Marshall Memo 256

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
October 20, 2008

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Quotes of the Week

"Recess does not have to be hell."

Jill Vialet (see item #10)

"Our students think we hang ourselves up in the closet at the end of the day and wait for them to return."

Jaymie Reeber Kosa (see item #3)

"Effective storytelling silences the room and invites every type of learner to participate. It encourages the chatty to be still and the quiet to speak up."

Jaymie Reeber Kosa (*ibid.*)

"Turnarounds are not a time to cherry-pick the more popular or painless components of reform or pursue them incrementally. Unless leaders, staff, and personnel are deeply and irrevocably committed to making a turnaround work, school reform efforts are likely to fail."

Frederick Hess and Thomas Gift (see item #1)

"Sometimes, burning the employee manual, making everyone reapply for their jobs, and then axing those structures that created the problem is the only way to convey that you're serious about turning the organization around."

John Lock (see item #1)

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1. Strategies for Turning Around Failing Schools

In this article in *American School Board Journal*, Frederick Hess and Thomas Gift of the American Enterprise Institute tackle the question of how to transform chronically low-performing schools. "Ultimately, whether it is in schools or private firms, a successful turnaround requires transforming culture, expectations, and routines," they say, and share these suggestions:

• *Reboot* – "Reformers should not hesitate to change principals and school leaders to jump-start the turnaround process," say the authors. New leadership can help both symbolically and substantively, providing "a commitment to wholesale change."

• *Go for broke* – "Reformers need to view school turnarounds as an all-or-nothing proposition to avoid the pitfalls caused by unclear or conflicting objectives," say Hess and Gift. "Turnarounds are not a time to cherry-pick the more popular or painless components of reform or pursue them incrementally. Unless leaders, staff, and personnel are deeply and irrevocably committed to making a turnaround work, school reform efforts are likely to fail." They quote John Lock, a turnaround expert: "Sometimes, burning the employee manual, making everyone reapply for their jobs, and then axing those structures that created the problem is the only way to convey that you're serious about turning the organization around."

• *Loose/tight* – "Staging a successful turnaround entails setting high expectations and then being flexible with regard to how principals, teachers, and staff go about meeting them," say the authors. Loosening bureaucratic constraints is vital, so that leaders are empowered to swiftly allocate resources, solve problems, and hold staff accountable. But top-down mandates don't work. "Based on our research," say Hess and Gift, "turnarounds require each individual employee to commit to their role. Teachers and staff cannot be content merely to take marching orders from administrators, but must be ready, willing, and trained to drive the educational innovations that make a turnaround possible."

The authors acknowledge that some schools may be too far gone to be turned around, especially if they are "burdened by anachronistic contract provisions, rickety external support, and years of accrued administrative incompetence." In such cases, say Hess and Gift, the best thing is to shut the school down, move out personnel and programs, and make a fresh start.

"The Turnaround" by Frederick Hess and Thomas Gift in *American School Board Journal*, November 2008 (Vol. 195, #11, p. 31-32), no e-link available; Hess can be reached at rhess@aei.org and Gift at thomas.gift@aei.org.

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2. Nine Characteristics of Effective School Leaders

In this *Education Week* article, Lew Smith, director of the National Principals Leadership Institute in New York, reports on what he learned from studying principals who turned around failing schools. Each school leader was successful in a different, idiosyncratic way, says Smith, but there were nine common characteristics. They were:

• *Laser-like* – "Each principal's central and unwavering focus was on teaching and learning and student success," says Smith.

• *Visionary* – The principals were able to look beyond the dismal situation they inherited and see a better future for their schools.

• *Change-sensitive* – The leaders understood the human dynamics of change, including fear, insecurity, cynicism, reluctance, and caution. "They recognized that their schools would not change unless there was a 'felt need' for change," says Smith.

• *Courageous* – "These principals persisted despite opposition," he writes. "They took professional risks. They never retreated from their vision or abandoned their mission."

• *Empowering* – These leaders knew they could not do it alone, so they worked with teams to create ownership throughout the school community.

• *Relational* – The principals were able to empathize with students, teachers, and parents, recognizing concerns and responding to needs.

• *Strategic* – They knew what steps to take, and when; they built alliances and made timely moves.

• *Learners* – "These principals read voraciously and were well-versed on the latest books on education, business, and leadership," says Smith. "They visited other schools to learn about successful practices, and attended professional conferences."

• *Communicators* – They told stories that their followers could relate to and appreciate. "They communicated through both their words and their actions," says Smith. "They were clear about the messages they wanted to convey."

"What McCain and Obama Can Learn from Successful School Principals" by Lew Smith in *Education Week*, Oct. 15, 2008 (Vol. 28, #8, p.32-33) http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2008/10/15/08smith.h28.html. This article was drawn from Smith's recent book, S*chools That Change: Evidence-Based Improvement and Effective Change Leadership* (Corwin Press, 2008). The author can be reached at lewsmith@npli.org.

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3. Using Stories Effectively in the Classroom

In this *NJEA Review* article, New Jersey educator Jaymie Reeber Kosa describes a common classroom scene: "The students shuffle around in their seats, papers ruffle, fingers fumble with pens. Words are whispered; giggles suppressed, almost. The lesson begins, but something is quite clear. The students are not present. Eyes dart between clock and window. And there's doodling. The students aren't listening."

How can a teacher hook these distracted kids? *Tell them a story!* says Kosa. "Storytelling is a teaching technique that has been with us for thousands of years. Stories

transmit values, engage the imagination, and foster community. Effective storytelling silences the room and invites every type of learner to participate. It encourages the chatty to be still and the quiet to speak up."

Why are stories so effective? They have a beginning, middle, and end. They are vivid, dealing with real people, experiences, objects, and colors. They engage different senses and learning styles. And they are accessible to all students, not just those with high achievement, helping everyone see the forest for the trees. Here are some examples:

• A math teacher introduces a new trigonometric principle by telling how he impressed a young woman on a bicycle ride: "During the ride, my date began to ask questions about some of the math concepts that she never quite understood in high school, so I explained the trigonometric functions of right triangles." The teacher proceeded to tell the details to students, and later in the lesson, he mentioned casually that he married this young woman a year later. "Using a story to disguise challenging theories and dry language is helpful to opening students' minds up to new ideas and concepts," says Kosa.

• After a classroom conflict that students are reluctant to discuss, the teacher tells a folktale in which characters make poor choices and learn a lesson. Discussing the story helps students learn the lesson without ever mentioning the incident in question.

• A left-handed art teacher working with pastels with young children tells how when she was young, she always smudged the pastels and got them on her clothes – and then demonstrates how her mother taught her to avoid doing this.

"All teachers have significant moments that inspired learning in their life," says Kosa. "When they take time to share their personal learning stories, students often can identify with the feelings and frustrations associated with learning something new." Some possible topics:

- My most embarrassing moment
- My most terrifying moment
- My proudest moment
- My most sorrowful moment
- My most joyful moment
- My most inspiring moment

"Our students think we hang ourselves up in the closet at the end of the day and wait for them to return," says Kosa. "Giving them more information about who you are and what you value creates a safer space for them to do the same. When teachers share personal stories, they create a bond with students."

Kosa has the following suggestions for teachers who want to expand their use of storytelling:

• Find a story you enjoy telling over and over again. "Enthusiasm is contagious," she says. And your story can be fictitious.

• Paint a vivid picture, using visual images and details. "The magic and mystery of a story lies in its details," says Kosa.

• Practice your story. Repetition and props are important to telling a story effectively. Some teachers use storyboards, some make a recording and listen to it repeatedly.

• Take the plunge, even if it's not perfect. Your story may bomb, but it's good for students to see you modeling risk-taking.

• Write the story down. This reinforces the tale, leads to reflection on word choice and sequence, and creates a written record.

[Note that storytelling is one of the six memory-enhancement strategies in the book *Made to Stick*, summarized in Marshall Memo 246.]

"Tell a Story" by Jaymie Reeber Kosa in *NJEA Review* (New Jersey Education Association), February 2008 (p. 8-10); spotted in *Education Digest*, October 2008 (Vol. 74, #2, p. 43-47)

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4. Combating Summer Reading Loss with a Strong Home Reading Program

In this important article in *The Reading Teacher*, researchers Thomas White and James Kim report on two studies of voluntary reading programs for grade 3-5 students in high-poverty schools. They found that simply giving students books to read over the summer made very little difference. What boosted students' reading levels and successfully counteracted summer reading loss was carefully matching books to students' reading level and interests and providing scaffolding that involved students and their families in making meaning of every book they read. Here are White and Kim's recommendations for running an optimally effective summer reading program:

- Before the end of the school year, have teachers teach several lessons that model the use of comprehension strategies and oral reading practice with a parent or family member.
- During the summer, provide at least eight books closely matched to each student's reading level and interests.
- Send a postcard with each book to remind students of what they should be doing (see below).
- Send a letter to parents asking them to listen to and provide feedback on their child's reading.
- Ask that the postcards be returned so the school can see if the program is being implemented as intended.

Here is the content of the postcard sent to students with each book:

1. What is the title of the book you got? ___________________________________
2. Did you finish reading this book? ___Yes ___No, I stopped at page ___.
3. How many times did you read this book? __Didn't finish __1 time __2 times __3 times
4. What did you do to understand this book better? Check all that apply:

   __I re-read parts of this book

   __I made predictions about this book.

   __I asked questions about this book.

   __I made connections (text-to-text, text-to-self).

__I summarized parts of this book.

5. After you read the book, tell someone in your family what the book was about. Pick a part of the book to read aloud two times. Ask him or her how you improved the second time you read the section and ask for his or her signature. Check all that apply:

    __Did I read more smoothly?

    __Did I know more words?

    __Did I read with more expression?

6. Family member's signature: ______________________________

Optional: Comment about this student's reading:

"Teacher and Parent Scaffolding of Voluntary Summer Reading" by Thomas White and James Kim in *The Reading Teacher*, October 2008 (Vol. 62, #2, p. 116-125), no free e-link available; White can be reached at tgw7u@virginia.edu and Kim at kimja@gse.harvard.edu.

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5. Professional Development and Coaching: The One-Two Punch

In this *Principal Leadership* article, professional development expert Mark Driscoll examines the symbiosis between traditional professional development and instructional coaching. Traditional PD activities, he says, "typically reside just outside the actual work of teaching. So although professional development may help teachers understand and even embrace research-based instructional strategies, it usually stops short of actual practice of those strategies in the classroom."

What's needed to close the loop, Driscoll believes, is instructional coaching. Coaching helps teachers actually implement effective practices. For example, an effective math coach working with a teacher on a particular kind of mathematics problem can help the teacher understand:

- The key mathematics ideas involved in solving the problem;
- The connection to relevant standards;
- Background knowledge students need to be successful;
- Common errors and misconceptions;
- Academic language that ELLs may need to be taught;
- How to make the problem accessible to all students;
- Questions to assess understanding and push students' thinking.

"All in all," says Driscoll, "the integration of knowledge and skills with the effective work of teaching can be very complicated." Coaches can help by providing another set of eyes on student interactions, as well as content knowledge and expertise. They can be especially helpful with:

• The role of specialized or academic language in learning – For example, in math problems, the word *any* can take on a special meaning (*Will your method allow you to transform any parallelogram into a rectangle?*).

• The development of understanding in adolescents – It takes some sophistication to know the different levels of mathematical understanding of different students.

• *Generalizing a big idea* – Deep engagement with big math ideas is the heart of teacher professional development.

Coaches can also help teams of teachers plan curriculum units, engage in lesson study, provide materials, and watch videotapes of students struggling with particularly challenging concepts. A key coaching function, concludes Driscoll, is to "increase teachers' ability to identify the limits of student understanding and address their learning needs. Further, with a coach seeing first hand what teachers need to enhance their content and pedagogical knowledge, group professional development can target areas of need and make professional learning more meaningful and productive."

"Embracing Coaching as Professional Development" by Mark Driscoll in *Principal Leadership*, October 2008 (Vol. 9, #2, p. 40-44), no e-link available

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6. To Have a Word Wall or Not, That Is the Question

In this article in *Rethinking Schools*, Charlotte (NC) fourth-grade teacher Anthony Iannone tells how he was summoned to the principal's office to discuss some "serious concerns" about his classroom. "My arrival in her office seemed to jostle her," recalls Iannone. "She was consumed by a mass of paperwork on her desk. She raised her head, bleary-eyed, and invited me in. The tension in the room was palpable."

The problem, it turned out, was that Iannone didn't have a word wall up in his classroom (vocabulary words posted under each letter of the alphabet) and this was a non-negotiable requirement in the district. Iannone said he had not put up a word wall because posting vocabulary from the literature anthology seemed like a canned, meaningless activity and his students had no say in the words that were posted. "It goes against all that I believe about how children learn," he told the principal. "I try to empower my students by teaching them how to choose what to read, providing them the opportunity to respond to the text and space to talk to others about the text."

Iannone was surprised by what the principal said next. She told him that district administrators periodically inspected the school using a "snapshot" observation form. One of the items on the checklist was classroom word walls, and when her bosses didn't see word walls, she got chewed out. In fact, his noncompliance made her look weak and ineffective. The principal explained that to prevent this from happening again, she was using the same snapshot checklist in her classroom visits and following up when she saw discrepancies.

Iannone felt his principal's pain, and the tone of the meeting changed. They talked about the merits of the snapshot checklist, her role as an "enforcer" of district policies, and the fact that teachers didn't have a chance for a dialogue after her classroom visits. In the end, the principal said that his word wall needed to go up, but it didn't have to be done "by the book."

Back in the classroom, Iannone worked with his students to construct *The Great (Word) Wall of Empowerment* – "a wall for the people, made by the people," he said. Students cut out different colored "bricks" from construction paper and they began to put up intriguing and

puzzling words from novels, picture books, science, social studies, and math, and words in their home languages. Family members could even recommend words via the class blog. "Now our wall fills up two sides of my classroom and is spilling down the corridor," says Iannone. "My principal shows my wall to visitors and understands that the check-off sheet will show that she is 'in control.' I think we've both begun to see each other differently, as co-workers engaged in the same struggle to provide our students with an education that empowers."

"My Talk with the Principal: Thoughts on Putting Up Walls – and Tearing Them Down" by Anthony Iannone in *Rethinking Schools*, Fall 2008 (Vol. 23, #1, p. 45-46), no free e-link

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7. Counteracting Students' Stereotypes About Africa

In this *Teaching Tolerance* article, Maryland educators Brenda Randolph and Elizabeth DeMulder suggest ways to address widespread student misconceptions and ignorance about Africa. Stereotypes abound: Africa is a rural country filled with wild animals, men hunting with spears, exotic practices, and starving people. These beliefs are detrimental to how students regard African Americans and black heritage. They contribute to negative racial beliefs, result in bad experiences for recent immigrants from African countries, and perpetuate misconceived policies toward Africa. Randolph and DeMulder have the following suggestions for teachers who are teaching about Africa:

• *Use the names of specific countries rather than "Africa,"* in the same way that we would refer to France rather than Europe and Canada rather than North America.

• *Avoid activities that perpetuate stereotypes of hungry, poor Africans.* Help students see the bigger picture, identify the root causes of poverty around the world, and ultimately get involved in supporting drives and policies that will make a difference.

• *Use "regular" language*, for example, "house" rather than "hut," "people" rather than "tribe."

• *Be aware of the messages and images conveyed by your choice of art activities.* Students should move beyond making African masks and huts to more contemporary African art. If masks are a required curriculum area, be sure to include masks from around the world.

• *Use contemporary stories as well as folktales.* Folktales are rich in meaning, but most are set in the past and involve wild animals and rural scenes. Balance these stories with ones set in present-day cities and towns.

• *Include North Africa*, not just sub-Sarahan Africa.

• *Highlight typical social groups and everyday activities.* Avoid materials that emphasize exotic practices, advise Randolph and DeMulder, and look for books and activities that show African children and families engaged in everyday activities.

• *Avoid wild animal motifs.* Most Africans have never seen large wild animals, say the authors. "Elephants, lions, and giraffes populate only a few countries, primarily in East and Southern Africa, and today most of these large animals live in or near national parks. Children in Africa are much more likely to see the same animals an American child would see."

• *Explore African perspectives and actions*. This can be done by reading award-winning books by African authors (see the resources list in the article).

• *Take an imaginary city tour*. The most common misconception about Africa is that it doesn't have large cities. One way to counteract this is to have students plan a trip to two or more African cities, complete with air travel, hotels, currency, clothes to pack, etc. The authors suggest Accra, Cairo, Addis Ababa, and Cape Town.

"I Didn't Know There Were Cities in Africa!" by Brenda Randolph and Elizabeth DeMulder in *Teaching Tolerance*, October 2008
http://www.tolerance.org/teach/printar.jsp?p=0&ar=944&pi=ttm
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8. How Content-Area Teachers Can Motivate Students to Read

In this article in *The Reading Teacher*, professors William Brozo and Sutton Flynt suggest how we can motivate students to read in science, social studies, and math classrooms. Research has shown that motivation and engagement are linked to reading more and becoming a lifelong reader. This makes it critical, say the authors, "that at an early age we capture students' imaginations with print that sustains their attention and keeps them reading into adolescence and beyond." It's especially important that students read in the content areas. If they don't, they will miss out on important background knowledge and vocabulary – the foundations of academic success – and they won't practice their reading skills on more challenging, content-rich material, which will handicap them as they move through the grades.

Here are the authors' six evidence-based principles for increasing reading motivation in the content areas:

• *Boost academic self-efficacy*. This means students' belief and confidence that they can accomplish meaningful tasks and produce a desired result in the classroom. Students who have high self-efficacy are more engaged and motivated, regardless of their socioeconomic background, so it's vital for content-area teachers to create conditions where students feel competent and are willing to work hard.

• *Spark interest in the content*. Student interest is key to a willingness to read content material, and the best content-area teachers find ways to stir up interest. Multiple forms of print and electronic media, multiple sources of information, and student choice are all helpful.

• *Connect school to the outside world*. Students who struggle when reading school textbooks and workbooks can be surprisingly proficient reading graphic novels, e-mailing, instant messaging, participating in chat rooms and blogs, and reading computer and video game magazines to pick up new strategies. The teacher's challenge is to link these two worlds and find ways of using students' strengths to learn content material.

• *Give students access to lots of interesting texts*. If they are going to become engaged and proficient readers, students need to be able to get their hands on a wide variety of engaging print materials in a range of genres.

• *Expand choices and options*. Students should have some say on what they read, the ways they respond and show proficiency, and even the kinds of learning experiences they have, say Brozo and Flynt.

• *Maximize collaboration*. Students like well-organized team collaboration on academic projects, and working in groups also increases their sense of belonging. Teacher-student collaboration is important too, say the authors: "Student motivation increases when teachers are their allies in the reading and learning process."

"Motivating Students to Read in the Content Classroom: Six Evidence-Based Principles" by William Brozo and Sutton Flynt in *The Reading Teacher*, October 2008 (Vol. 62, #2, p. 172-174), no free e-link available; the authors can be reached at wbrozo@gmu.edu and esflynt@memphis.edu.

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9. Re-Thinking "Gifted" Education

In this front-page article in *Education Week*, Christina Samuels reports on recent changes in the concept of giftedness. According to the new thinking, captured in *The Development of Giftedness and Talent Across the Life Span* (American Psychological Association, forthcoming in January 2009):

- Academic talents can wax and wane; a child who is labeled gifted at age 8 can be performing in the middle of the pack in high school.
- Giftedness is not innate and immutable; it can be nurtured and taught, and it can be lost.
- Rather than labeling a child "gifted," which implies a permanent state (some people have it and others don't), it's more useful to think of some children showing great accomplishment in certain areas, for example, spatial understanding, music, art, or sports.

Carol Dweck, the Stanford psychologist, likes this shift in thinking. Clearly, some children excel in certain areas, she says, but it's a mistake for teachers and parents to praise kids for their "natural" gifts. Doing so can lead them to withdraw when they hit a roadblock, worrying that having to work hard means they aren't really "smart." If adults tell all children that they can get smart and develop their talents through hard work over time, this is less likely to happen. The key, says Dweck, is moving from the "fixed-intelligence mindset" to the "growth mind-set."

Frances Degen Horowitz, co-author of the forthcoming book, says that to get in synch with the new thinking, schools should avoid labeling students as gifted and non-gifted based on one test early on. Instead, schools should assess more frequently and allow students to move in and out of gifted programs as appropriate.

Dona Matthews, a Hunter College expert on gifted education, believes that shifting to a more dynamic view of giftedness will improve the quality of gifted programs in schools. "Gifted education is very often used as a way to remediate general education," she says. "It

gives parents a happier place to park their kids. But the gifted program should be meeting a defined need."

Daniel Keating, a University of Michigan psychologist who contributed a chapter to the new book, takes this argument a step further. He believes that pullout enrichment programs don't really meet the needs of students who are way ahead of their peers, and this kind of program is not the best use of resources. "Why don't you take the least-engaged kids and get them to like school more?" he asks. "It's being aimed at the wrong kids." He believes that precocious students should be allowed to take academic courses at a higher level.

"'Gifted' Label Said to Miss Dynamic Nature of Talent" by Christina Samuels in *Education Week*, Oct. 15, 2008 (Vol. 28, #8, p.1, 18)
http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2008/10/15/08gifted_ep.h28.html

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10. Recess Without Mayhem

In this helpful article in *Principal*, Jill Vialet says that in recent years, recess has become the most problem-filled part of the school day. Why? Because children who spend most of their leisure time playing Xbox and PlayStation 3, or whose parents won't let them go outside because of safety concerns, haven't learned the basics of safe, healthy outdoor play – how to make rules, follow them, and resolve conflicts. "When chaos reigns on the playground, it can spill over into the classroom," says Vialet. "And when children don't feel safe in school, it affects their ability to learn."

The good news, she says, is that kids can be taught how to play safely if the school follows some basic steps. For the last dozen years, Vialet's organization, Sports4Kids, has been working in 130 schools in six cities and seen dramatic improvements in recess behavior. "In school after school," she says, "the problems that plague recess virtually disappear and the whole school day goes more smoothly as kids bring the confidence, teamwork, and constructive problem-solving skills they've learned on the playground into the classroom – and into their lives… Recess does not have to be hell." Here are her suggestions:

• *Analyze what's happening at recess*. What games are children playing now? Is there any structured play? What parts of the playground are kids using and not using? How are the transitions to and from the school building? Where do students who aren't participating stand? What are the adults doing?

• *Carve up the space*. Vialet suggests making a rough sketch of your schoolyard and dividing it into five or six areas. There can be an area for checking out equipment as children come out of the building. There can be cones to designate areas for basketball and soccer. There can be lines for four-square. One area can be for the Game of the Week, targeting kids who aren't generally participating in recess activities.

• *Teach everyone the rock-paper-scissors game*. "Nine times out of ten," says Vialet, "playground conflicts are completely inconsequential and with rock-paper-scissors as an agreed-upon tool for problem-solving, you will be amazed by how much more smoothly things can go."

• *Teach procedures and games*. "When kids don't play well together," says Vialet, "it's often because they don't know the rules." Classrooms are the best place to teach transition procedures, signals for getting attention (perhaps rhythmic clapping), and the rules to games.

• *Play outside yourself*. Vialet says it helps when the principal and other adults actually play games with students, encouraging reticent students to participate and modeling playing hard, playing fair, and losing graciously.

• *Give kids responsibilities*. Older students can be trained as Junior Coaches to distribute and collect equipment, turn jump-ropes, resolve conflicts, split students into teams, organize intramural tournaments, and run the Game-of-the-Day area. Often being made a Junior Coach can change the behavior of students who've had problems at recess themselves.

• *Put a trained adult on the playground*. It's very helpful to have someone on the scene every day who has a vision of a safe and happy recess and knows how to make it happen.

"The Elephant on the Playground" by Jill Vialet in *Principal*, November/December 2008 (Vol. 88, #2, p. 38-41), no e-link available; Vialet can be reached at jill@sports4kids.org.

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11. Short Items:

a. Election resources website – This Lesley University site created by Jo-Anne Hart has a number of free election activities and resources for elementary, middle, and high-school classrooms, organized around essential questions and aligned to national standards: http://www.lesley.edu/growingvoters. Many thanks to Jenn David-Lang for this resource!

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b. Mix It Up at Lunch Day – This national campaign to get students acquainted with kids outside their immediate circle is Thursday, November 13th this year. For information, posters, stickers, and other information, go to http://www.mixitup.org.
[See Marshall Memo 220 for an article summary on this idea.]

Spotted in a *Teaching Tolerance* advertisement in *Rethinking Schools*, Fall 2006, p. 4

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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:

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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
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