Marshall Memo 211

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
November 26, 2007

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Quotes of the Week

"Desire beats adversity every time."

June Eressy, principal of University Park School in Worcester, Mass., on her students' extraordinary success on state tests and college admission.
"Town-Gown Triumph" by Peter Schworm in *The Boston Globe*, Nov. 22, 2007
http://www.boston.com/news/education/k_12/articles/2007/11/22/town_gown_triumph/

"One of the most essential responsibilities of leadership is clarity – clarity regarding the fundamental purpose of the organization, the future it must create to better fulfill that purpose, the most high-leverage strategies for creating that future, the indicators of progress it will monitor, and the specific ways each member of the organization can contribute both to its long-term purpose and short-term goals."

Richard DuFour (see item #1)

"Strategic planning isn't doing, training isn't doing, writing mission statements isn't doing, talking isn't doing, even making a decision isn't doing unless it results in action."

Richard DuFour (*ibid.*)

"One reason that students think mathematics is useless is that the only people they see who use it are mathematics teachers."

Lynn Arthur Steen (see item #6)

"Bridging the gap between students' intuitive, everyday understanding of mathematics and their understandings of the corresponding formal symbolic representations is one of the most significant challenges faced by math teachers today. To date, there is no evidence that manipulatives help students make such connections."

Nicole McNeil and Linda Jarvin (see item #5)

1. Richard DuFour on Loose-Tight Leadership

In this important article in *School Administrator*, author/consultant Richard DuFour asks why "top-down" leadership has become such a dirty word in education. Are there ever situations where forceful leadership is the right approach – for example, when colleagues are resisting a change initiative that has compelling research behind it? "Does professional autonomy," he wonders, "extend to the freedom to disregard what is widely considered best practice in one's field?"

The best approach, says DuFour, is *loose-tight leadership* – stipulating a clear, non-negotiable theory of action (tight) and then encouraging autonomy and creativity within its parameters (loose). "One of the most essential responsibilities of leadership is clarity," he says of the *tight* component – "clarity regarding the fundamental purpose of the organization, the future it must create to better fulfill that purpose, the most high-leverage strategies for creating that future, the indicators of progress it will monitor, and the specific ways each member of the organization can contribute both to its long-term purpose and short-term goals… [L]eaders must be prepared to insist that those within their organizations heed, not ignore, clear evidence of the best, most promising strategies for accomplishing its purposes and priorities. Educational leaders must provide both pressure and support if they are to play a role in improving their schools and districts."

The trick, of course, is "getting tight about the right things," says DuFour. Fortunately, there is lots of research evidence around a change strategy that has come to be known as Professional Learning Communities. It includes the following components:

- Teachers are very clear about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that students need to acquire by the end of each grade level, course, and curriculum unit.
- Teachers collaborate in grade-level/course teams rather than working in isolation.
- Teacher teams set specific, results-oriented goals and hold themselves mutually accountable for achieving them.
- Teams use frequent, team-developed, common interim assessments to see what their students are and aren't learning.
- Teams adopt best practices and drop classroom strategies that aren't working.
- The school guarantees timely, mandatory, and systematic interventions for students who are struggling.
- Professional development is job-embedded so teachers can learn from each other and from the wisdom of the field as part of their everyday work.

- A process of continuous improvement is built into the regular routines of the school.

"These practices are supported by research," says DuFour, "proven to be effective in hundreds of schools and endorsed by professional organizations."

Unfortunately, it's possible to have the right theory of action and still blow it. DuFour describes what happened when two superintendents latched onto Professional Learning Communities and imposed the initiative on their districts without explaining the rationale, providing good training, listening to their principals and teachers, giving schools adequate resources, or monitoring implementation. The results of this kind of *tight-tight* leadership were predictable: few if any gains in student achievement. Then DuFour describes a district that did it right, including these steps:

• *Launch* – The superintendent organized a two-day retreat for the principals and a team of teachers from each school, including union leaders. The central office staff attended, and the superintendent was actively involved both days. The training created a common vocabulary and knowledge base and made a compelling case for Professional Learning Communities.

• *Openness* – All participants had a chance to discuss the initiative in small groups, ask questions, and express their concerns. This included an "Ask the superintendent" segment each day when anyone could get an immediate, public response to a concern. Giving teachers and principals a chance to think through the proposed initiative and get their questions answered is vital to the persuasion process, says DuFour.

• *The moment of truth* – Toward the end of the second day people seemed enthusiastic about the initiative, but then the union leader spoke up: "This all sounds fine, but are you saying we will be required to do this? Is this a top-down mandate?" Displaying a perfect balance of loose-tight leadership, the superintendent replied, "Why wouldn't we do this? Is anyone aware of any evidence that this is detrimental to student learning, teacher effectiveness or positive school cultures? This concept is supported by research, endorsed by our professional organizations, implemented with great success in schools around us, and it just makes sense. Knowing the commitment of the teachers in this district to do what is best for kids, how could we not go forward with this? I admit I am not certain as to all the details of implementation, and I will need your ideas as to how we can help all your colleagues become familiar with the concept. I know all of us will need time and resources to move forward, and we will need to consider what we will remove from our plates if we take on this challenge. But I propose this is the work we should be doing, and we need to build on the energy and enthusiasm in this room today and commit to doing whatever it takes to make this happen in our district."

• *Implementation* – Over the next two years, the district carefully implemented Professional Learning Communities in all schools. Practices were aligned with the initiative, teacher teams were given time to meet, central-office staff met with concerned faculties and groups of teachers to address their questions, and the plan was tweaked and improved.

• *Results* – In two years, the district made the biggest student achievement gains in the state.

DuFour believes this district embraced the right theory of action and got loose-tight leadership just right. Leaders who are serious about high achievement can't allow principals and teachers to opt out of proven strategies. When they do, says DuFour, they send mixed messages, create confusion and cynicism, and doom their schools to mediocrity.

But loose-tight leadership isn't easy, says DuFour, and those who adopt it need to become "servant leaders" who build the capacity of their troops to accomplish the greater good. If teachers are being asked to collaborate, for example, "leaders have an obligation to create structures that make collaboration meaningful rather than artificial," writes DuFour, "to guarantee time for collaboration during the contractual day, to establish clear priorities and parameters so that teachers focus on the right topics, to help teams make informed decisions by making the essential knowledge base easily accessible to them, to provide meaningful and timely training based on the specific needs of each team, to offer templates and models to guide their work, and to specify clear expectations and standards to help them assess the quality of their work."

The problem in many schools, says DuFour, is the *knowing-doing gap*. This is the tendency to cling to tried-and-true practices and resist new approaches, even if people know that new ideas are needed produce higher student achievement. Every school has an entrenched culture, and new initiatives tend to be resisted in favor of the status quo, or distorted to fit the culture.

"The key to improving schools is ensuring that educators *do* the right work," says DuFour, "but too often leaders settle for the illusion of doing. Strategic planning isn't doing, training isn't doing, writing mission statements isn't doing, talking isn't doing, even making a decision isn't doing unless it results in action. Getting people to do differently, to act in new ways, remains the central challenge of every improvement process, and it takes intentional leadership to meet that challenge."

So there are times when school leaders must be top-down, exercising their authority and requiring that something be done. What is the definition of a professional? asks DuFour. "A professional does not have the autonomy to ignore what is regarded as best practice in the field. We would have contempt for a medical doctor who continued to use a razor blade to perform radial keratotomy on a patient's eye rather than use the much more effective, pain-free process of lasik surgery. We would not tolerate an attorney who continued to cite arguments from case law that had been overturned by higher courts. We would not support the notion that a United Airlines pilot should have the right to fly a propeller plane rather than a jet because he has an affinity for propellers. Leaders within a profession have every right to expect people to seek and implement the best practices in their field."

"Effective leaders must recognize that school improvement cannot wait for everyone in the organization to have a favorable attitude toward the proposed change," concludes DuFour. "There is abundant evidence in the fields of psychology, organizational development, and education that changes in attitudes follow rather than precede changes in behavior. When work is designed to require people to act in new ways, the possibility of new experiences is created

for them. If those new experiences are positive, they can lead to new attitudes and assumptions over time."

"In Praise of Top-Down Leadership" by Richard DuFour in *School Administrator*, November 2007 (Vol. 64, #10, p. 38-42), http://www.aasa.org/publications/saarticledetail.cfm?ItemNumber=9540&snItemNumber=950

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2. Persuading Teachers to Buy Into Professional Learning Communities

In his 2006 book *Changing Minds: The Art and Science of Changing Our Own and Other People's Minds,* Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner spells out the most effective persuasion strategies. In this sidebar to his *School Administrator* article, Richard DuFour translates Gardner's principles into ways to win teachers over to Professional Learning Communities:

• *Reasoning and rationale thinking* – "Doesn't it make sense that we can accomplish more by working together collaboratively rather than in isolation, by checking for student understanding through formative assessments rather than waiting for the results of summative assessments, by creating timely school-wide systematic interventions when students experience difficulty rather than expecting each teacher to try to figure out how to respond?"

• *Research* – "I have shared the research with you that supports this initiative. I found it very compelling. Do you interpret it another way? Do you have any research refuting it we could look at together?"

• *Resonance* – "I know you believe in equity and fairness. Wouldn't it be more equitable and fair if we could assure students they would have access to the same guaranteed curriculum no matter who their teacher is, that their work would be assessed according to the same criteria, that we have a consistent way of responding when they struggle to understand?"

• *Representational re-description* – "I have presented you with the data regarding the fact that large numbers of our students are not being successful. But let me put those numbers in human terms. Let me tell you some stories of the impact their failure is having on their lives."

• *Rewards and resources* – "I acknowledge this will be difficult. That is why I ask your help in identifying the resources you will need to be successful – time, training, materials support, etc. Let's work together to identify them and I pledge I will do everything in my power to make them available."

• *Real-world events* – "I understand you have misgivings and predict negative consequences if we implement this initiative. But let's visit some schools and districts that have done it successfully. You will hear the enthusiasm of the teachers as they explain how they and their students have benefited."

• *Require* – "I understand you remain unconvinced, but this is the direction in which we are going, and this is what you must do to help us get us there. My hope is, as you work through the process it will be a positive experience, and you will come to have a more positive disposition toward it."

Sidebar in "In Praise of Top-Down Leadership" by Richard DuFour in *School Administrator*, November 2007 (Vol. 64, #10, p. 38-42), no free e-link available
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3. Why Singapore's Students Do So Well in Math

(Originally titled "Learning from Singapore Math")

In this *Educational Leadership* article, Steven Leinwand (of the American Institutes of Research) and Alan Ginsburg (of the U.S. Department of Education) sing the praises of Singapore's approach to math education. Five elements, they say, explain why Singapore's students are number one in international comparisons:

• *A comprehensive organizing framework* – The "narrowness and disconnected nature of the organizing structure of mathematics education in the United States," say Leinwand and Ginsburg, "prevents us from developing a stronger and more effective instructional program." Singapore's framework has five facets, all centered on math problem solving:

- Attitudes: Appreciation, interest, confidence, and perseverance;
- Metacognition: Monitoring one's own thinking;
- Process: Thinking skills and heuristics;
- Concepts: Numerical, geometrical, algebraic, and statistical;
- Skills: Estimation and approximation, mental calculation, communication, use of math tools, arithmetic manipulation, algebraic manipulation, and handling data

• *Alignment* – All the Singapore program components are lined up with each other: common national standards, textbooks, tests, and teacher preparation programs.

• *Simplicity and focus* – Singapore's national curriculum standards cover an average of 15 topics per grade level, compared with 54 per grade in Florida's and 50 in New Jersey. Singapore's third-grade textbook is 496 pages long with 42 lessons, compared with the third-grade Scott Foresman textbook, which is 729 pages long and has 164 lessons.

• *Multiple models* – Singapore's textbooks explain concepts through concrete representations, pictures, and abstract symbols, and use of bar graphics through the grades to clarify number concepts. American textbooks, by contrast, tend to have lots of lavish color illustrations, many not related to explaining the concepts on those pages, and use a hodge-podge of explanatory graphics.

• *Complex problems* – Singapore's textbooks pose complex multi-step problems like this one for fourth graders: Meredith bought 2/5 kg of shrimps. Courtney bought 1/10 kg of shrimps less than Meredith. Find the weight of the shrimps bought by Courtney. Find the total weight of the shrimps bought by both girls. Most American textbooks have one-step problems that don't demand much more than recall and routine application.

Leinwand and Ginsburg close with this caution: The U.S. won't solve its math problems by adopting Singapore math textbooks. Instead, we should adapt and adopt Singapore's math framework, which is what really explains that country's remarkable math success.

"Learning from Singapore Math" by Steven Leinwand and Alan Ginsburg in *Educational Leadership*, November 2007 (Vol. 65, #3, p. 32-36); full article available at http://www.ascd.org/el. See the preceding article in this issue of *Educational Leadership*, "Singapore Math: Simple or Complex" by John Hoven and Barry Garelick, for a detailed description of Singapore math textbooks.

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4. Marilyn Burns on Helping Struggling Students Master Math

(Originally titled "Nine Ways to Catch Kids Up")

In this helpful *Educational Leadership* article, veteran math teacher/author/consultant Marilyn Burns says that in every classroom there are a few children who are at serious risk of failing math – and in most cases they aren't getting enough help. Burns quotes an interaction with a fourth grader named Paul as an example of the challenges involved:

BURNS: Can you tell me something you know about multiplication?

PAUL: [*Thinks, then responds*] 6 x 8 is 48.

BURNS: Do you know how much 6 x 9 is?

PAUL: I don't know that one. I didn't learn it yet.

BURNS: Can you figure it out some way?

PAUL: [*Sits silently for a moment and then shakes his head.*]

BURNS: How did you learn 6 x 8?

PAUL: [*Brightens and grins*] It's easy – goin' fishing, got no bait, 6 x 8 is 48.

Burns then shares nine steps that she and her colleagues have developed to help elementary students like Paul catch up. She says that in recent years, she's learned to *slow down*, teach more strategically, and emphasize three vital components of math: understanding, sense making, and skills.

• *First, determine and scaffold the essential math content*. If we want to teach Paul how to multiply 683 x 4, we would need to teach him the basic multiplication facts, place value (so he could understand that 683 is 600 + 80 + 3), the distributive property (so he could combine partial products), how to multiply by 10 and 100, and basic addition facts.

• *Second, pace lessons carefully*. When students like Paul get that confused look in their eyes, we need to stop and help clear up the confusion before we move on. "Many of these students need to unlearn before they can relearn," says Burns.

• *Third, scaffold and gradually withdraw support*. Burns recommends a four-step process: (a) Model the procedure on the board with appropriate mathematical representation and think aloud about how it's done; (b) Model the procedure on the board with a different problem, this time calling on students to help out; (c) Put a third example on the board, have students think about it silently for a minute, then work in pairs to solve the problem three different ways, then have students share their answers and discuss them as a class; and (d) Put up another problem and have students work independently, referring to the work on the board if they need support.

• *Fourth, foster student interaction*. The more students talk about their thinking and teach others, the better, says Burns. She suggests having students think silently for a moment when a new problem is posed, then turn and talk to another student. This process is especially valuable for English language learners, says Burns.

• *Fifth, make connections explicit*. Struggling students rarely link one part of math to another, says Burns, so they need direct instruction. Paul, for example, needed to be taught to use 6 x 8 to figure out 6 x 9, and to use what he knew about addition to help him with multiplication.

• *Sixth, encourage mental calculations*. Mental arithmetic "builds students' ability to reason and fosters their number sense," says Burns. Students need to know their arithmetic facts and multiplication tables cold, and how to quickly multiply numbers by 10 and powers of ten. Mental math also helps students estimate answers and check to see if their calculated answers are reasonable.

• *Seventh, have students use written calculations to track thinking*. "Help students see paper and pencil as a tool for keeping track of how they think," writes Burns.

• *Eighth, provide practice*. "Struggling math students typically need a great deal of practice," says Burns, and practice is most effective when it's directly connected with a scaffolded learning experience. Games are another way to provide practice.

• *Ninth, build math vocabulary*. Many struggling students have weak math vocabularies, says Burns, and they need explicit instruction and practice to nail down the special meanings of words in math. [See Marshall Memo 210 for an article on learning math words.]

When should we intervene with students who are having difficulty? Burns lists three options, each with advantages and disadvantages:

• While the class is studying the topic – aimed at repairing students' shaky foundation of understanding. Immediate help can keep struggling students on pace with the class, but what they need may be too time-consuming for this to be workable.

• Before the class studies a topic – aimed at providing skills in advance of a unit so struggling students have a leg up. This can be a big help, but it can also confuse students by asking them to juggle two different topics at the same time.

• After the class has moved on – providing review and remediation. This gives struggling students a fresh start on the topic, but it can also compound a student's confusion and failure during regular instruction.

"Nine Ways to Catch Kids Up" by Marilyn Burns in *Educational Leadership*, November 2007 (Vol. 65, #3, p. 16-21); full article available at http://www.ascd.org/el.

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5. Do Manipulatives Help Children Understand Math?

In this thought-provoking *Theory Into Practice* article, Nicole McNeil and Linda Jarvin (professors at Notre Dame and Tufts, respectively) question the effectiveness of classroom

math manipulatives. In theory, they say, manipulatives should enhance student learning because:

- They provide an additional hands-on resource for learning math concepts;
- They help children draw on their practical, real-world knowledge;
- They engage students in physical activity, which has been shown to enhance memory and understanding.

This sounds promising, say the authors, since "[b]ridging the gap between students' intuitive, everyday understanding of mathematics and their understandings of the corresponding formal symbolic representations is one of the most significant challenges faced by math teachers today." It's not surprising that many teachers include manipulatives in math lessons.

But McNeil and Jarvin have bad news: "To date, there is no evidence that manipulatives help students make such connections." The research is ambiguous and inconclusive, they report. Some studies show that hands-on math activities have no benefit, and others show that such activities may actually be detrimental to learning. And there are indications that manipulatives start to lose their effects after first grade.

How can this be? McNeil and Jarvin believe that there are two reasons for manipulatives' very disappointing track record:

• *Teachers' attitudes often undercut potential benefits.* A number of teachers use hands-on activities solely to pique students' interest and add variety and fun to a lesson, failing to leverage manipulatives to enhance mathematical understanding. One teacher made this revealing comment: "Sometimes I think that they are just having fun, but I don't mind because eventually we'll get to the real math part." Students pick up on this mind-set and come to regard hands-on learning activities as play time.

Most American teachers, say McNeil and Jarvin, "believe that mathematics is best taught by telling. That is, math is best taught by introducing the step-by-step procedures necessary for solving problems, repeating those procedures in clear language, providing students with an opportunity to practice those procedures, and providing feedback when necessary." To get the most out of manipulatives, teachers need to embrace quite a different belief system – that students learn concepts more deeply when they construct their own understanding through well-orchestrated hands-on activities. Few teachers believe this.

• *Poorly chosen manipulatives can be the problem.* This happens most often when hands-on materials are everyday objects to children – toy cars, for example – and the teacher fails to explicitly make the link to their mathematical purpose in the activity. The need for this "dual representation" is missed by many teachers, and as a result, their students, who tend to be caught up in their enjoyment of the objects per se, gain only a small fraction of the mathematical value of the activity.

The research evidence, say McNeil and Jarvin, suggests that "manipulatives are not a sure-fire strategy for helping children learn math." So what are teachers to do? The authors have two recommendations:

• First, minimize the use of manipulatives that are "highly concrete and rich in perceptual detail" and familiar to children outside of school (e.g., toys). Manipulatives like

these lead students to see the activity as mere play and make it more challenging for the teacher to make the link to math content.

• Second, take the time to "build explicit bridges between the informal understandings that children construct when they use manipulatives and the formal symbolic instantiations of the concepts." This is not easy, the authors concede, but it's essential to leveraging hands-on activities for true mathematical benefits.

"When Theories Don't Add Up: Disentangling the Manipulatives Debate" by Nicole McNeil and Linda Jarvin in *Theory Into Practice*, Fall 2007 (Vol. 46, #4, p. 309-316), no e-link available; McNeil can be reached at nmcneil@nd.edu.

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6. How to Make Math More Compelling in Secondary Schools

(originally titled "How Mathematics Counts")

In this *Educational Leadership* article, St. Olaf College math professor Lynn Arthur Steen argues that U.S. math teachers have overemphasized math calculation and procedures (reasoning *with* numbers to produce an answer) and underemphasized math interpretation (reasoning *about* numbers to produce understanding). An example: fewer than half of American eighth graders were able to answer this international test question correctly:

What is the approximate value, to the nearest whole number, of the sum of 19/20 + 23/25 ? 1 2 42 45?

Based on college and 21st-century workplace demands, many high schools are requiring that all students master Algebra II, but it's clear that a lot of students are not reaching that ambitious goal. This has led some districts to water down the requirement with "fake" algebra courses and lax standards of proficiency. Even so, the high-school dropout rate is high, especially among African-American and Hispanic students, and math confusion and boredom is a big part of the problem.

To improve our secondary-school math achievement, says Steen, schools need to work on three things:

• *Communication* – "We used to believe that if mathematics teachers taught students how to calculate and English teachers taught students how to write, then students would naturally blend these skills to write clearly about quantitative ideas," says Steen. "Data and years of frustrating experience show just how naïve this belief is." To meet college and workplace demands, students need to write more in math classes and do more quantitative reasoning in English and social studies classes. "They need to be able to write fluently in complete sentences and coherent paragraphs; to explain the meaning of data, tables, graphs, and formulas; and to express the relationships among these different representations."

• *Connections* – "One reason that students think mathematics is useless is that the only people they see who use it are mathematics teachers," says Steen. "High-school mathematics is the ultimate exercise in deferred gratification. Its payoff comes years later, and then only for the minority who struggle through it." The solution: teachers in all subject areas need to inject quantitative reasoning into their classes, constantly tying data to conclusions. "This can best be

done by cross-disciplinary planning," says Steen, "built on a commitment from teachers and administrators to make the goal of numeracy as important as literacy."

• *Contexts* – Especially in middle and high school, math becomes too rarified for most students, and they get frustrated and bored. "Without reliable contexts to anchor meaning," says Steen, "many students see only a meaningless cloud of abstract symbols. As the level of abstraction increases, algorithms proliferate and their links to meaning fade." Teachers need to include more real-world problems that will help students see the relevance of math in their lives – for example, gas prices, college tuition, and global warming. "Most important, the pedagogical activity of connecting meaning to numbers needs to take place in authentic contexts, such as in history, geography, economics, and biology – wherever things are counted, measured, inferred, or analyzed."

"How Mathematics Counts" by Lynn Arthur Steen in *Educational Leadership*, November 2007 (Vol. 65, #3, p. 8-14); full article available at http://www.ascd.org/el.

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7. Does Co-Teaching in Inclusion Classrooms Work?

In this article in *Theory Into Practice*, University of Pittsburgh educators Victoria Volonino and Naomi Zigmond argue that special-education and regular-education teachers co-teaching in inclusion classrooms is not an effective instructional model. The research on co-teaching is sparse and inconclusive, they say.

To be sure, co-teaching is a popular model with intuitive appeal. Supporters argue that co-taught classrooms blend the complementary skills of two teachers – content expertise from the regular-education teacher and diagnostic and remedial expertise from the special-education teacher – to the benefit of all students. There are five variations of co-teaching as it's practiced in schools:

- *One teaching, one assisting* – One teacher, usually the regular educator, takes the instructional lead and the other circulates through the room helping out and supporting students as needed.
- *Station teaching* – Teachers divide up the instructional content and students rotate through stations, each staffed by one of the teachers.
- *Parallel teaching* – Teachers plan instruction together and then deliver it separately to two heterogeneous groups.
- *Alternative teaching* – The regular-education teacher instructs a larger group while the special-education teacher delivers intensive, specialized instruction to a smaller group of special-needs students.
- *Team teaching* – The two teachers plan and teach together, alternating the lead role every few minutes within each lesson.

"Co-teaching," conclude Volonino and Zigmond, "is an example of a practice that has been embraced by theorists and some practitioners as a solution to a problem of practice, and in this case, the research base does not provide sufficient support for the practice. Future research

on co-teaching may uncover particular situations and practices where co-teaching does improve student learning, as proponents have promised. But, at present, it seems that co-teaching has added another teacher to the general education classroom, without necessarily adding value (i.e., enhancing instructional and student outcomes)."

"Promoting Research-Based Practices Through Inclusion" by Victoria Volonino and Naomi Zigmond in *Theory Into Practice*, Fall 2007 (Vol. 46, #4, p. 291-300), no e-link available

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8. Short Item:

An online vocabulary quiz that raises money for the hungry – This unusual website – http://www.freerice.com - has a multiple-choice vocabulary test with instant feedback (words get harder if you are more successful, easier if you get words wrong). For every word you get correct, ten grains of rice are donated to the world's needy through the United Nations. Worth a try!

Many thanks to Marshall Memo reader David Marshall for flagging this resource!

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Do you have feedback? Is anything missing?

If you have comments or suggestions, if you saw an article or web item in the last week that you think should have been summarized, or if you would like to suggest additional publications that should be covered by the Marshall Memo, please e-mail: kim.marshall8@verizon.net

About the Marshall Memo

Mission and focus:

This weekly memo is designed to keep principals, teachers, superintendents, and others very well-informed on current research and effective practices in K-12 education. Kim Marshall, drawing on 37 years' experience as a teacher, principal, central office administrator, and writer, lightens the load of busy educators by serving as their "designated reader."

To produce the Marshall Memo, Kim subscribes to 44 carefully-chosen publications (see list to the right), sifts through more than a hundred articles each week, and selects 5-10 that have the greatest potential to improve teaching, leadership, and learning. He then writes a brief summary of each article, pulls out several striking quotes, provides e-links to full articles when available, and e-mails the Memo to subscribers every Monday evening (with occasional breaks; there are about 50 issues a year).

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Publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educator
American School Board Journal
ASCD, CEC SmartBriefs, Daily EdNews
Atlantic Monthly
Catalyst Chicago
Chronicle of Higher Education
CommonWealth Magazine
Ed. Magazine
EDge
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher (TESOL)
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
JESPAR
Journal of Staff Development
Language Learner (NABE)
Middle Ground
Middle School Journal
NASSP Bulletin
New York Times
New Yorker
Newsweek
PEN Weekly NewsBlast
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal
Principal Leadership
Principal's Research Review
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
Teacher Magazine (online)
Teachers College Record
TESOL Quarterly
Theory Into Practice
Tools for Schools