Marshall Memo 19

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
January 5, 2004

In this Issue:

Quotes of the Week

"The teacher shouldn't try to be our friend. We have a sixth sense and know that if the teacher isn't on point for the first five minutes, we can get away with stuff all year."
Danielle, a student at Frederick Douglass High School (see item #2)

"They might be thinking about sex through the whole period for all I know, but if I can get them to act attentive, chances are they're learning and, at least, they're not bothering other students."
Timothy Hearn, Frederick Douglass Academy teacher (see item #2)

"All the recruitment in the world isn't going to help us retain teachers. They are not going to stay if they don't have high-quality support."
Nancy Moir, New Teacher Project (see item #3)

"*Lo que se apprende en la cuna, siempre dure.*" (That which is learned in the crib lasts forever.)
Spanish saying (see item #4)

"How do children from dysfunctional families get their needs met? The answer is apparent in many classrooms. The need for attention is met by creating chaos; the need for competence is met by being the biggest bully in the class; the need for recognition is met by being a gang member and having other gang members look up to you."
B.J. Wise (see item #5)

"Flattery is like chewing gum. Enjoy it, but don't swallow it."
Hank Ketchum, "Dennis the Menace" cartoonist (Harvard Business Review)
See item #6

1. Emotional Intelligence Is a Key Leadership Skill

"Like it or not," says the introduction to this compilation of eighteen leaders' and scholars' thoughts on emotional intelligence, "leaders need to manage the mood of their organizations. The most gifted leaders accomplish that by using a mysterious blend of psychological abilities known as emotional intelligence. They're self-aware and empathetic. They can read and regulate their own emotions while intuitively grasping how others feel and gauging their organization's emotional state… Wisely and compassionately deployed, emotional intelligence spurs leaders, their people, and their organizations to superior performance; naively or maliciously applied, it can paralyze leaders or allow them to manipulate followers for personal gain."

Some of these insights from the business world have direct relevance to leading schools. Here are some excerpts with particular relevance to school leadership:

• *A definition* – These are the commonly agreed-upon elements of emotional intelligence (from a 1998 *Harvard Business Review* article by Daniel Goleman):

- *Self-awareness* – the ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions, and drives, as well as their effect on others.
- *Self-regulation* – the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods; the propensity to suspend judgment, to think before acting.
- *Motivation* – a passion for work for reasons that go beyond money or status; a propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence.
- *Empathy* – the ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people; skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions.
- *Social skill* – proficiency in managing relationships and building networks; an ability to find common ground and build rapport.

• *E.Q. is learnable* – Emotional intelligence can be learned and improved at any age, says Daniel Goleman, the psychology professor and author who first popularized the term in a book of the same name. On average, a person's E.Q. tends to increase with age, but not necessarily in all areas. Goleman has found that many leaders, especially those who have just been promoted, lack empathy.

• *What's needed to improve* – Goleman says that a person's E.Q. can develop if he or she is given the right information (a candid assessment of their strengths and

limitations from people who know them well and have their trust), guidance (a specific developmental plan that uses naturally occurring workplace encounters as the laboratory for learning), and support (someone to talk to as they practice how to handle different situations, what to do when they've blown it, and how to learn from those setbacks).

• *Motivation is the key to improvement* – Nobody should say "I could never be good at this, so why bother?" The central issue isn't a lack of ability to change; it's the lack of motivation to change. (Richard Boyatzis, Case Western Reserve management professor)

• *Aptitude helps* – Emotional intelligence can be learned, but it helps to have some basic ability up front. Leaders should select for people who already show the basic qualities. What are some key elements? "Look for those with a genuine, instinctive interest in other people's experiences and mental world. It's an absolute prerequisite for developing emotional intelligence." (Elkhonon Goldberg, neurology professor at New York University School of Medicine)

• *Self-awareness is key* – "Of all a leader's competencies," says Andrea Jung, chair and CEO of Avon Products, "self-awareness is the most important. Without it, you can't identify the impact you have on others." Her biggest concern is that people will not tell her the things she would rather not hear. She seeks out people who can tell her "the good, the bad, and the ugly" about the company. She also relies on her children to give her good "360-degree feedback." Jung says she grew up in a traditional Chinese family with an emphasis on being submissive, caring, and averse to conflict. But she feels she has developed her emotional intelligence so that she can be empathetic and still make tough decisions.

One way to measure your self-awareness is to ask a trusted friend or colleague to make a list of your strengths and weaknesses while you make your own list. The bigger the gap between the two lists, the more work you have to do. (Howard Book, psychiatry professor at the University of Toronto)

• *Self-control is also important* – Howard Book also says that it's important to be able to "monitor and control strong but subliminal biases that all of us harbor and that can skew our decision making."

• *Situational awareness is key* – One component of emotional intelligence is being able to "sniff out the signals in an environment and figure out what's going on without being told." People can develop this skill by working in jobs in which they're

exposed to a wide range of people and need to watch their reactions. (Robert Goffee, organizational behavior professor at London Business School)

• *Balance is important* – Goffee also stresses that leaders need to keep from over-developing or over-emphasizing one emotional intelligence skill over others. "If you're extremely self-aware but short on empathy, you might come off as self-obsessed. If you're excessively empathetic, you risk being too hard to read. If you're great at self-management but not very transparent, you might seem inauthentic." Goffee says that it's possible to get too close to the troops: sometimes you need to rein in the emotional intelligence, step back, and make sure you're seeing the bigger picture.

• *Meditation might help* – William George, former chairman and CEO of Medtronic, said that in 1975 his wife dragged him, kicking and screaming, to a weekend course in Transcendental Meditation. "I've meditated 20 minutes, twice a day, ever since," he says. "Mediation makes me calmer, more focused, and better able to discern what's really important. Leaders, by the very nature of their positions, are under extreme pressure to keep up with the many voices clamoring for their attention. Indeed, many leaders lose their way. It is only through a deep self-awareness that you can find your inner voice and listen to it."

• *Lead by listening and following* – Michael Tilson Thomas, music director of the San Francisco Symphony, says "My approach is to be in tune with the people with whom I'm working… Sometimes I lead. Other times I'll say, 'Violas, I'm giving you the lead. Listen to one another, and find your way with this phrase.' I'm not trying to drill people, military style, to play music exactly together. I'm trying to encourage them to play as one, which is a different thing. I'm guiding the performance, but I'm aware that they're executing it. It's their sinews, their heartstrings. I'm there to help them do it in a way that is convincing and natural for them but also a part of the larger design… A conductor's authority rests on two things: the orchestra's confidence in the conductor's insightful knowledge of the whole score; and the orchestra's faith in the conductor's good heart, which seeks to inspire everyone to make music that is excellent, generous, and sincere."

• *E.Q. is necessary but not sufficient* – Ronald Heifetz, Harvard Kennedy School of Government Professor and consultant, says "Emotional intelligence is necessary for leadership but not sufficient… Leadership couples emotional intelligence with the courage to raise the tough questions, challenge people's assumptions about strategy and operations – and risk losing their goodwill." Heifetz worries about leaders with

high emotional intelligence who don't ask the deeper questions. People with high E.Q. get lots of emotional gain from the adoring crowd, and that becomes an end in itself. "They're satisfying their own hungers and vulnerabilities: their need to be liked; their need for power and control; or their need to be needed, to feel important, which renders them vulnerable to grandiosity."

"Leading by Feel" in *Harvard Business Review*, January 2004 (p. 27-37)

2. Effective Classroom Management in Harlem

The no-nonsense discipline approach used by Timothy Hearn, a high-school chemistry teacher at Frederick Douglass Academy in New York City, is described in vivid detail in this cover article in the current *Teacher Magazine*. Hearn lays down the law on rules and classroom procedures for the entire first week of school, and sticks to them religiously from then on. "The bottom line is, my system allows me to teach," he says. Once it's in place, he finds he can devote entire periods to content, almost completely avoiding the undercurrent of chatter and inattention and low-level chaos that spoils learning in so many other classrooms (and his own when he first started teaching). Virtually all students pass his class, with half taking the rigorous Regents exams and more than 85 percent passing on the first try.

At first blush, Hearn seems shy, stiff, overly serious, even geekish (pocket protector, stopwatch around his neck, terrorism kit on his belt). But he quickly wins students over with a combination of strictness and (literally) explosive chemistry demonstrations. "The teacher shouldn't try to be our friend," said Danielle, one of his students. "We have a sixth sense and know that if the teacher isn't on point for the first five minutes, we can get away with stuff all year."

Early in his teaching career, Hearn groped for a way to avoid getting caught up in heated exchanges with students around differing interpretations of what was involved in "doing your work." His "positive behavior support" system, which clearly defines the overt behaviors he expects, was originally inspired by Randall Sprick's book, *Discipline in the Secondary Classroom*. These are the key components:

- Students are required to sit right down and complete the "Do Now", a five-minute assignment written on the board, at the beginning of every class.
- Lateness to class, chewing gum, and violations of the school's dress code, etc. are immediately challenged and dealt with.

- Students adhere to narrowly-defined acceptable behavior in the two modes of behavior in the classroom:
    - *Working independently* (during lectures, demonstrations, and tests): work quietly, no talking; sit in assigned seats; have pen in hand ready to take notes; maintain eye contact with the speaker when you're not writing; ask relevant questions or make appropriate comments after raising your hand and waiting to be recognized; show academic posture (sit up straight, derriere against the back of the chair).
    - *Working cooperatively* (during class discussions, group work, and lab experiments): low voices, cooperative tone, problem-solving, work completed in a reasonable time.
- Class participation is worth 20 percent of students' grade on every report card, making it easier for a struggling student to pass if he or she plays by the rules.
- Hearn carries a clipboard with his Weekly Record Sheet and constantly notes students' positive and negative behaviors. Students begin each class with an automatic 80 percent score and each positive or negative action raises or lowers their grade for the class.
- Every Monday, the previous week's grades are posted, so students know exactly where they stand. Hearn describes himself as "a fair and consistent dictator to judge whether an action is rude or disrespectful."

Hearn says that scripting positive behavior helps students know exactly what is expected. "Ironically," he said, "the system works best for the worst-behaved students because it teaches them precisely what to do on a moment-to-moment basis and rewards them for it with grade points."

Hearn's behavior-based system is well-regarded in his school, although not every colleague feels the need to implement all aspects of it. One fellow teacher said, "I always tell teachers with classroom management problems to see Hearn. It's a great system for a novice, a timid veteran, or anyone in trouble." Gregory Hodge, the principal, says that university education programs are decades behind in preparing new teachers for today's classrooms. "They read all this theory crap," he says, "but don't learn anything about the nuts and bolts of getting students to perform academically when they don't want to."

Hearn noted, "I want to get all my students excited about science and reach those with the least ability. I know I'm anal-retentive in the classroom, but it's the best way I've found to get challenging students to focus on the work instead of their problems

at home or people of the opposite sex across the table. After all, science is about precise procedures, observations, and attention to detail, which is exactly what my management system is based on. One misstep in the lab, and you can blow it up. The same is true in life, especially for these kids."

"Point Guard" by Patrick McCloskey in *Teacher Magazine*, January/February 2004 (p. 30-36) http://www.teachermagazine.org/tmstory.cfm?slug=04point.h15

3. How Principals Can Hire – and Keep – the Best Teachers

Quite apart from the No Child Left Behind requirement that schools hire only "highly qualified" teachers, the importance of excellent classroom instruction is well-established. Studies have shown that good teachers can improve student achievement by as much as an extra grade level during a school year, and the effects are cumulative: a Texas study found that three consecutive years with effective teachers can result in progress from the 59th percentile in fourth grade to the 76th in sixth grade (while a similar group of students assigned to three less effective teachers went from the 60th percentile to the 42nd). A "value-added" study in Tennessee found that low-achieving students gained about three times more than those taught by the least effective teachers.

How can principals spot effective teachers? The research is not definitive, but Jennifer King Rice of the University of Maryland says that key factors include subject-area knowledge, an undergraduate major in the subject taught, and knowledge of pedagogy. "I would be reluctant to hire anyone with no experience or no coursework in teaching methods," said Rice. On the other hand, she thinks that advanced degrees are not critical unless they are closely aligned with what teachers will be teaching.

From other studies and principals, these are additional factors to be looking for in hiring teachers (drawing on references and interviews):

- The match of the candidate to your school; does the candidate have the skills and personality to handle the kids in your setting?
- A demonstrated ability to work in teams with other teachers;
- A belief that all students can learn at high levels;
- The ability to be an authority figure in the classroom – the ability "to be adult".

Martin Haberman of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee has developed an interview designed to identify effective urban teachers. The Haberman Urban Teacher Selection Interview has been used to hire 30,000 teachers in 160 cities, and Haberman says that follow-up studies suggest these hires have performed at least as well as

other teachers and remain in the profession longer. The Haberman interview is designed to get at a prospective teacher's belief system in seven key areas. "How much teachers know is important," says Haberman, "but it only matters if you can relate to kids. If knowing stuff was all that matters, college professors could teach middle school kids." These are the qualities that Haberman's interview focuses on [there are two other characteristics of "star" urban teachers for which Haberman found it impossible to devise effective interview questions]:

- *Persistence* – Star teachers take responsibility for the success of every child and keep working to find better ways of reaching kids who are not learning.
- *Approach to authority* – Star teachers do whatever they can to engage students in learning, even if it means going against district policies (but they have to know when to back off).
- *Application of generalizations* – Star teachers put their beliefs about teaching and learning into practice in their classrooms.
- *Approach to "at-risk" students* – Star teachers do not make excuses for social and economic factors outside the school; they believe that schools and teachers are responsible for getting results from all students.
- *Professional vs. personal orientation* – Star teachers feel strongly about their students, but they do not think that loving them (or being loved by them) is a prerequisite for getting results.
- *Burnout* – Star teachers use support networks to help withstand the inevitable pressures they face in large, bureaucratic school districts.
- *Fallibility* – Star teachers know that they will make mistakes in the classroom, including serious ones involving human relations.

Observing a candidate teach a sample lesson is an effective way of getting a handle on a candidate's beliefs, knowledge, and skills. In Michigan, an unusually high number of new teachers (29 percent) had done student teaching in the school where they were eventually hired, and new teachers in Michigan reported a relatively high degree of "fit" in their schools. But nationally, few schools give candidates the chance to demonstrate their skills. One study in four states put the number at only 7.5 percent.

It's also crucial to see if the teacher is a good match for the school. Candidates should be asked about their own expectations of the school and be given a chance to get a clear picture of the school's culture and values. This will affect whether a teacher stays (29 percent of teachers leave teaching in the first three years). Teacher

attrition is one of the major factors in how much hiring a principal has to do (see quote above).

Many principals, especially in urban districts, hire teachers so late in the year that they can't be selective. One study found that 62 percent of teachers in four states were hired within 30 days of the start of their teaching, and 33 percent were hired after the school year had already begun. A recent report from the New Teacher Project identified three systemic factors in late teacher hiring:

- Allowing teachers to notify schools that they are leaving as late as August;
- Union contracts that grant veteran teachers the right to vacant positions;
- Budget uncertainties that prevent principals from filling vacancies earlier.

This suggests some obvious reforms: requiring earlier vacancy notices, transfer requests, and budget allocations and setting limits on the ability of senior teachers to "bump" less-experience teachers. Several districts have done some or all of this: Clark County (Nevada), San Diego, Boston, and Rochester (New York).

"Landing the 'Highly Qualified Teacher" by Robert Rothman in *Harvard Education Letter*, January/February 2004 (Vol. 20, #1, p. 6-8). The study "New Teachers' Experience of Hiring" is available at http://www.newteacherproject.org/report.html. For further information about the Haberman Interview, go to http://www.altcert.org. "Teacher Quality: Understanding the Effectiveness of Teacher Attributes" is available at http://www.epinet.org/content.cfm/books_teacher_quality_execsum_intro.

4. Good Dual-Language Programs for Immigrant Children and Parents

This article describes several preschool programs that have been highly successful in boosting the academic achievement of poor, primarily Latino children. The AVANCE program (with eleven chapters in Texas and California) focuses on getting immigrant parents involved in their children's education from the very beginning. Sanjay Mathur, director of the El Paso chapter, says, "We stress to parents that their child's first three years are a critical time for development… we talk to them about how important it is that they find time to talk to their children, listen to their problems, take them to the library, and read to them on a regular basis. Ultimately, when they realize how much they are helping their children, they become empowered."

AVANCE recruits parents for Even Start family literacy classes that are mostly housed in local elementary schools so that preschool children and parents can adjust to the school environment before children enter kindergarten. Parents take up to 23 hours a week of ESL, GED, and parenting classes a week while their infants and

toddlers are cared for in a high-quality day-care center across the hall. "The program is truly wonderful," said Carmen Ramirez, an El Paso mother who earned her GED through the program. "It has helped us to learn more English, and I have become a much better mother."

AVANCE uses a dual-language approach so that Spanish speakers develop skills in their native language and in English. "[S]ometimes people think of literacy as only English literacy," says Mathur. "I think that's narrow. Research has shown that children who develop a high level of literacy in their home language are subsequently more adept at transferring that literacy to English." The dual-language approach can mitigate the feeling of isolation that immigrant children may feel in school by fostering home-school connections. "Immigrant children often grow up in a split world, encountering a vastly different culture at school than they do at home. If they are foreigners in English-only classes at school, they likewise may also begin to feel estranged at home, where their culture and language are different from what they encounter each day in school."

The dual language approach also helps address the problems of children who have poorly-developed Spanish as well as English skills. "[Children] must learn [English] in order to succeed, and they must learn it as soon as possible," said early childhood educator Blanca Enriquez. "But not at the expense of losing their home language. The home language is the one that promotes and maintains culture and the values [across] generations of family members. That is so important. It is also important that we are teaching children not to speak half English and half Spanish but to develop each language fully."

The article concludes with a description of the turnaround of Hacienda Heights School in El Paso using the dual language approach. Overcoming initial parent resistance, principal Marvyn Luckett started with a ratio of 80/10/10 (Spanish, English, and a third language, either French or Japanese) and gradually moved students to a ratio of 45/45/10 by fifth grade. Students learn science and social studies in English and literacy and math in Spanish, with a transition to English in third grade once students learn to read in Spanish. The school went from rock bottom in 1996 to winning a National Blue Ribbon award in 2000-01, and boasted TAKS (the new, more rigorous Texas assessment) pass rates of 93 percent in writing, 89 percent in reading, and 90 percent in math, with higher scores for LEP than non-LEP students.

"Bringing Parents on Board" by Sue Miller Wiltz in *Harvard Education Letter*, January/February 2004 (Vol. 20, #1, p. 1-5)

5. Doing Meaningful Jobs in School Motivates High-Risk Students

Written by a veteran Colorado principal, this article describes "Christopher", a first grader who entered mid-year with a warning phone call from his previous teacher: Watch out! He's "behind academically, frequently cruel and hurtful to other students, and rarely completed schoolwork." Christopher quickly lived up to his advance billing: he pushed other children down, pulled chairs out from under them, and took what he wanted by force. He distracted his classmates during independent work time and hurt them when they wouldn't play with him. Punishment only made his behavior worse.

A staff meeting was called to brainstorm ways to deal with Christopher. His teacher mentioned that the only time he behaved appropriately was when he was given a prestigious responsibility such as passing out papers or taking a message to the office. While resolving to hold Christopher accountable for misbehavior, his teacher decided to try giving him such jobs on a daily basis.

There was an immediate, dramatic improvement in his behavior. His hurting behaviors decreased and were completely gone within a month. He did better at staying on task and following directions. His work improved, and success in one area bred success in others. The principal and teachers were so pleased that they gradually began to use the "meaningful work" approach with other high-risk students, with equally positive results.

The school's transition to this more effective approach happened only gradually. Why? First, because the traditional punishment system, ineffective though it was, had become ingrained in staff members. "It took time and experience for us to rethink our way of dealing with students and to accept the fact that forming a relationship with students, giving them responsibility, and praising them for a job well done would motivate them to climb to even higher heights."

Second, because the traditional punishment system *did* work with occasional, less severe discipline offenders. A stern talk or mild punishment was usually all it took to straighten out students with problems less serious than the Christophers of the world. Less severe kids were highly motivated to avoid that call home. But with Christopher-level cases, "punishment was an opportunity for much-needed adult attention… For Christopher, a call home was an opportunity to get his parents to stop their chaotic life for a moment and pay attention to him. He was so starved for attention that he was motivated to get it in any way possible." (see quote above).

Over time, the staff developed guidelines for admitting students to the Meaningful Work program. They were also concerned that if only "bad" kids were doing the Meaningful Work tasks, they would be seen as jobs for losers. So teachers gave jobs to all types of students. "We made sure, however, that every child we saw as being at risk had a job, often alongside these popular, successful students. This provided them with a positive sense of identify and strong motivation to succeed."

Over a decade of using the Meaningful Work approach, the school developed a list of more than a hundred jobs that students could do in 10-20 minutes a day, always making sure that the job had visibility around the school and involved contact with a caring adult. Among them: raising the flag, unlocking doors, being the office assistant, acting as answering machine technician, collecting coffee cups, delivering lunch tickets, and acting as pre-school assistants. Staff members made a point of praising students for doing their jobs, sometimes using the "overheard praise" strategy (talking about what a difference the student was making to the school within earshot of the student in question).

The formula for success in this program was: Challenging, prestigious jobs + good instruction + success + recognition = motivation to try more difficult tasks.

"Motivate At-Risk Students with Meaningful Work" by B.J. Wise in *Leadership Compass*, Fall 2003 (Vol. 1, p.1-3), condensed in *Education Digest*, Dec. 2003 (Vol. 69, #4, p. 39-42). Wise's book, *Meaningful Work*, is available at http://www.sopriswest.com.

6. Watching Your Back as a Leader

Leaders can be led astray by followers in a variety of ways. First, good leaders can end up making poor decisions because well-meaning colleagues are united and persuasive about a course of action. This happens most often to leaders who attract and empower strong people. Such leaders need to be skeptical of the majority view and push followers to examine their opinions more closely.

Second, leaders can get in trouble because they are surrounded by followers who fool them with flattery and isolate them from uncomfortable views. Charismatic leaders are most prone to this pitfall, and they need to make an extra effort to unearth disagreement and find followers who are not afraid to ask hard questions. It also helps to get "360-degree feedback", and having an external coach can also help get to the brutal facts.

Third, unscrupulous and ambitious followers can encroach on the authority of the leader, making him or her little more than a figurehead with responsibility and no

power. The key to avoiding this is to communicate and live a positive set of values, be a straightforward leader, and cultivate like-minded followers.

Here is a summary of six ways to counter the "wayward influences" described above:

- *Keep vision and values front and center*. Be clear of what the main track is; then it's harder to get side-tracked.
- *Make sure people disagree*. Most people form opinions too quickly and give them up too slowly.
- *Cultivate truth tellers*. Make sure there are people around you who you can trust to tell you what you need to hear, no matter how unpopular or unpalatable.
- *Do as you would have done to you*. Followers look at what you do more than what you say. Set a good ethical climate with our actions and be sure your followers have clear boundaries for their actions.
- *Honor your intuition*. If you think you're being manipulated, you're probably right.
- *Delegate, don't desert*. Share control and empower your staff, but remember who is ultimately responsible for outcomes. As a former U.S. president said of nuclear arm control, "Trust, but verify."

"When Followers Become Toxic" by Lynn Offermann, *Harvard Business Review*, January 2004 (p. 34-60)

7. Short Items:

• ***Effective math programs for migrant children*** – A University of Texas at Austin study identified the characteristics of school programs that were successful at boosting the math achievement of migrant students:

- *Teacher collaboration* – Teachers worked in teams to review students' test scores, set and reflect on goals, and focus on self-evaluation, concentrating their energies on *how* to teach rather than *what* to teach.
- *The same high expectations for migrant students as for others* – Teachers didn't do anything different for migrant students as they did for others. The attitude was, "We don't teach these kids as migrants, we teach them as students who need to learn math."
- *Student-centered instruction focused on problem-solving* – Teachers made extensive use of tutors and peer tutoring and used real-world math scenarios such as

buying things in a store or figuring out how much wallpaper to buy to decorate a room.

- *Ongoing cumulative review* – The curriculum spiraled with teachers covering the same math objective four or five times during the year, helping students make connections between key concepts.

"Teaching Math to Migrant Students: Lessons from Successful Districts" by Meino Makkonen, *Harvard Education Letter*, January/February 2004 (Vol. 20, #1, p. 5). The full study is "Successful Migrant Students: The Case of Mathematics" in Journal of Curriculum and Supervision (2003, Vol. 18, #4, p. 306-333); no e-link is available.

• ***Book reviews*** – Yesterday's *New York Times* reviewed three recent education books: *Final Test: The Battle for Adequacy in America's Schools* by Peter Schrag, *The Flickering Mind: The False Promise of Technology in the Classroom and How Learning Can be Saved* by Todd Oppenheimer, and *No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning* by Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom. The reviewer said that all three books do a better job analyzing their respective issues than giving detailed solutions, but concluded that each is important in its own right. Here's what he feels we can get from them:

- Spend more money on schools (Schrag);
- Spend it more intelligently (with a skeptical eye toward computers) (Oppenheimer);
- Keep the children most in need squarely in our sights (the Thernstroms)

"Tales Out of School" by Timothy Hacsi, *New York Times* Book Review, January 4, 2004 (p. 19) http://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/04/books/review/04HACSIT.html

Do you have feedback? Is anything missing?

If you have comments or suggestions, or if you saw an article or web item in the last week that you think should be covered, please e-mail: kim.marshall8@verizon.net

About the Marshall Memo

Mission and focus:

This weekly memo aims to keep busy principals, teachers, and other educators very well-informed on important research, ideas, and developments in K-12 education. Kim Marshall, a former Boston teacher and administrator, is your "designated reader," searching through a wide range of publications the week they come out, zeroing in on the articles that are most relevant and useful to improving teaching and learning at the school level, and summarizing them in a brief e-mail. Target topics include the following:

• *School leadership* – Building a professional learning community; effective teamwork; effective schools practices; supervision and evaluation of teachers; time management.

• *Effective teaching* – Key variables associated with high student achievement; professional development of teachers; teacher leadership and career ladders; multiple intelligences and brain research.

• *Curriculum* – Alignment and planning with the end in sight; teaching for understanding; new ideas in reading, writing, and math.

• *Assessment* – Aligned formative and summative assessments; using data and student work for continuous improvement; graphic display of student achievement data; standardized testing and the debate on standards.

• *Closing the gap* – Effective strategies to close the racial/economic achievement gap; the innate-ability/intelligence/effective effort debate; safety-net programs.

• *Positive school culture* – Student discipline; social-emotional learning; moral development; parent involvement; and community partnerships.

• *And…* – New areas of research; upcoming television and radio programs on education.

Publications covered:

(those read this week are underlined)

American Education Research Journal
American Educator
ASCD SmartBrief
Atlantic Monthly
Bay State Banner
Boston Globe
Commonwealth Magazine
Curriculum/Education Update (ASCD)
Ed. Magazine (Harvard School of Education)
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Elementary School Journal
Harpers
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Education Review
New York Times
New Yorker
PEN Weekly NewsBlast
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal Magazine
Psychology Today
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Review of Educational Research
Teachers College Record
Teacher Magazine
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