

Marshall Memo 475

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education

March 4, 2013

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Quotes of the Week

“A child who can read but chooses not to has no particular advantage over one who cannot read.”

Peter Dewitz and Jennifer Jones (see item #1)

“The role of the agitator is to create the seed of doubt, the sense of wonder, the feeling of urgency, the cry of outrage.”

Stephen Downes (see item #4)

“Schools, whether or not we choose to admit it, operate on faith in their quality. Such faith is what attracts and motivates capable teachers. It is what draws the most active and concerned parents. And it is what keeps young people showing up each day.”

Jack Schneider in “Rebranding Public Schools” in *Education Week*, Feb. 27, 2013 (Vol. 32, #22, p. 32), www.edweek.org

“Summer forgetting is a problem. However, it is not even close to the problem of forgetting during the school year.”

Lee Jenkins in a letter to *Education Week*, Feb. 27, 2013 (Vol. 32, #22, p. 24)

“I once taught three sections of high school finite math. One of those sections had the best score in the entire district. Another had one of the worst. Same teacher, same lesson plans, same room, same book, same materials, even same time of day (block scheduling)... So what am I worth?”

DASEIN in an e-mail message to *Education Week* responding to Eric Hanushek's article (Feb. 6, 2013), “Why Educators' Wages Must Be Revamped” (*Education Week*, Feb. 27, 2013, Vol. 32, #22, p 25), www.edweek.org

1. Compensating for the Shortcomings of Basal Readers

In this important article in *The Reading Teacher*, Peter Dewitz (Mary Baldwin College, Virginia) and Jennifer Jones (Radford University, Virginia) address what teachers should do when their districts mandate a “research-based” basal reading textbook to meet Common Core State Standards. The good news is that basal reading programs provide an assortment of texts and instructional tools:

- An anthology of reading selections
- A hefty teacher’s edition
- Small leveled readers
- Big books
- Workbooks
- Assessments
- Material on Response to Intervention, ELLs, and differentiation

All this saves a lot of work, so it’s not surprising that 74 percent of American teachers use programs like these, some with fidelity, others picking and choosing.

However, say Dewitz and Jones, “Research on basal reading programs has always cast doubts on their instruction and curriculum design.” Among the flaws, according to researchers, is that basals are weak on explicit instruction in comprehension, metacognition, guided reading questions, building knowledge, and providing enough text to develop fluency and independent reading expertise.

Dewitz and Jones also question basal publishers’ claim of a solid research base. “From extensive interviews,” they say, “we learned that basal reading programs are not written by a limited number of authors with a close eye on the research. Rather, authors, editors, graphic designers, and marketing experts develop these programs reflecting market demands, teachers’ wants, and research findings... Publishers embraced the label of ‘scientifically based reading research,’ using it as a marketing tool.”

Publishers and some states and districts have pushed the idea of “fidelity”, implying that the basal program is infallible, that everything teacher needs is in the box, and if the program is used faithfully, all students will learn. Yet in a Florida district in which teachers were required to use a basal program with fidelity, 25 percent of third graders failed the state assessment. Fidelity also raises a practical question: there simply isn’t time to implement all the components, so teachers must be selective – but which components should they choose?

“Logic and research suggest that following a basal program with fidelity is not the right path,” say Dewitz and Jones. “Schools and teachers must exercise their professional judgment when using instructional materials. They must know when to follow suggested lesson plans, delete instructional activities, supplement, and modify.” Here are eight ways to modify and augment a basal:

- *Set goals and aim high.* “Basal reading programs do not set explicit goals about desired levels of achievement, interpretive skills, reading breadth, or enjoyment,” say Dewitz and Jones. Teachers need to start by answering some basic questions:

- What is my vision for my students by the end of the year?
- What kind of readers do I want my students to be?
- How will I get my students there?

Then they should set concrete, quantitative goals that can be understood by students, parents, and administrators – for example, my third graders will be able to read a fourth-grade passage at an instructional level on the Qualitative Reading Inventory by the end of the year. Teachers should also set qualitative goals – for example, children reading widely and deeply, seeking out books and digital resources for pleasure and information, and sharing what they read with others. “A child who can read but chooses not to has no particular advantage over one who cannot read,” say Dewitz and Jones.

- *Use real children’s literature for read-alouds.* “Although all basal programs contain read-aloud texts, typically one per week, often these texts lack the quality necessary to engage children in an exciting experience,” say Dewitz and Jones. “Basal read-alouds are often authored by unknown or nameless writers, preventing the class from making connections between the read-alouds and other popular works of children’s literature.” Even the high-quality passages by well-known authors (*Make Way for Ducklings*, for example) often eliminate most of the illustrations. It’s vital to use real children’s books geared to the themes and content being taught.

- *Build knowledge.* “Basal readers place considerable emphasis on teaching skills and strategies but neglect the development of knowledge,” say Dewitz and Jones. Basal themes are vague (relationships or natural changes, for example) and lessons tend to activate prior knowledge versus developing new content learning. Savvy teachers fill this gap with literature read-alouds, library books on particular topics, and resources from the Internet.

- *Read extensively outside the basal.* The Common Core calls for more complex texts than those found in a basal anthology, say Dewitz and Jones: “Current research on six leading reading programs reveals that there is not enough text to read for students to become fluent, let alone avid, readers.” In fact, the average basal requires only fifteen minutes of reading a day for weak readers, less time for proficient readers. Teachers need to supply a wide variety of nonfiction trade books and novels and give students the time and motivation to read extensively.

- *Adapt the scope and sequence to meet students’ needs.* “We have come to question the scope and sequence of skills within basal programs, as well as the assumption that skills can’t be divorced from their reading selections,” say Dewitz and Jones. “The scope and sequence of

comprehension skills and strategies instruction in most basal programs is overly complex, teaching too many skills under too many different labels, lacking in thoroughness, and unsupported by research.” Teachers may need to tweak the sequence in which word identification, vocabulary, decoding, and comprehension skills are taught to meet their students’ needs.

- *Be explicit and model thinking.* “Basal readers lack the explicitness that researchers recommend,” say Dewitz and Jones. Teachers should supplement them with modeling, guided practice, and independent application of strategies, including a clear explanation of why the strategy is important and when to use it.

- *Enhance guided practice.* Basals put too much emphasis on questioning and too many of the questions do not focus on meaning but “sidetrack students into thinking about decoding, structural analysis, and even the mechanics of writing,” say Dewitz and Jones. Teachers need to put more emphasis on showing students how to comprehend a text and supporting their attempts.

- *Differentiate instruction.* “Basal programs approach differentiation in a tentative manner,” say Dewitz and Jones. “Basal programs cannot differentiate instruction because doing so would require data about the performance of individual students. The developers don’t know which vocabulary words your students have learned or need to know, and they don’t know why individual students struggle to comprehend... Despite the best of intentions by publishers, differentiation of instruction will always be under the control of the teacher exercising personal decision making using student data.” The best teachers differentiate on time, teaching, texts, and tasks.

The bottom line: “Basal programs are merely one tool in the process. In the end, it is the *teacher* who matters most for our students,” say Dewitz and Jones.

“Using Basal Readers: From Dutiful Fidelity to Intelligent Decision Making” by Peter Dewitz and Jennifer Jones in *The Reading Teacher*, February 2013 (Vol. 66, #5, p. 391-400), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/TRTR.01134/abstract>; the authors can be reached at pdewitz@cstone.net and jjones292@radford.edu.

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2. An Arizona High-School Teacher Embraces the Common Core

In this article in *Education Week*, veteran English teacher Lyn Cannaday confesses that her classes once hid “a tale of two cities.” Her honors students got a rich selection of fiction and poetry as they prepared for the AP literature test. She says this included “dramatic readings, exaggerated play-acting, role-playing, and a level of hyperactivity generally considered unattractive in a woman in her 40s.” Meanwhile, her non-honors students read very few complete works of fiction or non-fiction and focused mostly on simple grammar and memorizing literary terms. “It was awful,” she says. “[M]uch of the joy of my early years of teaching eventually vanished under the weight of district-mandated standards that, honestly, did not matter in the real world.”

The Common Core State Standards have changed all that. “I now have balance,” says Cannaday. “I feel like my students have joined the real world. They are engaged and making connections across genres that I never thought would be possible.” Her honors students are reading *All Quiet on the Western Front* along with pieces on morality and ethics by Pema Chodron, Thomas Jefferson, and Machiavelli, bringing the moral dilemmas into sharp focus and developing a deeper understanding of *All Quiet*. And her non-honors students are reading Taliban propaganda and the Declaration of Independence and considering how words engender power and people use words both legitimately and illegitimately. “When one of my intermediate students announced that Jefferson was a bit of ‘a badass for flipping off a king’ with ‘an in-your-face kind of’ writing style like the Declaration of Independence,” she says, “I admonished him for swearing, but I did an internal jig of delight because that is a student who understands this English language that I adore.”

In another unit, Cannaday has students reading *Frankenstein*, *Death of a Salesman*, and *The Color of Water* in conjunction with nonfiction texts on psychology and ethics. “This has allowed them to explore the real world,” she says, “including, for the first time, through their own research. I have heard many critics lament that the common core is taking fiction out of the classroom. My curriculum is living proof that this is not true... In fact, in my intermediate class, fiction is moving back into the room, pushing out drill-and-kill exercises that may have taught students to memorize, but did little to make them better readers, writers, or consumers of the English language.”

“A Happy Tale from a Common-Core Classroom” by Lyn Cannaday in *Education Week*, Feb. 27, 2013 (Vol. 32, #22, p. 22-23), www.edweek.org

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3. An Educator Shifts Her Thinking In Three Key Areas

“Comprehension strategies are more important now than ever,” says instructional coach/author/consultant Debbie Miller in this article in *The Reading Teacher*. “They help children get smarter about big, important topics that are relevant to them and help them become powerful and thoughtful human beings.” Common Core State Standards give teachers clear guidance on *what* those strategies are. But *how* teachers reach those goals is determined classroom by classroom and school by school based on accumulated – and evolving – instructional wisdom. Miller describes how she’s changed her mind about three core instructional strategies:

- *Gradual release of responsibility* – She used to follow the traditional sequence: modeling in a mini-lesson, guided practice, independent practice, application. She now believes that it’s sometimes better to quickly model and then have students try it on their own. “It’s messier,” says Miller, “– nurturing creativity and independence always is – but now children are the ones digging in, figuring out, and working hard to read words and make sense of stories, content, skills and strategies, and big ideas. And I get to be the one listening in, conferring with children, and supporting them as needed – all the while finding just where they are, and just what they need to move forward.”

- *Objectives* – Miller used to believe that big ideas (for example, making connections, asking questions, and determining importance) were her guiding stars. Now she combines big ideas with content, saying for example, “We’re synthesizing our learning about life cycles” or “We’re building background knowledge about people in other parts of the world” or “We’re learning how thoughtful readers ask and answer questions, determine importance, and synthesize information to help them access, remember, and understand nonfiction texts and materials.”

- *Assessment* – Miller used to state her objectives, observe where students were in the learning process, and decide what was needed to help them close the gap. “Now I think I was only half right,” she says. “Learning is a process that teachers and children engage in *together*. Both of us need to be able to answer and understand:

- Where am I going?
- Where am I now?
- What do I need to do to move forward?

“When children and teachers have a clear vision about where they are going, when teachers offer children regular, descriptive feedback and teach students to self-reflect, keep track of, and share what they’ve learned (both content-wise and about themselves as learners), we motivate them and help them understand that they have control over their learning.” An important part of this is checking for understanding along the way – for example, listening in on turn-and-talk sessions, conferring, exit tickets, anchor charts, and real-time response sheets.

“I Can Create Mental Images to Retell and Infer Big Ideas” by Debbie Miller in *The Reading Teacher*, February 2013 (Vol. 66, #5, p. 360-364), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/TRTR.01135/abstract>; Miller can be reached at d.d.miller@earthlink.net.

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4. Twenty-Three Facets of Teaching – and What They Imply for Teachers

In this article in *Huff Post Education*, Stephen Downes shares an extraordinary list of the roles teachers play that he created in collaboration with a graduate class and Twitter followers:

- *The learner* – Modeling being excited about something new, exploring it, trying it, and engaging students in learning about it.

- *The collector* – Pulling stuff together for students, whether it’s old magazines or new websites and links.

- *The curator* – Organizing and making sense of what’s been found. “The curator is like a caretaker and a preserver,” says Downes, “but also a creator of meaning, guardian of knowledge, or an expert at knowing.”

- *The alchemist* – This used to involve turning lead into gold, now it’s mixing the mundane with something new and unexpected, seeing patterns and symmetries in materials.

- *The programmer* – Teachers work with computers, design communities and social networks and wikis, and develop course materials and work-flows for students.

- *The salesperson* – Principals sell ideas to the staff and teachers champion a cause, an idea, or a set of values.
- *The convener* – Educators are constantly bringing people together, building networks, and acting as Pied Pipers.
- *The coordinator* – Teachers organize schedules, set expectations, manage logistics, and solve problems.
- *The designer* – Creating a space for learning, including wall maps, desk arrangements, and more.
- *The coach* – “This multifaceted role involves everything from creating synergy and chemistry in a group to providing the game plan for learning to raising the bar and encouraging players to higher performance,” says Downes. “Though the coach is on the side of the learner... the coach also serves a larger or higher objective, working to achieve team or organizational goals.”
- *The agitator* – “The role of the agitator is to create the seed of doubt, the sense of wonder, the feeling of urgency, the cry of outrage,” says Downes. “The agitator is sometimes the devil’s advocate, sometimes the revolutionary, sometimes the disruptive agent, and sometimes just somebody who is thinking outside the box.”
- *The facilitator* – This role is vital to keeping things on track and gently nudging the process forward without imposing an opinion or agenda.
- *The moderator* – Governing and pruning, invoking rules, decorum, and good behavior.
- *Tech support* – Understanding people’s technological needs, solving problems, and making things possible.
- *The critic* – This role “asks for evidence, verifies the facts, assesses the reasoning, and offers opinions,” says Downes. “Every person needs to be questioned; it is part of the learning process. Values, truths, and institutions need to be questioned as well.”
- *The lecturer* – Organizing ideas into a comprehensible whole, making things that are complex clear for the listener or reader.
- *The demonstrator* – In the past, showing was usually done in person, but now it can be done in videos or simulations.
- *The mentor* – Teachers can play this role for students, being there for them as an enthusiastic coach or a constructive critic, showing them the person they might become.
- *The connector* – This role “sees things in common between disparate entities and draws that line between them, creating links and collaborations between otherwise isolated communities and disciplines,” says Downes.
- *The theorizer* – Teachers describe how or why something is true, often working through abstraction and generalization. “The theorizer is also the person who leads us to develop world views, find the underlying cause or meaning of things, or create order out of what appears to be chaos,” says Downes. “If nothing else, the theorizer helps us remember things by giving us a single structure under which to assimilate numerous details.”

- *The sharer* – Teachers move ideas from person to person, perhaps making e-portfolios available, managing the class mailing list, or passing along links and reflections from outside the classroom.

- *The evaluator* – “The evaluator in a digital world is more than a marker of tests and assigner of grades,” says Downes. “Modern technology makes it possible to assess not merely declarative knowledge or compositional ability, but instinct and reactions, sociability, habits and attitudes.”

- *The bureaucrat* – Someone has to collect and keep the records, organize accountability, and maintain systemic coherence.

“Not everybody can perform every role,” says Downes. “Not everybody wants to perform every role.” Extroverted teachers prefer the role of lecturer or demonstrator. The more technically inclined gravitate to being programmers or bureaucrats. The most people-oriented want to be coaches or mentors. And not every student needs every role – for example, some want criticism more than coaching, some don’t need a convener, and not everyone needs a mentor.

“Rather than asking one person to perform every role, some of them very badly, for a given group of students, it makes more sense to ensure that these services are available where needed and to allocate them according to the needs of the students, the nature of the learning environment, and the type of learning being undertaken,” Downes concludes. “This is in fact what is happening online, at least outside the circles of formal education. People are finding coaching where they need it, community where they want it, and lectures and demonstrations for those days when they have the time... Eventually, learning will be transformed in this way; the needs of students and the affordances of technology make it inevitable.”

“The Role of the Educator” by Stephen Downes in *Huff Post Education*, Mar. 3, 2013,
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/stephen-downes/the-role-of-the-educator_b_790937.html

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5. Twelve Ways to Blow a Job Interview

In this helpful *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, Robert Sternberg (Oklahoma State University) draws on his experience to steer us clear of some common mistakes:

- *Good question, but now let me answer the question I wish you’d asked.* This is the politician’s trick of briefly touching on the question that was asked and then “bridging” to the point you really want to make. While this may work in journalistic interviews, it’s a dud in job interviews.

- *I have no clue, but I’ll be damned if I’m going to let you know that.* Actually, search committees will give a candidate more points for admitting ignorance than giving a poor answer. But saying “I don’t know” too often may indicate the job is not a good fit.

- *I’m so glad you asked.* Enthusiastically going on and on in answer to a question annoys committees. “Overly long answers suggest a lack of self-control, uncertainty about how to answer, or, sometimes, an outsized ego,” says Sternberg.

- *I'm going to keep that face smiling and that head nodding.* There's a tendency to speak to committee members who are giving you encouraging body language – but it's the people who are frowning or sitting stony-faced who need to be persuaded.

- *A little embellishment never hurt anyone.* Candidates need to resist this understandable tendency since it's so easy for the committee to fact-check on the Internet, and any undermining of your credibility will kill your chances for the job.

- *You can count on me to please everybody.* Faculties have diverse opinions, and you run the risk of appearing wishy-washy or being unwilling to stand up for your principles if you're too ingratiating. "Show who you are," advises Sternberg. "If the committee members don't like who you are, you don't want to go to their institution, and you should thank them if they reject you."

- *Weaknesses? Me?* "Someone who is unaware of his or her weaknesses – or not savvy enough to have thought about a good answer to such a standard question – is not going to be effective on the job," says Sternberg. "Just make sure that, whatever they are, your weaknesses are not fatal for the job."

- *I've got this great new technology for my talk.* "Don't use an interview to experiment for the first time with a new technology," he advises. "If you do use technology in your talk, try to ensure that it will work, but have a backup plan in case it doesn't."

- *We really know how to handle the problem at my school.* If you give the impression that your current school has the answer to every problem, committee members may wonder why you're leaving.

- *Here's a long list of what I need for the job.* "You have to be careful about specifying conditions of employment too soon in the process," says Sternberg. "You will be in a bargaining position after you're offered the job, but not really before."

- *I'll teach you never to ask such a stupid question again.* Sternberg remembers that in his first job interview, he gave a snarky, put-down answer to what seemed like a lame question from a scruffy-looking guy in the audience. Turned out he was the committee chairperson and Sternberg didn't get the job. "I have never given a snarky answer since, no matter how weak I thought the question was," he says ruefully.

- *That will never work.* If a committee member talks about an idea about which you're skeptical, a job interview is not the time to say that. Better to say you'd like to think about it.

These are twelve things not to say. What's some more positive advice? "Be yourself and speak honestly," says Sternberg. "If the institution does not hire you, be glad you avoided landing at a place where you would not fit, and your role in the process is to ensure that when you do take a job, it is at a place that is a match for you. Bad romances are painful not only in one's choice of partner but also in one's choice of jobs."

"12 Bloopers to Avoid in Job Interviews" by Robert Sternberg in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Mar. 1, 2013 (Vol. LIX, #25, p. A31-32), e-link for subscribers

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6. Dealing with Acting-Out Students with Skill, Not Meds

In this thoughtful article in *Education Week*, Nancy Rappaport (Harvard Medical School) says that medications are sometimes the right intervention for students with ADHD. “But the use of stimulants to improve poor academic performance or enhance cognitive skills is a travesty that can lead to unintended consequences,” she says. “It takes experience and a nuanced eye to determine whether a child is suffering from ADHD, boredom, or something else entirely... Many students don’t need prescriptions. They simply need teachers trained in prevention strategies, which are key to providing them with a chance to learn and the skills they need to persevere.”

This is what’s lacking in many schools, says Rappaport. “Too often, teachers enter the classroom ill-equipped to respond to students’ challenging behaviors: their refusal to do work, defiance of teacher authority, persistent arguing, or, in the words of one principal I know, their ability to go from ‘zero to 100 in a split second.’ Faced with challenging students, teachers often feel exhausted or incompetent.”

The first step, says Rappaport, is a shift in mindset. “Teachers need to learn to see all behavior as a form of communication... Behavior happens for a reason, and by determining the intent or the function of the behavior, teachers can better decide how to intervene... Even though students’ behavior can look bizarre or disruptive, their actions are purposeful attempts to solve a problem.” The cause might be transitions, unstructured time, lunch, recess, being asked to write something, or social demands. These students need to learn replacement behaviors, learn self-calming strategies, and improve underdeveloped skills.

Analyzing behavior and crafting effective interventions takes time and energy, says Rappaport – but so does getting a class back on track after one student has a meltdown. “For the teacher who thinks that it’s not his or her job to work with such a student, and that the student just needs to go somewhere else, keep in mind that inevitably the teacher will face another child with similar challenges.”

Rappaport tells the story of a fourth grader who had lived in two foster homes and exploded three times a day. Working with the school counselor, the teacher realized that the meltdowns occurred after lunch and recess when the boy was required to write something. He had learned that acting out would get him what he wanted – lots of attention and not having to write. The teacher taught the boy to take a deep breath when he felt this way and to say “I’m frustrated” instead of screaming. The counselor worked on social skills and the teacher emphasized positive talk, provided a “comfort box” with Theraputty, a “power card” with a motivational character, a picture of his family, and other soothing items. The teacher also broke down writing tasks to help with the boy’s anxiety and previewed all writing assignments with pictures to help him get started. Within three weeks, the explosions had stopped, the boy was able to complete many tasks, and he was getting along better with his classmates.

“Why ADHD Medication Is Not Reform: Understanding Behavior Is Critical” by Nancy Rappaport in *Education Week*, Feb. 27, 2013 (Vol. 32, #22, p. 23, 25), www.edweek.org

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7. Ways to Improve the College Scorecard Website

In this *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, Amy Schnoebelen reports on critiques of the College Scorecard website (<http://collegecost.ed.gov/scorecard/index.aspx>), which President Obama touted in his State of the Union address last month. While the website has been praised for providing lots of information and clear graphics for students applying to college, these were some concerns raised by a number of higher-education experts:

- *Costs* – The term “net price” may be confusing to high-school students, who might incorrectly assume it’s synonymous with tuition.

- *Graduation rate* can be a tricky statistic – Does this pertain only to first-time, full-time students, or does it include students who transfer in or leave and graduate from another college?

- *Loan default rate* is not a meaningful statistic for most students. Better to report the percent of students who are actively repaying their loans.

- *Median borrowing* gives a sense of the distribution of student debt on graduation, but it would be good to know the percent of students who graduate with excessive debt – perhaps more than their first-year salary.

- *Employment rate* of graduates is important information, but are those jobs the right fit and do they use students’ preparation fully? This statistic needs to be beefed up.

Critics also suggested three additions to the website: (a) a side-by-side comparison tool to make it easier to compare one college to another; (b) more information on the diversity of the student population; and (c) contact information for the college, including the financial-aid office.

“5 Experts Give the College Scorecard a Barely Passing Grade” by Ann Schnoebelen in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Mar. 1, 2013 (Vol. LIX, #25, p. A6), e-link for subscribers

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8. Can Non-Native Speakers Teach a Foreign Language Well?

In this *Foreign Language Annals* article, Amy Thompson and Amy Fioramonte (University of South Florida) report on their interviews with teachers of Spanish who are not native speakers. These teachers are often treated as second-class citizens by colleagues and students. Thompson and Fioramonte interviewed a number of university teaching assistants, hoping they would “reveal their experiences as both language learners and teachers by reflecting on their past and present experiences and imagining their future selves as teachers.” This article focuses on three of the interviewees who taught Spanish and had diverse language backgrounds; one was Russian, one Thai (with Chinese parents), and one English (she grew up in Canada and the U.S.). These themes emerged from the interviews:

- *Everyone makes mistakes* – “Interestingly, all of the participants commented that making mistakes was acceptable, whether on the part of the student or on the part of the teacher,” say Thompson and Fioramonte. One of them said, “I don’t have to know everything. It’s not my job as a teacher [laugh] to know everything. It’s my job as a teacher to direct them to the information that they need to get.”

• *Pronunciation* – The interviewees said that speaking like a native was important to them and to their students, and speaking with a thick non-native accent makes a teacher of Spanish less credible and effective. But is pronunciation the most important indicator of a teacher’s competence? ask Thompson and Fioramonte. They believe it’s superficial compared to knowledge of the language and culture and teaching skill. In addition, native speakers also make mistakes and some speak with non-normative accents.

• *Teaching advanced classes* – All the interviewees said they were reluctant to teach upper-level Spanish courses because of their perceived inadequacies. That’s a shame, say Thompson and Fioramonte: “It is probable that these three participants would, in fact, be able to teach higher levels of Spanish, but their self-perceived limitations are preventing them from doing so... Thus, the theme of not being able to teach higher levels of Spanish potentially comes from a combination of three factors: self-deprecation or lack of self-confidence, prior language learning experiences, and the expectations of the students and supervisors in their current teaching positions.”

What conclusions flow from these interviews? Thompson and Fioramonte believe the field needs to move beyond negative stereotypes of non-native speakers and focus on the more important issues of knowledge of the language and teaching competence. “Language students should strive to be competent users of the language, rather than try to achieve the unattainable ‘native-speaker’ status,” they say. Non-native speakers can be excellent role models in that process. Thompson and Fioramonte conclude by saying that “bilingualism and multilingualism of language teachers should be highly valued and emphasized, as bilingual and multilingual individuals have a heightened metalinguistic awareness when compared to monolingual teachers...”

“Nonnative Speaker Teachers of Spanish: Insights from Novice Teachers” by Amy Thompson and Amy Fioramonte in *Foreign Language Annals*, Winter 2012 (Vol. 45, #4, p. 564-579), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2013.01210.x/abstract>

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9. How Teachers Can Capitalize on a Student’s Family Trip

In this article in *The Reading Teacher*, Laurie Curtis (Kansas State University) recommends that when students miss school to travel with their families, teachers should reach out to capitalize on learning potential. Here’s her suggested letter to the parents of Helena:
Dear Parent/Guardian,

Thank you for informing me of your upcoming trip. It is my belief that travel can afford Helena amazing opportunities for learning that cannot otherwise occur here in our classroom. Those new experiences can be captured through our writing! I will not be sending any typical “make-up” work for Helena to complete during her absence. Instead, I will be sending you with an assignment that when completed should provide Helena with optimal learning and provide you with a journal or log of your travels written through her eyes! When Helena returns, she will be asked to share her experiences with our class so we will all learn from her experiences.

- The pocket at the front of this folder can be used to collect any brochures that show experiences your family has during this journey. Include additional road maps, menus, or brochures of what you have actually experienced.

- Using the map that is included, please help Helena keep track of the journey. She can draw the route or make notations of airplane terminals, landforms, etc. to show us where the family went. Please locate our town on the map to begin the log.

- I have included paper. Each day of your journey, please ask Helena to reflect on what happened, what she learned, what she enjoyed, with a date at the top of each entry. You will find a box of colored pencils and two regular mechanical pencils in the folder for this activity. Encourage Helena to write about the day's events and draw or illustrate her work. Ask Helena to read what she writes to a family member once it is completed. She should write this independently and it is fine to use invented spelling. You may certainly help and guide this process, as needed, but this work should be Helena's! If she has difficulty reading it aloud, you may wish to write her ideas on a sticky note and attach it to the paper.

- Postcards or pictures of your trip can be placed in the back pocket for sharing with our class. Any additional artifacts or notes are welcome! If your pictures were taken digitally, feel free to e-mail a few to me and I can show them to our class (no more than 10, please).

Upon return from your travels, please make sure Helena brings this folder to school to share with us on her first day back. We will miss Helena – but look forward to hearing about your journey!

Yours in education,

“Literacy on the Move: A Journal for the Journey” by Laurie Curtis in *The Reading Teacher*, February 2013 (Vol. 66, #5, p. 360-364), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/TRTR.01137/abstract>; Curtis can be reached at lcurtis@ksu.edu.

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10. Short Item:

Websites for students to share their reading lives – In this article in *The Reading Teacher*, Frank Serafini (Arizona State University/Phoenix) and Suzette Youngs (University of Northern Colorado) recommend websites that allow students to share and archive their reading lives, create online reading histories, and place books on digital bookshelves for future reading:

- www.Goodreads.com
- www.Shelfari.com
- www.LibraryThing.com

“Reading Workshop 2.0: Children’s Literature in the Digital Age” by Frank Serafini and Suzette Youngs in *The Reading Teacher*, February 2013 (Vol. 66, #5, p. 401-404); Youngs can be reached at suzette.youngs@unco.edu.

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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 42 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 64 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 50 issues a year).

Subscriptions:

Individual subscriptions are \$50 for the school year. Rates decline steeply for multiple readers within the same organization. See the website for these rates and information on paying by check or credit card.

Website:

If you go to <http://www.marshallmemo.com> you will find detailed information on:

- How to subscribe or renew
- A detailed rationale for the Marshall Memo
- Publications (with a count of articles from each)
- Article selection criteria
- Topics (with a count of articles from each)
- Headlines for all issues
- Reader opinions (with results of an annual survey)
- About Kim Marshall (including links to articles)
- A free sample issue

Subscribers have access to the Members' Area of the website, which has:

- The current issue (in Word or PDF)
- All back issues (also in Word and PDF)
- A database of all articles to date, searchable by topic, title, author, source, level, etc.
- How to change access e-mail or log-in

Core list of publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educational Research Journal
American Educator
American Journal of Education
American School Board Journal
ASCA School Counselor
ASCD SmartBrief
Better Evidence-Based Education
Center for Performance Assessment Newsletter
District Administration
ED Magazine
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Update/Curriculum Update
Education Week
Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis
Educational Horizons
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher
Go Teach
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk (JESPAR)
Journal of Staff Development
Kappa Delta Pi Record
Knowledge Quest
Middle Ground
Middle School Journal
NAESP Journal
NJEA Review
Perspectives
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal
Principal Leadership
Principal's Research Review
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Responsive Classroom Newsletter
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
School Administrator
Teacher
Teachers College Record
Teaching Children Mathematics
Teaching Exceptional Children/Exceptional Children
The Atlantic
The Chronicle of Higher Education
The District Management Journal
The Language Educator
The Learning Principal/Learning System/Tools for Schools
The New York Times
The New Yorker
The Reading Teacher
Theory Into Practice
Time
Wharton Leadership Digest