Marshall Memo 953

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education September 19, 2022

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Quotes of the Week

"Schools are not designed to address, much less unravel, psychological dependence on portable supercomputers designed to disrupt and hold our attention. Teachers already have a daunting list of educational priorities."

Doug Lemov (see item #1)

"It has transformed the school. It is so nice walking around the yard seeing students actually interacting again, and no distractions during class."

A teacher in an Australian school that banned students' cellphone use (*ibid*.)

"Though we claim to value children as individuals, we also sort them into winners and losers." Jeff Frank (see item #5)

"Instructional leaders who want to get into classrooms will never 'find' the time... Simply 'trying' to get into classrooms will result in sporadic, inconsistent visits – even if your goals are ambitious... It's essential to *make* time – and protect it from some (but not all) interruptions."

Justin Baeder (see item #2)

"Coaches are called upon to provide productive, job-embedded professional development for teachers, but their capacity to do so hinges on gaining access to classrooms."

Jen Munson and Evthokia Stephanie Saclarides (see item #3)

"Music brings smiles and tears, energy and stillness, agitation and peace, joy and wonder. It need not be compartmentalized in schools, nor should it be perceived as inaccessible and unattainable, relegated only to the artist-musician."

Patricia Shehan Campbell (see item #6)

1. Doug Lemov on Cellphones and "Rewiring" Schools for Belonging

In the second part of this *Education Next* article, Lemov follows up on his argument that online interactions are rewiring young people's brains and cellphones "must be turned off and put away when students walk through school doors." Various approaches are being tried in some schools: cellphone lockers at the main entrance, phone collection baskets in classrooms, limiting use to approved areas. "My personal preference," says Lemov, "is a simple policy: You can have your cellphone in your bag, but it must be turned off and cannot be visible during the school day. Not during lunch, not in the hall, not anywhere until after the last bell rings. If there's an emergency and you need to contact your parents, you may use it in the main office. That's it."

Schools, states, and countries that have adopted strict policies report remarkable, immediate changes. "It has transformed the school," said a teacher in the state of Victoria in Australia. "It is so nice walking around the yard seeing students actually interacting again, and no distractions during class." Of course these benefits depend on consistent enforcement by all adults – nobody trying to be "the cool teacher" who allows *sub rosa* use.

School leaders thinking about restricting cellphones should expect "doubts, skepticism, and pushback," says Lemov. The two most common arguments: (a) bans are an infringement on young people's freedom, and (b) students need to be taught how to use their phones responsibly. Lemov disagrees. On the first: "Suggesting that we give students 'freedom' to use cellphones whenever they want is trading valuable and enduring freedom that accrues later for a self-destructive indulgence in the present."

On the second: "Schools are not designed to address, much less unravel, psychological dependence on portable supercomputers designed to disrupt and hold our attention. Teachers already have a daunting list of educational priorities. They are not trained counselors, and the school counselors on staff are in woefully short supply. It's magical thinking to propose that an epidemic that has doubled rates of mental health issues and changed every aspect of social interaction among millions of people is going to go away when a teacher says, 'Guys, always use good judgment with your phones."

Establishing cellphone limits is part one, says Lemov: "Schools themselves will also require rewiring." Here are some key areas:

• *Classroom norms and belonging* – Lemov believes teachers can maintain academic rigor and simultaneously foster a sense of classroom community. He describes a discussion in a New York City high-school math class whose teacher has been working on this dual agenda. A student suddenly realized a problem solution she had been confidently describing was Marshall Memo 953 September 19, 2022 2

incorrect. "Um, I'd like to change my answer," she said, laughing. Her classmates laughed with her, snapping their fingers in support.

"The moment was beautiful because it was lit by the warm glow of belonging," says Lemov. He describes three teaching techniques the teacher had been using that made this possible (each described in Lemov's book, *Teach Like a Champion 3.0*):

- Habits of attention Students actively look at the classmate who is speaking and keep their body language and nonverbal cues positive. "How someone acts in a group setting," says Lemov, "is shaped as much by the audience and the social norms that the speaker perceives as it is by internal factors."
- Habits of discussion Earlier in this class, another student started by saying, "Okay, I agree with Vanessa…" This kind of validation from a classmate (not just from the teacher), says Lemov, "makes it more likely that students feel supported and successful, and that the speaker will contribute to the discussion again."
- Props The finger-snapping was another classroom routine fostered by the teacher, giving students a way to nonverbally affirm a classmate's efforts: *You're doing great! You're family!*

These techniques, says Lemov, are examples of teacher actions that "intentionally establish a culture that reinforces both academic endeavor and a much stronger sense of belonging... It's a deliberate rewiring of social norms to maximize positive outcomes... Engineering the classroom to ensure positive peer-to-peer norms is about honoring young people and creating an environment that not only maximizes their learning but also their belonging – the pervading senses that *School is for me* and *I am successful here*." Of course establishing these norms takes hard, day-by-day work by teachers, but the results can be amazing.

• *Extracurricular activities* – This is an area where connectedness and belonging can thrive – if it's handled well. Lemov describes how a school in Nashville decided on a major expansion of its after-school sports programs, aiming to allow students to build relationships with trusted adults, explore their identities, and perform in front of a crowd. There were extended tryouts so more students could participate, coaches were recruited based on their ability to build community as well as sports expertise, and cheerleaders, songs, and chants helped attract sizeable audiences.

• *Character education and social-emotional learning* – Lemov suggests integrating these into the school day rather than bringing in outside programs. Positive character traits should be "caught, sought, and taught," he says, quoting his co-author Hilary Lewis. For example, gratitude can be fostered in school meetings in which peers and adults regularly get public shout-outs. "If you continually share and expect to be sharing examples of things you are grateful for," says Lemov, "you start looking for them. You begin scanning the world for examples of good things to appreciate and notice more of the good that surrounds you. Gratitude is a well-being builder."

• *Concentration skills – and time to chat* – Schools need to create blocks of time where students can "rebuild their attentional skills and experience the full value of connected social

interaction," says Lemov. "They must also protect students' opportunities to socialize with one another."

<u>"Take Away Their Cellphones"</u> by Doug Lemov in *Education Next*, Fall 2022 (Vol. 22, #4, pp. 8-16); the first part of this summary is in Memo 952.

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2. How Principals Can Get Into Classrooms for Informal Visits

In this *Principal Center* article, Justin Baeder has this to say about classroom observations: "Instructional leaders who want to get into classrooms will never 'find' the time... Simply 'trying' to get into classrooms will result in sporadic, inconsistent visits – even if your goals are ambitious... It's essential to *make* time – and protect it from some (but not all) interruptions." Baeder has these suggestions for keeping up a steady pace of short, unannounced classroom visits, each followed by a face-to-face conversation with the teacher:

• Break up large blocks of time into smaller chunks. The conventional wisdom for classroom visits is to "block it out," scheduling significant amounts of time. The problem with this, says Baeder, is that these blocks usually occur only in the morning, which means afternoon classes won't be observed, and if there's an interruption, there's no fallback and zero classroom visits will happen that day. Instead...

• Identify specific time slots when you can realistically make visits – for example, right after a meeting or a student supervision duty that takes you out of your office. It's a good idea to identify more slots than you need in case one of them is interrupted.

• Plan, but don't over-plan. "It's important to balance intentionality with flexibility," says Baeder. If you try to schedule classroom observations days in advance, you'll have to constantly modify the schedule because of interruptions, teacher absences, and other events you can't foresee. Instead...

• Decide on a numerical goal for the number of visits per day (he suggests three) and fit them in, working around other responsibilities, striving to hit the target every day. It's helpful to have teachers' schedules at your fingertips so you'll know when they're teaching different subjects and when they have lunch and planning breaks.

• Establish a protocol for situations when you should be interrupted while making classroom visits. It's not wise to leave instructions to *never* call you during observations, says Baeder: "Instead, it's best to protect against *some* interruptions, while remaining available for real emergencies." He suggests these five categories for office staff to keep in mind:

- Interrupt Call me immediately for example, there's a major student discipline problem or safety issue or a 911 call.
- Consult Let me know about the issue right away so I can decide if I should interrupt a classroom visit for example, a "frequent flyer" student is sent to the office but might be able to sit and wait until the principal gets back.
- Inform Let me know about the issue as soon as I'm free for example, the superintendent calls asking about the date of the open house and saying she will attend.

- Document Handle the issue and document it, but don't bother informing me directly for example, minor first aid is administered to a student.
- Handle Take care of the issue yourself; no need to inform me for example, a parent calls inquiring about the date of the open house, or a vendor stops by without an appointment.

"A key step," says Baeder, "is to talk with your office staff (and any other administrators on your team) and set expectations for how to handle various issues. You can expect this to involve some trial and error, but you'll quickly get on the same page."

• It there's more than one administrator doing classroom observations, Baeder suggests that (a) each person visit only the teachers they personally supervise, (b) they coordinate schedules so one person is "on call" at any given time, and (c) the team meets frequently to keep each other accountable and discuss the substance of what they're observing and any schoolwide trends and issues.

• Address productivity challenges. Paperwork and e-mails can keep administrators from visiting classrooms. "You don't need to finish *all* your other work," says Baeder, 'but if you get it under control, you'll at least feel confident enough to step away from the office for a few minutes." The threshold for liberation is having obligatory paperwork *under control*.

<u>"How To Schedule and Protect Time for Classroom Walkthroughs</u>" by Justin Baeder in *The Principal Center*, September 16, 2022; see Baeder's excellent article on time management and work-life balance in Memo 729. Baeder can be reached at justin@principalcenter.com. <u>Back to page one</u>

3. How Instructional Coaches Can Work Their Way Into Classrooms

"Coaches are called upon to provide productive, job-embedded professional development for teachers," say Jen Munson (Northwestern University) and Evthokia Stephanie Saclarides (University of Cincinnati) in this *Elementary School Journal* article, "but their capacity to do so hinges on gaining access to classrooms." Norms of teacher autonomy and instructional coaches' lack of positional authority make it difficult to get into many classrooms. "Without access," say Munson and Saclarides, "coaches have limited opportunities to affect teachers' and students' learning."

Through interviews with a district's math, literacy, and technology coaches, Munson and Saclarides identified more than three dozen strategies for overcoming these barriers, and grouped them in the following categories:

• Establishing oneself as a coach:

- Building relationships spend time getting to know teachers and administrators on a professional level.
- Building trust as a partner assure teachers of confidentiality that information won't be shared with others.
- Demonstrating instructional competence teach a model lesson to show you're a "good" teacher.

- Demonstrating reliability – follow through on your promises to teachers and students; Marshall Memo 953 September 19, 2022

- Praising the teacher give genuine professional compliments.
- Taking a nonjudgmental approach position yourself as nonevaluative and teachers as competent partners.
- Valuing teachers' time show up on time for meetings, don't overwhelm teachers with too many ideas, and don't ask them to engage in wasteful activities.
- *Defining the work:*
 - Clarifying your role as a coach it's to support teachers' instructional growth and students' learning, steering clear of administrative activities.
 - Making coaching routine convey that participating in coaching is a normal and expected aspect of teacher learning.
 - Normalizing presence in classrooms visit frequently during instruction (prior to establishing a coaching partnership) to make teachers comfortable with your presence.
 - Positioning yourself as a learner discuss your own professional learning curve, now and in the past.

• Outside-the-classroom support:

- Advocating for coaching time and resources secure meeting times, books, technology, supplies, and funds for substitutes.
- Attending professional development with teachers model a learning stance, talk about PD content, and build a shared understanding of initiatives.
- Attending teacher team meetings sit in on PLCs and planning sessions with an eye to supporting teacher learning and getting into individual classrooms.
- Communicating through a variety of channels use e-mails, memos, bulletin boards, perhaps a newsletter to share ideas with teachers.
- Leading professional development present workshops that give teachers an opening to ask for coaching.
- Supporting teachers' growth plans and evaluations offer support in reaching district goals and earning good ratings from the principal.
- Direct offers of coaching:
 - Beginning with eager teachers this creates momentum and word-of-mouth buzz.
 - Offering coaching propose a coaching cycle, modeling, or co-planning.
 - Offering resources provide, recommend, or make available materials that meet a teacher's needs.
 - Leveraging administrative directives use a teacher's growth plan or test results to initiate coaching.
- Building knowledge of each teacher:
 - Attending to the teacher's goals and needs Ask what teachers want to learn, what they need to do their work, and the goals they've set for themselves and their students.
 - Building knowledge for coaching Become expert in the resources, standards, systems, data, and tools that will be helpful working with teachers.

- Coordinating with other instructional leaders Meet with key professionals in the building and attend meetings to integrate coaching with other efforts and to disseminate ideas.
- Learning about school culture Gather information about the school's history, mores, and staff.
- Learning about teachers you're coaching Observe how they engage with curriculum and students and identify possible areas for growth.
- Using data to initiate student-centered discussions Zero in on instructional needs and how to meet them.
- Demonstrating willingness to engage:
 - Being visible and available Make regular, unscheduled visits and be a regular presence in hallways and common spaces.
 - Being flexible Accommodate teachers' schedules, which might mean holding meetings over lunch or virtually.
 - Saying yes Take teachers up on invitations and offers regardless of whether they pertain to teachers' learning.
- Preserving teachers' agency:
 - Allowing teachers to initiate coaching Wait for the teacher to make the first move.
 - Creating expectations of results Build a track record of positive student gains through PD or coaching other teachers.
 - Using the ripple effect Open more classroom doors by successfully working with receptive teachers.

• Indirect strategies:

- Asking to learn by visiting a teacher's classroom Get access by expressing a desire to see a new approach in action or check out instruction at an unfamiliar grade.
- Avoiding naming coaching Don't describe what you're doing as coaching or something that was suggested by an administrator.
- Focusing on students Spend time in a classroom observing and interacting with students rather than what the teacher is doing.
- Using an initiative Get a teacher interested in coaching by discussing a school, district, or state policy that affects classrooms.
- Working with groups of teachers Meet with a team and discuss issues that might lead to one-on-one coaching.
- Pitching in:
 - Helping with daily tasks Make copies, mount bulletin boards, deliver stuff, get technology working, and take on temporary duties.
 - Offering to perform instructional duties Teach a lesson, work with small groups of students, or give diagnostic assessments so the teacher can attend PD or observe a colleague's class.
 - Orienting new teachers Show newly arrived instructors around the school.

<u>"Getting a Foot in the Door"</u> by Jen Munson and Evthokia Stephanie Saclarides in *Elementary* School Journal, September 2022 (Vol. 123, #1, pp. 128-154); the authors can be reached at <u>jmunson@northwestern.edu</u> and <u>saclares@ucmail.uc.edu</u>. Back to page one

4. Parent Involvement That Promotes Student Success

In this article in *Theory Into Practice*, Wendy Grolnick (Clark University) and Eva Pomerantz (University of Illinois/Urbana-Champaign) say that the 2014 book, *The Broken Compass* by Keith Robinson and Angel Harris, challenged the widespread belief that parent involvement in their children's schooling is positive. The authors cited evidence that involvement was not associated with better achievement and can have a number of negative effects. A follow-up article in *The Atlantic* entitled, "Don't Help Your Kids with Homework" picked up on Robinson and Harris's argument and got many educators rethinking the issue.

Grolnick and Pomerantz analyzed decades of research on parent involvement and found that it is "an important and necessary ingredient in children's academic adjustment" and can contribute to student motivation, engagement, and learning. Studies have found that this is especially true when parents' role is affectively positive (showing joy, love, and satisfaction helping their children) and when it promotes children's autonomy. Here's what promoting autonomy looks like:

- Parents trying to understand the child's perspective;
- Providing choice;
- Allowing input on decisions;
- Engaging in joint problem-solving;
- With homework, asking children how they would solve a problem and then providing hints when needed.

Grolnick and Pomerantz's review of the research also found that involvement can have negative effects when parents feel pressure (from the school or when their children aren't doing well) and when their involvement is affectively negative and controlling. Here's what controlling parent behavior looks like:

- Pressuring children with demands, directives, and guilt trips;
- Threatening to withdraw love;
- Not allowing input or dissent;
- Solving problems for the child;
- With homework, taking over as soon as the child is frustrated.

Since there's a basic human need to feel volitional and that one has choice, say Grolnick and Pomerantz, "autonomy-supportive involvement is likely to facilitate children's motivational resources, whereas controlling involvement is likely to undermine such resources." One study found that the more controlling parents were with their fifth graders' homework, the worse children's study habits and achievement were in seventh grade.

Homework has the greatest potential for being a battleground, and Grolnick and Pomerantz have these suggestions on how schools can improve the chance of positive and productive parent involvement:

- Work to create a welcoming school climate.
- Develop positive relationships with parents.
- Convey that parents are partners in their children's happiness and success.
- Communicate regularly with parents about school activities, the curriculum, and academic expectations.
- Give parents permission not to micromanage their kids' homework.
- Help parents feel efficacious in supporting their children; they don't need to know all the answers, just provide good working conditions, positive expectations, and other resources.
- Teachers should send home fewer assignments with right/wrong answers and more that foster exploration with an emphasis on the process, as well as activities that have children play a game with a family member that uses the skills being learned in school.
- Foster a mastery versus a performance orientation.

<u>"Should Parents Be Involved in Their Children's Schooling?</u>" by Wendy Grolnick and Eva Pomerantz in *Theory Into Practice*, Summer 2022 (Vol. 61, #3, pp. 325-335); the authors can be reached at <u>wgrolnick@clarku.edu</u> and <u>pomerntz@illinois.edu</u>. <u>Back to page one</u>

5. Avoiding Hierarchical Thinking About Students

In this *Education Week* article, Jeff Frank (St. Lawrence University) says we aren't paying enough attention to a "fundamental tension" in our schools: "though we claim to value children as individuals, we also sort them into winners and losers" – in these ways:

- Academically grades and class rank;
- Extracurricular chosen for the starting team, class president, first chair violin;
- Socially not invited to the birthday party.

We can't ignore these hierarchies, says Lawrence, because they loom large for students and can affect their mental health in powerful ways.

Some educators try to "wiggle out" of these pressures, says Frank, by focusing on learning styles and multiple intelligences: "A child who does not excel is in fact equally excellent, just in a different way." But he believes this is disingenuous; it ignores the fact that our society values proficiency – in math and science, for example – and we can't fudge the objective criteria for success.

What is to be done? First, says Frank, educators should embrace the idea that "each student has an inherent worth and dignity that is not tied to where they stand in any established hierarchy." Teachers delight in the achievements of their top 10 percent, but should also work tenaciously with their struggling students, bending the curve of achievement in their classes.

Second, schools should "do more to help students listen to their unique calling and feel confident in it," says Frank, "even if it runs counter to what others think is valuable." Teachers, mentors, and counselors are key to students discovering and developing the talents and interests that will guide them to become the person they were meant to be and live a life of purpose.

<u>"The Stubborn Persistence of School Hierarchies</u>" by Jeff Frank in *Education Week*, September 7, 2022 (Vol. 42, #4, p. 19); Frank can be reached at <u>jfrank@stlawu.edu</u>. <u>Back to page one</u>

6. Bringing Music into All Classrooms

"All teachers can use music to help students express emotions and to add joy to the classroom," says Patricia Shehan Campbell (University of Washington) in this article in *American Educator*. She suggests ways that, in all parts of a school, teachers can be "music ambassadors":

- To start the school day on a positive note, perhaps singing *Lean on Me, Here Comes the Sun,* or *Celebration* together;
- To close the day, wrapping up the day's work (So Long, Farewell; Happy Trails);
- To get students' attention, alert them to an announcement, or as a break between activities;
- A listening center to which students can retreat from intense academic work;
- A mood regulator, "enlivening children who appear lethargic, distracted, or crabby;"
- To create a soothing atmosphere during silent reading (*Air on the G String, The Midnight Blues*);
- As stress-reliever in moments of tension, a way to "lift and soothe the spirit," says Campbell;
- For the joy of it, making a classroom experience more vibrant and sparking creativity;
- To enliven ELA, math, science, or history lessons with well-chosen compositions;
- To teach about mathematics songs that get students counting in different languages, and using songs to teach about technical properties: pitch, vibration as frequency, timbre as wave complexity, dynamics as decibels and intensity levels.

"Music brings smiles and tears, energy and stillness, agitation and peace, joy and wonder," says Campbell. "It need not be compartmentalized in schools, nor should it be perceived as inaccessible and unattainable, relegated only to the artist-musician."

<u>"Bonding Through Music"</u> by Patricia Shehan Campbell in *American Educator*, Fall 2022 <u>Back to page one</u>

7. Some Things We Did During the Pandemic That We Should Keep Doing

In this *Education Week* article, Madeline Will says that in recent interviews with educators, she has heard that we have a once-in-a-generation chance to make big changes to a K-12 system that is riddled with inequalities and outdated practices. But teachers and administrators also mentioned Covid-era practices they'd like to continue using:

- Flexibility to conduct some meetings and gatherings online mentioned by 61%
- More attention to student mental health -57%
- Better integration of technology 55%
- Offering remote learning when necessary, e.g., inclement weather 54%

- More/better technology 46%
- More attention to staff mental health -40%
- Improved cleaning protocols 36%
- Better ventilation/HVAC systems 36%
- More wraparound services for student well-being 27%
- More asynchronous learning 20%
- Less focus on standardized testing 12%
- More-flexible teacher work hours -12%

<u>"Teachers Are Ready for Systemic Change. Are Schools?"</u> by Madeline Will in *Education Week*, September 14, 2022 (Vol. 42, #5, pp. 22-25) Back to page one

8. Recommended Graphic Novels for Teens

In this *School Library Journal* feature, Brigid Alverson features graphic novels on history, sci-fi, and humor that are suitable for mature teens:

- The Ghost in You by Ed Brubaker, illustrated by Sean Phillips, grade 9 and up
- Radium Girls by Cy, grade 10 and up
- *Flung Out of Space: Inspired by the Indecent Adventures of Patricia Highsmith* by Grace Ellis, illustrated by Hannah Templer, grade 11 and up
- Revenge of the Librarians by Tom Gauld, grade 7 and up
- Bubble by Jordan Morris and Sarah Morgan, illustrated by Tony Cliff, grade 10 and up
- RetroActive by Ibrahim Moustafa, grade 10 and up
- Never Open It: The Taboo Trilogy by Ken Niimura, grade 9 and up
- One-Star Squadron by Mark Russell, illustrated by Steve Lieber, grade 9 and up
- Accidental Czar by Andrew Weiss, illustrated by Brian "Box" Brown, grade 9 and up

"9 Adult Graphic Novels for Teens" by Brigid Alverson in *School Library Journal*, September 2022 (Vol. 68, #9, pp. 42-45)

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About the Marshall Memo

Mission and focus:

This weekly publication keeps principals, teachers, instructional coaches, superintendents, and other educators well-informed on current K-12 research and ideas. Kim Marshall, drawing on 53 years as a teacher, principal, central office administrator, writer, and consultant, lightens the load of busy educators by serving as their "designated reader."

To produce the Marshall Memo, Kim subscribes to 60 carefully-chosen publications (see list to the right), sifts through more than 150 articles each week, and selects 8-10 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 elinks to full articles when available, and e-mails the Memo to subscribers every Tuesday (with occasional breaks; there are 50 issues a year). Every week there's also a podcast and HTML version.

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- An easily searchable archive of all articles so far
- The "classic" articles from all 19+ years

The Best of the Marshall Memo website:

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Core list of publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

All Things PLC American Educational Research Journal American Educator American Journal of Education American School Board Journal AMLE Magazine ASCA School Counselor ASCD Express Cult of Pedagogy District Management Journal Ed. Magazine Education Digest Education Gadfly Education Next Education Week Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis **Educational Horizons** Educational Leadership Educational Researcher Edutopia Elementary School Journal English Journal Exceptional Children Harvard Business Review Harvard Educational Review Independent School Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk (JESPAR) Kappa Delta Pi Record Knowledge Quest Language Arts Learning for Justice (formerly Teaching Tolerance) Literacy Today (formerly Reading Today) Mathematics Teacher: Learning & Teaching PK-12 Middle School Journal Peabody Journal of Education Phi Delta Kappan Principal Principal Leadership Psychology Today Reading Research Quarterly Rethinking Schools Review of Educational Research School Administrator School Library Journal Social Education Social Studies and the Young Learner Teachers College Record Teaching Exceptional Children The Atlantic The Chronicle of Higher Education The Journal of the Learning Sciences The Language Educator The Learning Professional (formerly Journal of Staff Development) The New York Times The New Yorker The Reading Teacher Theory Into Practice Time Urban Education