Marshall Memo 159

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
November 6, 2006

In This Issue:

Quotes of the Week

"We don't know what works until after it has."

Frederick Hess in *Education Week*, Nov. 1, 2006 (Vol. 26, #10, p. 40)

"If it's the case that reading scores could rise if parents pushed their kids to do more leisure reading at home or took the television out of the bedroom, why not do it?"

Ronald Ferguson (see item #1)

"You've got to understand what they don't understand and what their misunderstandings are, and you've got to have the confidence to say, 'If these children tell me what they are thinking, I can clear up any confusions that they have, and at the end of the day they're going to understand what I am trying to teach them."

Ronald Ferguson (*ibid.*)

"Both boys and girls should be expected to excel in all academic subjects and helped to do so. How individuals should be helped can't be determined by their gender."

Daniel Willingham (see item #2)

"One of the most remarkable things about American classrooms is how little real teaching goes on there."

Richard Elmore (see item #3)

"In the breadth of its domain, in its union of the mathematical and the poetic, and in its involvement of the whole human being (body, heart, and mind), music is an essential liberating art."

Peter Kalkavage (see item #6)

"Collaboration by invitation never works."

Rick DuFour (see item #5)

1. Ronald Ferguson On the Black-White Achievement Gap

In this thoughtful interview in the *Harvard Education Letter*, Harvard professor Ronald Ferguson describes the work he's been doing on the achievement gap among black and white students whose parents have similar levels of education. Some highlights:

• Ferguson says that the gap closed considerably between 1970 and the late 1980s, but there has been stagnation and backsliding since 1990. "There's been enough progress to establish firmly that these gaps are not written in stone," says Ferguson. "Even IQ gaps are narrowing… Achievement gaps are not facts of nature. They are mostly because of differences in life experience. We've got to figure out how to get all kids the kinds of experiences that really maximize access to middle-class skills. That's the challenge."

• Ferguson rejects the idea that we have to wait for social inequalities to be dealt with before the achievement gap will narrow. That's a worthwhile long-term goal, he says, but it's not either/or. "I think we can make substantial progress by affecting home intellectual climate and lifestyle as they affect achievement… Even in school, the notion is to try to provoke lifestyle changes that cause people to be a bit more focused on cultivating a love of learning among kids."

• Ferguson bridles at the idea that talking about lifestyle is blaming the victim. "I don't care whose fault it is really. If it's the case that reading scores could rise if parents pushed their kids to do more leisure reading at home or took the television out of the bedroom, why not do it? Or why not at least tell parents that that's an option that they have? I think most parents would want to know." Ferguson says that his research shows that a television in a child's bedroom is associated with sleepiness in class, and it concerns him that 80 percent of African-American students in his studies have televisions in their bedrooms – a much higher percentage than other student groups. Additional home behaviors that make a difference are the amount of leisure reading and the number of books in the home.

• "Still," continues Ferguson, "virtually every school can make progress even if the family achieves zero change. They'll do better if parents do more, but no school, no institution, none of us is as good as we can be. Pretty much every school has a way to improve… There's a spiral of mutual causation that can lead classrooms to be either terrible places or really nice places. A lot of it you can characterize as lifestyle."

• Ferguson and other colleagues have organized the Tripod Project, which seeks to close the achievement gap in a number of diverse school districts by focusing on three elements: content, pedagogy, and relationships. One of their ideas is a one-hour protocol called Teaching the Hard Stuff. It consists of teachers reviewing papers of students who have done

poorly and figuring out what they didn't know, why they didn't know it, and how to alter instruction to help them do better.

"Teachers discover all kinds of things," says Ferguson. "At least half the time the problem is with the way the assignment was written: the assignment wasn't really testing what the teacher was trying to test; or there was a vocabulary word that had two meanings; or the context for the problem was a context the students weren't familiar with and so the student couldn't solve the problem." Ferguson gives this example of a Pythagorean theorem problem with insufficient scaffolding: How far does a catcher need to throw the ball in order to throw out a runner who is trying to steal second base if the bases are 90 feet apart? If students don't know that there's a right angle at first base, they can't solve the problem. "Where schools may contribute to the achievement gap is by not scaffolding appropriately for different kids," says Ferguson, "not differentiating instruction in ways that are grounded in what kids actually bring to the classroom."

• Ferguson talks about the difficulty some students have admitting when they don't understand something – especially African-American students who are worried all the way through school about what others think about their intelligence. "If you are concerned with whether you think people think you're smart," says Ferguson, "you are not going to speak up and show your ignorance as often. So if what the teacher just said doesn't make sense to you – particularly if you are in a racially integrated classroom and you think the other kids are ahead of you – you are more likely to misbehave and pretend you weren't trying anyway, because it's better to look lazy than stupid."

• Ferguson wrestles with the paradox of misbehavior among African-American students. His studies show that black students are just as likely as white students, sometimes more likely, to endorse the statement, "My friends think it's important to work hard and get high grades in school." But black students have conflicting motivations and conflicting pressures, says Ferguson. "Sometimes they're just trying to fit in with friends, to be liked inside a culture of behavior that no one student created and no one student can singlehandedly reform. They are part of a peer culture where certain patterns of behavior do have oppositional elements, but they are not opposition to high achievement. Paradoxically, their assertiveness is a quest for respect: It shows opposition to the kinds of subordination and toleration of disrespect that blacks have had to put up with over centuries. Kids are saying, 'We're not taking that… You can't face me down in front of one of my friends and yell at me or fuss at me and have me not say something back to you.'"

• Black students report spending just as much time on homework as their white peers, but their homework completion rate is much lower. They also report that their parents show just as much interest in their school day as do the parents of white students. But many teachers, seeing less homework handed in, more misbehavior, and more defiance, conclude that black students and their parents don't care about learning. Ferguson says this is simply not true, but it feeds a cycle of disrespect, misbehavior, and low achievement.

• Ferguson doesn't buy the "acting white" theory of black underachievement, but there is an exception that has to do with a student's personal style. "In order to fit in with your

friends," he explains, "you don't have to be a low achiever or resist high grades, but you do need to be able to speak in informal settings the way kids speak in informal settings, you do have to be the kind of kid who doesn't tolerate disrespect without a response even if it comes from an adult in an authority position. Among black kids, self-esteem rises as grades rise all the way through an A, *except* if it's the kid who doesn't fit in socially, in which case – if it's a male – self-esteem drops as they move from a B to an A average. This is not true of white kids."

• Ferguson's studies show that black students frequently tease peers who make mistakes in class, especially in classrooms with fewer than 25 percent white and/or Asian students. The victims of teasing worry about not measuring up to classmates, and anxiety interferes with concentration. A lot of this teasing, which starts as early as first grade, happens without the teacher's knowledge.

• At the beginning of every school year, over 80 percent of students in any classroom say they plan to do their best all year long. But every year, many drift away from that aspiration. This happens in classrooms where students don't feel the teacher is there to help them and believe the teacher doesn't have high standards. What kind of classrooms will produce the highest achievement among African-American students? "High help/high perfectionism" classrooms, says Ferguson. Students know that their teachers are there to help them *and* students know that their standards are very high.

• "When working with kids who come from difficult backgrounds," concludes Ferguson, "and who don't bring a whole lot for you to scaffold on some of the time, you've really got to understand these kids. You've got to understand what they don't understand and what their misunderstandings are, and you've got to have the confidence to say, 'If these children tell me what they are thinking, I can clear up any confusions that they have, and at the end of the day they're going to understand what I am trying to teach them."

"Recent Research on the Achievement Gap: How Lifestyle Factors and Classroom Culture Affect Black-White Differences" – An interview with Ronald Ferguson in *Harvard Education Letter*, November/December 2006 (Vol. 2, #6, p. 4-6), no e-link available

2. How Relevant is Brain Research to Educators?

In his "Ask the Cognitive Scientist" column in the Fall *American Educator*, University of Virginia professor Daniel Willingham casts a skeptical eye on the current chatter about "brain-based learning." Yes, we are getting a much clearer idea of how the brain works from new brain imaging technology, and yes, this research is very exciting to researchers. But the payoff for educators, says Willingham, won't come for another five or ten years. The research so far has little practical value for educators.

Take the case of an 8-year-old boy who can't read. "A neuroscientist could give his teacher an image of his brain and explain that the wrong areas of his brain are active when he tries to read," writes Willingham. "A literacy coach or school psychologist could give the student a 45-minute assessment and then explain to his teacher that he doesn't have a good grasp of the sounds that the letters make. As a teacher, which test results would you rather

have? The brain image might be interesting, but it does not provide any information about how to help the boy read."

Willingham goes on to puncture three brain-related notions that have made their way into the conventional wisdom.

• *Myth #1: School is designed for left-brained students.* Over the last three decades, the popular media picked up on speculative research that seemed to draw a distinction between the logical-sequential left brain and the artistic-creative right brain. There have been scores of articles and books applying these supposed findings to the classroom, and a cottage industry has provided programs and products geared to left- and right-brained students. It's all baloney, says Willingham. The most recent research shows the following: "Barring severe brain damage or radical surgery, all of us are whole-brain thinkers… The broad participation of both hemispheres in most cognitive tasks became especially apparent in the 1990s when brain imaging data (e.g., from fMRIs and PET scans) of normal subjects became widely available – both hemispheres participate in virtually every task."

Why haven't these findings percolated down to the classroom? "I can't say," says Willingham, "but I can reassure educators that they need not be concerned with left- versus right-brain distinctions… Efforts to tailor instruction should be based on a careful consideration of what the educational content calls for and on students' individual needs – not on faulty schemes for characterizing two kinds of thinkers."

• *Myth #2: Schools are designed to suit girls' brains.* Willingham says the latest research finds only small differences between girls' and boys' brains, and the findings are averages that don't apply to many individual students. The research has also been misinterpreted in some cases. For example, studies show that girls, on average, have a bigger hippocampus (the area of the brain that deals with learning and memory) than boys. It seemed logical to conclude that having a larger hippocampus *caused* girls to have better memories. Not true, says Willingham. "The assumption that the bigger hippocampus causes the better memory is an oversimplification… because your behavior can change your brain. For example, researchers know that if you memorize a lot of material, your hippocampus will get bigger." It could be that other factors, including subtle social pressures and teacher expectations, encourage girls to work harder in school, which makes their hippocampuses get bigger.

"All told," says Willingham, "it seems that neuroscience has brought more confusion than clarity to the debate about educating boys and girls." It's certainly true that boys are having more difficulty in school, on average, than girls. "But the surest way to pursue that issue is to investigate data that emerge from the school setting – not by looking to neuroscience… Both boys and girls should be expected to excel in all academic subjects and helped to do so. How individuals should be helped can't be determined by their gender."

• *Myth #3: Young children's brains must have lots of sensory stimulation – and classical music is especially important.* Again, the popular media misinterpreted research. In the case of stimulation, studies showed that kittens who were totally deprived of visual stimulation in a critical phase of kittenhood suffered permanent cognitive impairment. The idea that no stimulation is bad was transmogrified into the conclusion that more stimulation must be

good. But it doesn't work that way, says Willingham. "The fact that deprivation results in a poorly developed sensory system does not mean that extra stimulation beyond what's normal would make the sensory system any better. A baby with two mobiles will not have better vision or better processing of visual information than a baby with one mobile. So long as a baby is not being raised in an inhumane way – deprived of interaction with others and the world around him – his sensory system will function just as well as that of the baby with all the latest sensory-stimulating gadgets."

Willingham goes on to draw a distinction between sensory stimulation, where normal doses will produce normal development, and learning, where more is truly better. "Unlike sensory development," he writes, "which plateaus in early childhood, learning effects are cumulative – the more you know, the easier it is to learn more – so learning things in a rich home environment makes it easier for children to learn still more when they get to school."

As for the idea that listening to Mozart makes people smarter, it was based originally on a study that showed very minor, short-term effects on college students; further research has not provided clear evidence that there is any impact on children.

The problem with applying brain research, concludes Willingham, is that it's very difficult to jump from images of brain functions to practical applications in the classroom. Better to stick to findings from research in classrooms and cognitive psychology. But even here, there's reason for caution. Take practice, for example. Studies have shown that practice is important to memory – but if students are asked to practice too much, they will get bored and their attention will wander (or they'll start acting out). So we always have to ground research findings in common sense observations of the way different elements interact in real classrooms. The same is doubly true for brain research, says Willingham.

He's hopeful that in the next decade, neuroscience will give us practical insights into memory and other brain functions, but in the meantime, educators should view brain research "with a healthy dose of skepticism."

In a sidebar, Willingham focuses on the one area where he thinks brain research *could* be on the verge of a breakthrough: early detection of learning disabilities. Researchers have discovered significant differences in the brain responses of infants who end up being dyslexic. "Early intervention is critical for dyslexia," he says. "Identification of a child who is at risk for reading difficulties before reading instruction begins could be of tremendous use to educators and, of course, to students and their parents."

"'Brain-Based' Learning: More Fact Than Fiction" by Daniel Willingham in *American Educator*, Fall 2006 (Vol. 30, #3, p. 27-33, 40-41)
http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/issues/fall2006/cogsci.htm and
http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/issues/fall2006/cogsidebar.htm

3. Richard Elmore On More Effective Use of Time in American Schools

"One of the most remarkable things about American classrooms is how little real teaching goes on there," says Harvard professor Richard Elmore in this provocative essay in the *Harvard Education Letter*. Observing elementary and secondary classrooms over the years,

Elmore has been struck by how much time teachers spend getting ready to teach, reviewing and re-teaching things that have already been taught, giving instructions to students, overseeing student seatwork, giving tests, orchestrating administrative tasks, listening to announcements on the intercom, or presiding over dead time – and how little time is spent teaching new material. His estimate is that only 15 minutes of a 55-minute class are typically devoted to what he calls "real" teaching.

Looking at an entire school year, Elmore says that still more time is wasted by testing and test prep, and more still is thrown away in the final "let-down" weeks of the year. By his calculation, there are 2,940 hours of lost instructional time each year, which comes to 3.3 years in a student's K-12 career.

Aren't review, re-teaching, and test preparation legitimate uses of classroom time? Elmore thinks not. "Most review and re-teaching is a consequence of a hopelessly fragmented and disorganized curriculum," he says, "often coupled with extremely weak teaching in the first place. Most test prep is low-level instruction with no discernible curriculum design."

Elmore contrasts this situation to the "strong, parsimonious curriculum" in many other industrialized countries "designed around clear and accessible standards for student learning." This is how time is used in a typical Japanese class: "The teacher begins with a brief introduction to the problem of the day including a short connection to the previous day's work, followed by a combination of individual seatwork, pair work, and group problem-solving, which in turn is followed by students presenting their work and a discussion among the teacher and the students of what the students have produced. All the content is new."

"I am increasingly persuaded that the use of time in classrooms is a measure of the respect adults have for the role of learning in the lives of students," concludes Elmore. "I have also become aware of how profoundly disrespectful schools, and the people who work in them, are of the time and effort they extract from the lives of students and their families, without regard to the value this time adds to students' learning and development… It would be an enormous step forward if adults in schools treated the time that children and their families give to schools as a precious gift rather than an entitlement. The most valuable resource that schools have is the largely unexploited capacity of students to engage in high-level learning. It is the responsibility of adults in schools to make the best possible use of this resource… In all my hours in the classroom, I have yet to see a student refuse to engage in meaningful academic work."

"Three Thousand Missing Hours: Where Does the Instruction Go?" by Richard Elmore in *Harvard Education Letter*, November/December 2006 (Vol. 2, #6, p. 8, 7), no e-link available

4. A New York City High School's Alternative Discipline Process

In this article in *Rethinking Schools*, former teacher Maria Hantzopoulos describes the fairness committee that deals with many disciplinary issues at Humanities Preparatory Academy in New York City. The committee meets whenever a member of the school community believes that someone has violated one of the school's core values:

• Respect for humanity, the intellect, truth, and diversity

• A commitment to peace, justice, and democracy

Anyone can be "taken to fairness" – a student can take another student, a teacher can take a student, and a student can take a teacher. Some students refer peers because they are upset with inappropriate language, disrespect for other students, and cheating. One student took his best friend to fairness because he was worried that he had been missing too much school and would not graduate. A student can even refer himself or herself, which happened when a student broke a window in the school and then decided to turn himself in.

The fairness committee is an *ad hoc* group, consisting of the person who made the referral, the person who was referred, a teacher acting as facilitator, and another teacher and two students who are not familiar with the incident. The school makes an effort to get different staff and students involved at one time or another, which means, says Hantzopoulos, that "the entire school is involved in the process of creating, through dialogue and by consensus, consequences for the violation of the school community norms."

When the committee meets, all members ask questions, listen, and try to uncover the various truths of the incident, with the understanding that the proceedings are confidential. "In many cases," writes Hantzopoulos, "the fairness committee reveals that there was a misunderstanding. Other times, it uncovers a deeper conflict, one that would be better addressed in a different venue (which could be one of the consequences). Often it unearths that a community norm was violated and subsequently begins a process to discuss and analyze the effects of this violation on the individual and the community at large."

In the case of the student who broke the window, the committee discovered that the day before the incident, his family was told that it was being evicted from their shelter and had no place to go. "While this did not fully excuse his actions," says Hantzopoulos, "we were able to discuss more fully and fairly what the consequences should be, as well as discuss more constructive ways to deal with anger." It obviously made no sense to try to get a homeless student to pay for the window, so he was assigned to answer the office phone after school for a month. His advisor and the school's social worker also reached out to his family to offer support.

Not all students who are "taken to fairness" embrace the process. Hantzopoulos tells of one case in which a student named Alex was referred for "jokingly" calling a girl stupid (he had already been referred several times for relentless teasing). In the first part of the meeting, Alex sulked, hung his head, and stared at the table in front of him. After some discussion, one of the student members, who had herself been referred for hurtful teasing in the past, addressed him. "You know," she said, "I have sat exactly where you are sitting. Different people kept taking me here and I kept thinking it wasn't me. It was them. But then, after the fourth or fifth time, I realized that maybe it was something that *I* was doing. Do you think that you actually might have something to do with it?" This exchange, with other factors, brought about a change in Alex's behavior.

"This method of bringing members of the community together validates students as thinkers and decision makers," concludes Hantzopoulos, "and reinforces the idea that they

have a stake and voice in their communities… Student buy-in, feedback, and action are essential in making our school move toward democracy, where people all are respected. Without ways to authentically develop this, we are just paying lip service to democratic ideals."

"Deepening Democracy: How One School's Fairness Committee Offers an Alternative to 'Discipline'" by Maria Hantzopoulos in *Rethinking Schools*, Fall 2006 (Vol. 21, #1, p. 41-43), no e-link available

5. Rick DuFour on Teacher Collaboration for Student Achievement

In this piece in *The Learning Principal*, Rick DuFour declares, "Collaboration by invitation never works." Effective principals have to ensure that every staff member is a contributing member of a collaborative team. "Principals must do more than organize teacher teams and hope for the best," he says. "They must provide the focus, parameters, and support to help teams function effectively." These include:

- Providing time for collaboration in the school day and year.
- Identifying critical questions to guide the work of collaborative teams.
- Asking teams to create products as a result of their collaboration.
- Insisting that teams identify and pursue specific student achievement goals.
- Providing teams with relevant data and information.

DuFour compares a well-led school with a first-rate symphony orchestra. The conductor wants each violinist to improve, but developing those skills will not result in a great orchestra. The conductor also has to get each section of the orchestra working together as a section – and help each musician and each section to hear the music in the same way and have a shared sense of what they are trying to accomplish with each piece of music they play.

"Principals who are staff development leaders function in much the same way," says DuFour. "They want each 3rd-grade teacher to become a better teacher, but they realize that a focus on individual development will not create a great school. They must also help the 3rd-grade team function in ways that strengthen the entire 3rd grade. Most importantly, they must keep everyone in the school committed to a shared vision of improved learning for all."

"Collaboration Is the Key To Unlocking Potential" by Rick DuFour in *The Learning Principal*, November 2006 (Vol. 2, #3, p. 1, 6, 7), no e-link available

6. Music As An Essential "Liberating Art"

In this cover article in the Fall issue of *American Educator*, St. John's College, Maryland music educator Peter Kalkavage argues passionately that music is an essential subject in schools. "As a music teacher," he writes, "I hope that the study of music begets in my students a habit of searching for the causes and details of beautiful things, and that the love of beauty will nourish the love of knowledge and truth. As students' intellects are opened to the power of music, I hope they will strive to imitate in their day-to-day lives the musical virtues

of harmoniousness, proportion, good timing, appropriate flexibility and grace, and 'striking the right note' in thought, speech, feeling, and action."

Kalkavage argues against the common notion that music is a "soft" subject that should be covered for amusement in low-caliber "music appreciation" courses, that musical proficiency is the prerogative of a gifted elite – something that only those with the potential to be professional musicians should pursue seriously. "If studied as a liberal art," he argues, "(i.e., in order for the student to become more inquisitive and reflective and more aware of music's power) rather than as a fine art (i.e., in order for the student to become a musician), music gets students to look beyond surface distinctions in order to seek out deep, underlying harmonies or bonds between things apparently remote. In the breadth of its domain, in its union of the mathematical and the poetic, and in its involvement of the whole human being (body, heart, and mind), music is an essential liberating art."

In an interview sidebar to this article, acclaimed trumpeter Wynton Marsalis shares his views on music education, including this: "The music our children hear on the radio may feel good, like a candy bar feels good, but it has no nutrition. The foundation of any music education cannot be found in the Top 40 this week. That's not how you train the ears of a musician or even a non-musician. That's not how you lead kids into a deeper understanding of who they are or who they will be, which is even more important. We're sending our kids into the world with their skills and talents untapped and underdeveloped. We are doing that; it's not them. We're depriving them of a fundamental part of their educational development, and our nation is really much poorer for it."

"The Neglected Muse: Why Music Is an Essential Liberal Art" by Peter Kalkavage in *American Educator*, Fall 2006 (Vol. 30, #3, p. 10-17, 42-43)
http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/issues/fall2006/muse.htm and
http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/issues/fall2006/marsalis.htm

7. What Makes Formative Assessments Work – and Not Work

In another in a continuing series of paid advertisements in *Education Week*, New Hampshire testing company CEO Stuart Kahl spells out the conditions under which he believes formative assessments will produce significant improvements in student achievement:

• The assessments occur while instruction on a particular learning outcome is still going on.

• The assessments give teachers accurate, rich diagnostic information or descriptive feedback.

• The results are used to make adjustments in instruction that foster better achievement of the desired learning outcome.

Kahl continues to be skeptical about the "benchmark" assessments being purchased by many school districts. He says most are really summative assessments in disguise and aren't being used to refine instruction or help struggling students – which makes them a waste of time and money.

"Experience (Plus Training) Makes the Best Teachers" by Stuart Kahl in a Measured Progress advertisement in *Education Week*, Nov. 1, 2006 (Vol. 26, #10, p. 20), no e-link available

8. Short Items:

a. Free children's books online – The International Children's Digital Library is a website working to make more than 10,000 books in a hundred languages freely available to children around the world. There are currently over 1,500 books in 38 languages, and more are being added every week. Website users can choose among eleven languages (including English, Spanish, French, German, Hebrew, Arabic, Chinese, Filipino/Tagalog, Persian/Farsi, Portuguese, and Thai) to navigate and search.

The creators of this library have a clear philosophy as they choose books. In their words: "Literature is one of society's means of exposing young hearts and minds to new and foreign ideas. Engaging stories help children grow intellectually and emotionally, understand who they are, and inspire them to explore the world around them." The website aims to include particularly high-quality books that provide all children "with direct access to the resources that are essential to enlightened citizenship: literature, knowledge, and information."

The website, http://www.childrenslibrary.org, is being built by the University of Maryland's Human-Computer Interaction Lab, with funding from the Library of Congress, the National Science Foundation, several major donors, and other contributions and in-kind donations.

"Worthwhile Web Sites: The International Children's Digital Library Brings Books in 38 Languages to Your Classroom" in *American Educator*, Fall 2006 (Vol. 30, #3, p. 7)

b. A writing contest with a difference – During the 2006-07 school year, Silly Books is running a contest for children ages 4 to 16. Entries, which must be under 300 words and can be fiction or non-fiction and cover any topic, are judged each month, and winning pieces are professionally animated and posted on the website and sung or read aloud, with each word highlighted in the subtitles. Monthly winners get $25 in addition to the honor of having their work on the Web, and the Grand Prize winner, based on an online vote next summer, will get $200. You can check out the winners so far, and a bunch of other stories delightfully illustrated and read or sung, at http://www.sillybooks.net.

"Children's Writing Contest – Winning Entries to Be Animated and Posted Online" in *American Educator*, Fall 2006 (Vol. 30, #3, p. 7)

c. Two good magazines for children – The editors of *American Educator* recommend two children's magazines that haven't received as much attention as *Sesame Street Magazine*, *National Geographic for Kids*, and *Time for Kids*:

• *ASK* – Geared to elementary students, this magazine has a variety of long and short articles, comics, puzzles, etc. on topics like the solar system, deserts, how money works, the human body, how wild animals stay healthy, and volcanoes. For information on subscribing, go to: http://www.cobblestonepub.com/magazine/ASK.

• *Kids Discover* – Geared to grades 5-8, this magazine is purely academic – no comics, no mention of the latest video games, no distractions – and each issue focuses on a single topic, for example, mummies, atoms, the Underground Railroad, and mountains. For information, go to: http://www.kidsdiscoverteachers.com.

"Motivating Young Minds: The Best Kids' Magazines Turn Natural Curiosity Into Exceptional Knowledge" in *American Educator*, Fall 2006 (Vol. 30, #3, p. 34)
http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/issues/fall2006/Magazines.pdf

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 36 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 scores of 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 (with occasional breaks; there were 50 issues in 2004-05).

Subscriptions:

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- 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 SmartBrief
Atlantic Monthly
CommonWealth Magazine
District Administration
Ed. Magazine
EDge
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Update
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher (TESOL)
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
JESPAR
Jimmy Kilpatrick
Journal of Staff Development
Language Learner
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
Teachers College Record
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