teachers.

"A Better Beginning: 10 Ways Principals Can Support Student Teachers" by Steven Turner in *Principal*, May/June 2008 (Vol. 87, #5, p. 52-54), no e-link available; the author can be reached at sturner6@kent.edu.

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10. Assessing a School's Parent Outreach and Involvement

In this column in *Principal*, parent involvement expert John Wherry recommends that schools conduct an end-of-the-year audit of parent involvement using an eight-point rubric developed by his Virginia-based Parent Institute. Principals could rate each on a 5-4-3-2-1 scale (excellent to poor) and jot ideas for improvement in each area:

• *Relationships* – Our school builds productive, personal relationships with all parents; we try to get acquainted with parents, know their names, and work cooperatively to help children learn. 5-4-3-2-1

• *Communication* – Our school promotes the two-way flow of information between staff and parents about students' academic achievement and individual needs; we both "talk" and "listen" to parents in written and face-to-face communication in parents' language. 5-4-3-2-1

• *Decision-making* – Our school encourages, supports, and expects parents to be involved in decisions to monitor and assist school improvement; we help parents learn about decision-making and participate in school improvement decisions. 5-4-3-2-1

• *Advocacy* – Our school makes sure that each child has an adult advocate to help make sure that his or her learning needs are met. 5-4-3-2-1

• *Information* – Our school provides written materials and multiple opportunities to teach families how to support their child's learning. 5-4-3-2-1

• *School improvement* – Our school engages and partners with community members and agencies to plan and implement ways to improve school success and student achievement. 5-4-3-2-1

• *Parenting advice* – Our school is a resource for families on developing positive parenting skills and home environments; we help parents be responsible and have a positive effect on their children, in school and in the community. 5-4-3-2-1

• *Problem-solving* – Our school works collaboratively with parents, teachers, and administrators to develop solutions to students' needs and school issues; we see ourselves as members of a broad-based school and parent team to get best results for all students. 5-4-3-2-1

"Taking Stock and Looking Ahead" by John Wherry in *Principal*, May/June 2008 (Vol. 87, #5, p. 12); no link, but the assessment rubric is available at http://www.parent-institute.com/naesp.

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11. Kindergarteners Lead Parent Conferences with PowerPoint Scripts

In this article in *Principal*, Nebraska educators Dianne Young and Lynn Behounek describe how kindergarten students in their district lead parent-teacher conferences with PowerPoint presentations. Prior to conferences, teachers and aides work with students to fill in personalized information in a seven-slide template:

- Slide 1: Title page with name and date.
- Slide 2: What are you good at?
- Slide 3: What do you like to do at school?
- Slide 4: What do you need to practice?
- Slide 5: What sight words do you know?
- Slide 6: What is your favorite job in kindergarten?
- Slide 7: A photo of the student with classmates.

The authors say that the first year they used this approach, it took teachers or the media specialist ten minutes to enter the data for each student. The second year, they cut the time in

half by having a paraprofessional and high-school intern enter the data and re-using clip art from the previous year.

Before parent conferences, students rehearse their presentation with teachers, peers, or paraprofessionals and get feedback on how well they introduce their parents to the teacher, their voice volume, and the quality of their presentation. During the actual conferences, students do the talking as they move through the seven slides (this takes about ten minutes); then parents give feedback and talk with the teacher. Young and Behounek say the program has been successful at informing parents, sparking good communication during conferences, and building students' confidence and competence.

"Kindergarten Students Use PowerPoint to Lead Conferences" by Dianne Young and Lynn Behounek in *Principal*, May/June 2008 (Vol. 87, #5, p. 58-59), no e-link available; the authors can be reached at dianne_young@ralstonschools.org and lynn_behounek@ralstonschools.org.

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12. The Best Response to the "What Is Your Weakness?" Interview Question

In this "Career Intelligence" column in *Education Week*, Washburn University career advisor Kent McAnally suggests that the usual way of answering the time-honored interview question – "What is your greatest weakness?" or "If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?" or "On a ten-point scale, what are you a '6' on today that you would like to be a '10' on in a couple of years?" – is no longer effective. Employers are weary of candidates talking about something that appears to be a weakness and turning it into a strength, for example, "I'm too much of a perfectionist. Sometimes it takes me a little longer to complete assignments or tasks because I want them to be perfect before I submit them."

A more effective approach, says McAnally, is what he calls the "realistic" approach, in which the candidate does some honest soul searching, shares a real weakness, talks about steps to improve, and reports on progress. For example, an applicant for an elementary teaching position responded to the "weakness" question thus: "I'm not very good with science. But I have talked with my supervising teacher, and she has shared some materials that I can use to develop lessons and units in my classroom next year. I have joined a science teachers' organization and I will be attending their conference this summer. I have also contacted the local natural history museum and arranged to check out some of the 'kits' they have available for teachers to develop units around. I am taking steps to improve my abilities as a science teacher." The principal interviewing her said he had absolutely no worries about this teacher. "In two years," he said, "she will be the best science teacher in my building."

This approach works, says McAnally, but only if you can honestly report progress on your weakness. "Showing that you are taking steps to improve is essential to making a positive impression," he concludes, "but more importantly, it is essential for developing your personal and professional goals and development plans. And that is the real reason for the question."

"The Weakness Question" by Kent McAnally in *Education Week*, April 16, 2008 (Vol. 27, #33, p. 31); no e-link available

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13. Short Items:

a. Get It, Got It, Go! - Preschool growth measures website – This remarkable, free resource from the Center for Early Education Development at the University of Minnesota provides Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs) to measure, chart, and monitor students' progress: http://ggg.umn.edu.

Spotted in *Principal*, May/June 2008 (Vol. 87, #5, p. 20)

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b. Websites where students can post art projects – This site has millions of art works on display and allows students to post their work. Art teachers can create their own space for students to exhibit their work online: http://www.artsonia.com.
A second site allows art teachers and their students to create portfolios of their classroom work: http://www.digication.com.

Spotted in *American School Board Journal*, May 2008 (Vol. 195, #5, p. 40)

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c. Evaluating websites – This site at the University of California/Berkeley's library has helpful guidelines for planning instruction on evaluating websites:
http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html.
If you want to show your students a good example of a spoof/fraudulent website, check out this one on the endangered Pacific Northwest tree octopus: http://www.zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/.

"New Literacy Skills for the 21st Century" by Mary Devaney Colombo in *Perspectives*, Spring 2008 (p. 406), no e-link available

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d. Conducting an arts audit – At this Kennedy Center website, school leaders can assess their needs in the area of arts education:
http://www.kennedy-center.org/education/kcaaen/resources/CAudit6-9.pdf.

Spotted in *American School Board Journal*, May 2008 (Vol. 195, #5, p. 40)

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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