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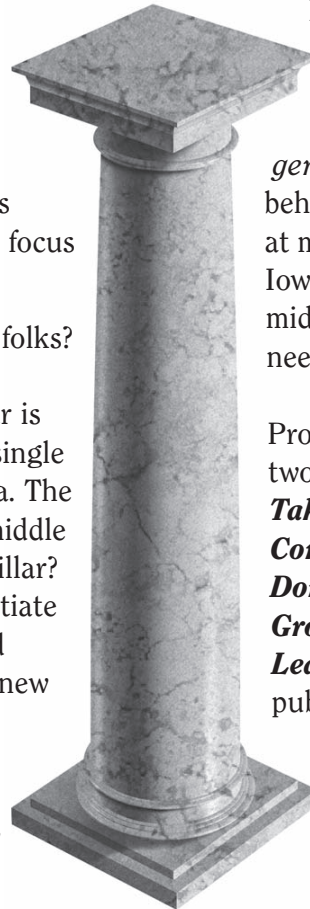
## President's Message

Over the past year I've had the opportunity to explore Dr. Rick DuFour's ideas about schools as "Professional Learning Communities". Dr. DuFour is the long-time Superintendent of the Lincolnshire, Illinois school district and now is an internationally known speaker and author.

Although much of DuFour's experience centers on the high school, I've been struck by the "PLC's" almost hand-in-glove fit with middle level initiatives. Take a look, for instance, at DuFour's "Three Pillars of the Professional Learning Community":

- A solid foundation of collaboratively developed and widely shared mission, vision, values, and goals.
- Collaborative teams that work interdependently to achieve common goals.
- A commitment to continuous improvement and a constant focus on results.

Sound familiar, middle school folks? Just look at *This We Believe* and *Turning Points*, and the first pillar is covered. We walk that talk every single day in middle schools around Iowa. The second pillar? How much more "middle school" can it be? And the third pillar? What about our efforts to differentiate instruction, meet the affective and social needs of our kids, and find new and effective ways to enhance our practice using data? Middle schools reflect the precepts of the Professional Learning Community almost by their very nature.



Still, even the best middle schools can improve. As we approach the end of the year and begin planning for the next, it's a good idea to review the Professional Learning Community's guiding questions:

- What is it we want kids to learn?
- How will we know if they've learned it?
- What is the standard of mastery that they have to demonstrate?
- How do we respond as a school when they don't learn?

Perhaps middle school organization allows more thorough examination of the last question than elementary or high school configurations. As a school - as a "community of learners" - what do we do to *genuinely* leave none of our kids behind? This is the challenge we face at my school. Let's show the state of Iowa and the nation just how well middle level educators can meet kids' needs.

If you'd like more information on Professional Learning Communities, two good sources are: ***Whatever it Takes - How Professional Learning Communities Respond When Kids Don't Learn and On Common Ground - The Power of Professional Learning Communities***. Both are published by the National Education Service and are written by Rick DuFour and other nationally known authors.

Marc McCoy

### Highlights of this issue:

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### Topics for the next issue:

- Mini Grant and Educator of the Year Announcements
- Midwest Regional Conference Information

## Keeping the Target in Sight

By Rick Herrig, Summer Camp Director

Never has it been more important to keep in sight the goal of successful implementation of middle school practices that positively impact student achievement. As a principal (Wood Intermediate School, Davenport), one of my roles is to help staff keep the end in mind despite the distractions of NCLB, political agendas, and the ever-changing landscape of education. One method I employ is a weekly bulletin I send to staff. Each bulletin contains a thought for the week, something that hopefully causes them to pause and reflect on their practices. Who knows if it works...but you can't change people's thoughts unless you first change what goes into their minds. Below you will find several examples I have used this past year. I hope you find them helpful.

### **“I think we're gonna' need a bigger boat!”**

Roy Schneider in a scene from the movie, *Jaws*.

The line above was spoken during a scene in which Roy Schneider sees the giant great white shark for the first time. Surprised by the enormity of the shark that dwarfs the small vessel commissioned to bring the shark in, Schneider exclaims what is obvious to viewers.

Certainly the requirements and challenges of NCLB encircle us as the great white shark did that small fishing vessel. While no larger boat was used to capture and destroy the great white shark, non-traditional fishing methods were ultimately used to destroy it...but not without loss of vessel and some crew. As we tackle the challenges of meeting the requirements of NCLB, keep in mind that its intention is to raise achievement for all students. This might mean we need to examine our traditional fishing methods and explore new ways to bring the shark at bay before it destroys the boat and its crew. One method we can employ is to simply change bait. If we were to go fishing with the intent to catch a specific fish, we might check with a local expert to determine the appropriate bait. We know not all fish hit on one type of bait. If we ignored that expert, used our own bait and didn't catch anything, we shouldn't lament that the fish weren't biting. We don't need a bigger boat; we have a great crew, now let's learn to fish.

### **“Never play leapfrog with a unicorn!”**

The unicorn is a magical creature that brings good luck to those who happen upon it. But the thought for the week suggests that if we misuse our good fortune or opportunity, it could hurt us in the end. The middle school concept, in a lot of ways, is much like the unicorn. Fully implemented, the middle school concept has the magical power to raise student achievement for all students. Yet, many educators

play leapfrog with it by partially implementing recommendations hoping to get the magical results promised. Middle schools across the nation face criticism for lack of academic progress and the middle school concept is considered unsuccessful because so many schools advertise themselves as practicing the middle school concept, when in reality, they are not. Playing leapfrog with a unicorn is not the best use of the good fortune a unicorn can bring....partially implementing the recommendations of the middle school concept is also not the best use of the opportunity to help all students achieve. Examine closely the opportunity you have before you, and oh, look out for the horn.

### **“I know I'm getting better at golf because I am hitting fewer spectators.”**

Former President Gerald Ford

At least in golf you know right away when you hit a bad shot...even the spectators can tell by the flight of the ball whether they are going to get hit or not, and even then, they sometimes can't move fast enough to avoid getting hit. Unfortunately, in teaching, we sometimes don't know whether or not we are getting better at the art of teaching until the spectator gets hit...and then it's too late. But like the game of golf, we can get better at our craft. Continuous professional development, much like the practice it takes to get better at any sport, is the key to finding ways to get better at what we do. Take advantage of the professional development opportunities such as the IAMLE Sectional Conference, IAMLE Summer Camp, and the Making Middle Grades Work Summer Institute, as well as opportunities to develop new instructional strategies through district provided training and watch your game improve. Spectators enjoy golf more when they are not ducking.....FORE!

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## Discover Iowa's Resources

Achievee is a group of 16 Iowa organizations that offer resources, field trips and other information about conservation issues to K-12 educators. Combined, these organizations provide more than 35 programs and services that are student-centered, easy to adapt and promote collaborative learning. Most of the programs and services are interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary and have strong reading components.

For an electronic copy of Achievee's directory of resources, titled, "Discover the possibilities," e-mail Susan Salterberg at [salterberg@uni.edu](mailto:salterberg@uni.edu). Put "Achievee Directory of Resources-IAMLE" in the Subject line.



## Asset Building in Middle School - Everyone Can Build Assets

Many things you personally do—or could do—every day makes a big difference for children and teenagers. As a teacher there are many ways you can help young people succeed.

How? By building developmental assets - positive relationships, experiences, and inner strengths that all young people need to grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. Search Institute research on thousands of young people has shown that having these assets can make a tremendous difference in young people's lives, giving them strength to make positive choices.

Search Institute organizes the 40 developmental assets into eight categories. The first four categories (20 assets) are "external assets" - relationships, experiences, and opportunities provided by nuclear and extended families, caring adults and peers, neighborhoods, and institutions within communities. The other four categories are "internal assets," which focus on the commitments, values, skills, and outlook on life that guide young people's choices.

Research shows the more assets we can build in a student's life the more likely they are to succeed and that negative risk taking behaviors are directly correlated to having fewer assets in their lives. These 8 asset categories are:

- Support
- Empowerment
- Boundaries and expectations
- Constructive use of time
- Commitment to learning
- Positive values
- Social competencies
- Positive Identity

If you are interested in learning more about the 40 Developmental Assets, check out the Search Institute Website [www.searchinstitute.org](http://www.searchinstitute.org) or contact John Walling, President of Iowa Asset Builders Coalition at [john.walling@dmps.k12.ia.us](mailto:john.walling@dmps.k12.ia.us).

## IAMLE Middle Level Educator of the Year Award

### In honor of R. Paul Brimm

Sponsored by QSP

Each year the Iowa Association for Middle Level Education Sponsors the IAMLE Middle Level Educator of the Year Award. The purpose of this award is to recognize an outstanding middle level educator from the state of Iowa.

The criteria for the award recipient centers around middle level educators who are committed to:

- Lifelong learning
- Middle level education
- The philosophy of middle level education

The application forms are available on the IAMLE website. Completed application materials must be submitted by May 20, 2005.

## Recertification workshop is low or no cost

Looking for new ideas for thematic mini-units that will help you meet standards and benchmarks? And are you looking to access to these new ideas for low or no cost?

The University of Northern Iowa offers a recertification workshop, *Waste Reduction: Addressing the Overlooked "R,"* where educators from many disciplines are introduced to resources and lesson plans about conservation issues.

The workshops are subsidized by grants, and solid waste agencies often pay registration fees—which mean that many educators receive recertification credit and \$80 of classroom-ready resources...all at no cost to them.

In addition, UNI hosts a website ([www.uni.edu/ceee/wastereduction](http://www.uni.edu/ceee/wastereduction)) where educators may access a sampling of lesson plans that are introduced during the workshop.

Past workshop participants say:

- "The quality and quantity of the class discussions we had were phenomenal! [Students] would

come to class each day and ask me what we were going to talk about next. They were engaged 100 percent in all of the activities we did..."

—Billie Buss, Hampton-Dumont Middle School, Hampton, Grade 7

- "This was my first attempt at a cross-curricular unit, and...I was able to reach more students, and incorporate more interests, by expanding my curriculum into another field. I would not hesitate to use the unit again."

—Meggan Boyle, Language Arts, Brody Middle School, Des Moines, Grade 8

- "The waste reduction unit is a perfect fit for the objectives of my classroom, as I want to teach values and responsibilities of citizens.

—Lu Ann Link, Science, Stilwell Jr. High, West Des Moines, Grade 7

Watch this newsletter and/or log into [www.uni.edu/ceee/wastereduction](http://www.uni.edu/ceee/wastereduction) for dates for next year's workshops. Or, to receive information about the workshop when it becomes available, contact Susan Salterberg, instructor, by phone at 319-337-4816 or by e-mail at [salterberg@uni.edu](mailto:salterberg@uni.edu).

## Election Results

**The IAMLE board will meet on April 18 at Prairieview Middle School in Waukee. During this meeting, the election results will be certified. They will be posted on the IAMLE website on April 20, 2005.**

# Fifth Annual Summer Camp

Held at Simpson College, Indianola, Iowa  
**SIMPSON COLLEGE**



Presented by



Iowa Association for Middle Level Education

## ***“Increasing Student Achievement Through Teaming”***

**June 13 - June 16, 2005**

This year's camp features both workshop and breakout sessions featuring Turning Points 2000, CEYA, and NMSA consultants. More information coming soon.

For more information regarding this year's camp, contact:

Rick Herrig  
herrigr@davenportschools.org  
Wood Intermediate School  
5701 N. Division Street  
Davenport, IA 52806  
563-391-6350

### **What's Summer Camp About?**

Remember those days at camp when you were young? The things you learned, the friends you made, and the FUN you had can be more than memories of the past. Join us as we re-create some of those by-gone days during three days of camp devoted to best practice in middle level education.

Set in the serene atmosphere of Simpson College, located in Indianola, Iowa, you get the best of both worlds – small-town friendliness and a good mix of city life. Located 12 miles south of Des Moines, Indianola is a town of 13,000 friendly people. Simpson College offers air-conditioned dorms, excellent meeting facilities, and use of computer facilities during camp.

Returning campers will note changes to this year's camp design includes both workshop topics and breakout sessions and Monday's keynote will be a dinner keynote followed by a social.

**Visit [www.iamle.org](http://www.iamle.org) to check out the tentative daily schedule.** This year's keynote and workshop topics will include:

- The Iowa Professional Development Model: Incorporating No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the Teacher Quality Act, and Comprehensive School Improvement in Middle Level Implementation
- Classroom Management Strategies Using the Discipline With Love and Logic Approach
- Advisory and Transition Planning: Creating Your Own District Plan
- Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Practices: Understanding the Backward Design Curriculum Model
- Interpreting Data and Examining Sub Group Strategies That Work
- Instructional Leadership: More Than An Administrator's Job

### **When is Registration Due?**

- Registration materials are due by **May 13, 2005**
- Camp is limited to first **75** individual attendees. A waiting list will be compiled on a first-come basis.

### **Who Can Attend?**

Individuals and teams are welcome to attend. Whether you attend camp as a team or individual, you will leave camp with an understanding of NCLB and the tools to implement current best practice in your classroom, team, or building. Consultants will be available to work with individuals or teams as they develop actions plans. Round table discussion opportunities will exist for individual attendees during team time.

### **What do Registration Fees Include?**

- Lodging (double) at Simpson College's air-conditioned Picken Hall
- Meals (nine included)
- Linen service including pillow, bed and pillow linen, blanket, towel, washcloth, soap, and glass
- Camp T-shirt
- One book: *High-Performing Teams*
- Materials and Handouts

### **Is College Credit Available?**

Yes, Simpson College is offering one- and two-hour graduate credit options. CEU's are also available through AEA 11.

### **Keynote Speakers and Camp Consultants Include:**

(Consultant List Incomplete)

**Dale Henze:** After more than 30 years in education, most at the middle school level, Dale Henze retired in 2001 as principal at Galena (Illinois) Middle School. During his tenure at GMS, he led the faculty and staff through the transition from a traditional junior high to a middle school philosophy helping them earn the distinction as a Blue Ribbon school. A frequent presenter at the Teaching the Transescent Seminar at the University of Wisconsin – Platteville, Dale now serves the university as an adjunct professor in the education department. We welcome his return visit to Simpson and look forward to his presentations on advisory programming, transitioning activities, teaming .

*continued*



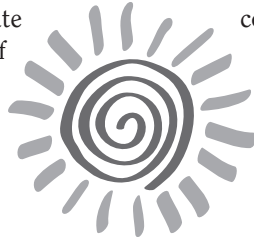
## Summer Camp *continued*

**Rick Herrig:** A former President and Executive Director of IAMLE, Rick Herrig brings a wealth of middle level knowledge and experience to the summer camp. He serves as a North Region Trustee for the National Middle School Association (NMSA) and is currently principal of Wallace W. Wood Intermediate School, Davenport, Iowa. A former middle school teacher, Rick has presented at numerous regional and state conferences throughout the Midwest. Rick returns in his third year as director of summer camp.

**Dr. Kristen Crabtree-Groff:** A former school improvement consultant for Heartland AEA 11 and member of the AEA 11 Middle School Satellite Team, Dr. Crabtree-Groff brings vast experience in school reform. A middle school language arts teacher for 13 years, she also taught exploratory courses including Spanish and Communications. A 1987 graduate of Coe College, Dr. Crabtree-Groff earned her Masters of Science in Teaching, Learning, and Leadership from Drake University in 1993 and has completed her Curriculum Specialist coursework. She earned her Doctorate in Educational Leadership at Drake University in 2003.

**Theresa Hinkle:** Currently the South/East Teacher Trustee for the National Middle School Association, Theresa is a former president of the North Carolina Middle School Association. A former Teacher of the Year recipient for her district and state finalist, she has presented throughout the East and South and worked with many school districts in North Carolina on topics including Reading in the Content Area, Teaming, Interdisciplinary Instruction, and Organizing for Success. A 28-year veteran of middle level, she is National Board Certified in Early Adolescent English/LA and is currently teaching LA/SS on a 3-person interdisciplinary team at Kernodle Middle School, Greensboro, North Carolina.

**Turning Points 2000 Consultant:** Arrangements have been made this year to bring in a consultant from the Turning Points 2000 Regional Center located in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. This consultant will assist participants in the review of their current level of implementation of the recommendations found in Turning Points 2000: Educating Adolescents in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Participant will then develop an action plan designed to enhance their efforts to fully implement Turning Points 2000 recommendations.



*(Complete and detach registration form below)*

## Summer Camp at Simpson College Registration Form

Please print clearly or type: (Return to Rick Herrig, Wood Intermediate School, 5701 N Division St., Davenport, IA 52806)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

School City/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Home City/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Team Members: \_\_\_\_\_ Roommate: \_\_\_\_\_

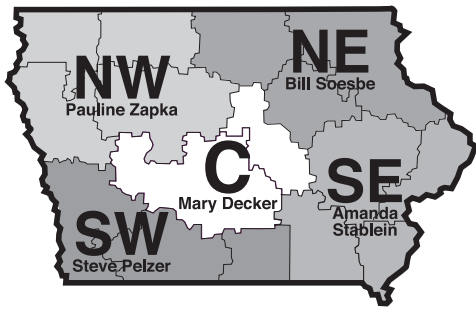
_____ Full Time Camper Single Registration	\$355 (\$380 if single room)	T-shirt Size:
_____ Day Camper Single Registration	\$315	S__ M__ L__ XL__ XXL__
_____ Special School Registration (up to 5 staff)	\$2000 (includes one-day in-service)	
_____ Check enclosed (payable to IAMLE)	P.O.# _____ (\$35 cancellation fee)	

**Note: \$15 Early Bird Discount for schools/individuals who have completed their registration and paid in full by April 15, 2005.**

I A  LE

Iowa Association for Middle Level Education





## Northeast Reflection

It wasn't that long ago that I commented, "I hope your school year is off to a great start." We have just finished the third quarter at Waverly-Shell Rock; where does the time go?

In addition to my teaching responsibilities, I also coach wrestling at the high school. The winter sport seasons are just wrapping up. It is interesting when I work with my athletes that nearly every one of them wants to be the best. They want to stand on top of the podium in the "barn" with 12,000 fans cheering their accomplishments. Although, virtually all of my athletes want that moment, few will achieve it. Why? Just because they want something, even if they really want it, it does not mean they will get it.

How do you become the best? WORK. You need to train with the best. You need to sell out everyday. You need to take risks. You need to learn from your mistakes. You need to push further. You need to be innovative. So...what does that have to do with teaching?

I often hear (and occasionally join in the conversations) teachers talk about being a great teacher or making a positive difference in the lives of their students, but then they do little to become one. They complain about how bad the students are or that parents do not have enough to do with their son or daughter's educational development. They complain about the administration or that they do not get enough support from the community.

Besides making them feel better for the moment, what does this complaining accomplish? We do not condone some of the behaviors of students and parents alike and we might not agree with the administration, but instead of complaining about it all of the time, why not do something about it?

My wrestling team decided early on that instead of complaining about how hard practices were and the amount of time the sport required, they would embrace these aspects. They came to the realizations that these are the "beasts" of the sport, and they are going to be there regardless of the amount of complaining done. So, they made the best of the situation and moved forward.

My student-athletes dreamed, they believed, and more importantly they worked. Their relentless dedication and great attitudes resulted in two state team titles this year, the 3-A traditional team title and a week later the 3-A state dual title. This would not have been possible without the effort of the whole team and the community. Likewise, three young men earned individual titles of their own.

If you want to be the best and make a positive difference, then it is going to take some work. I have never heard anyone say this profession was easy or would get easier the longer one is in it. Instead, new challenges arise and old ones resurface. It is the attitude you have and the way you approach these challenges that are going to determine what impact you have and the degree of your accomplishments.

*Dream and your goals take form,  
Believe and you are halfway there,  
Work and climb to fulfillment.*

Bill Soesbe, NE Sectional Director

## Greetings from Southeast Iowa!

North Scott Junior High School was the site for the Southeast Sectional Conference on March 16. Over 100 participants enjoyed Steve Kwikkel's keynote address about your role in the change process as well as a variety of breakouts discussing classroom practices that work, NCLB, bullying in schools, differentiated instruction, and teaming. A catered meal and plenty of door prizes kept the evening entertaining. Thank you to the planning committee with members from North Scott, Bettendorf, Wood and the AEA and to the attendees for making it an enjoyable conference. If you are doing something cool in your school, please contact me so I can interview you for the next IAMLE newsletter. If I can be of any service to you or your school, contact me at [stableina@davenportschools.org](mailto:stableina@davenportschools.org)

Enjoy the rest of the school year!

Amanda Stablein, SE Director

## Iowa Partner's for Healthy Schools

America's low calcium intake is recognized as a major public health problem. To address this concern, the Midwest Dairy Council will award one \$5,000 grant to an organization or individual proposing innovative, community-based nutrition education programs aimed at empowering kids to become advocates for healthy eating, including three servings of dairy a day, and an active lifestyle, which contribute to a healthy weight.

Grants are open to all groups or individuals in the U.S., including those self-employed, commissioned by or employed by organizations of local government, state and local health departments, regional and state agencies and schools, medical facilities and extension specialists.

The 3-A-Day of Dairy nutrition education program is designed to improve overall diet, by including three servings a day of milk, cheese or yogurt to help children adopt a healthy, active lifestyle.

To access submission guidelines and to download a sample application, please visit [www.midwestdairy.com](http://www.midwestdairy.com). If you don't have Internet access, please contact Kim Polzin at 651-487-4772 or 1-800-406-6455.

**Note: Applications must be postmarked by May 13, 2005**



✓ Have a great idea to improve the experiences of your middle schoolers?

✓ Short on cash?

## An IAMLE mini-grant may be just what you are looking for!

**Amount Available:** A limited number of mini-grants are available in 2005.

**Application Due Date:** Postmarked on or before May 1, 2005.

**Who Qualifies:** Iowa schools whose building configuration includes grades 5-9.

**Project Timeline:** Spring 2005-Fall 2005.

Priority Projects: **The intent of the grant is to fund innovative ideas that improve the school experience of middle level students or enhance team teaching efforts at the middle level.**

Project requirements: **Participants in the IAMLE Mini-Grant Program must share the results of their projects at a Sectional Middle Level Conference and/or at a Midwest Regional Middle Level Conference (Iowa, South Dakota, Nebraska). Additionally, grant recipients are required to publicize their project and funding from IAMLE through the use of local mediums.**

**Statement of Completion:** A final report of the project is due 30 days upon its completion. This report can be completed by answering the questions listed on the IAMLE website (<http://www.iamle.org>) section for mini-grants.

Money Allocated: **Schools that are selected for the mini-grants will receive 50% of the grant when approved. The rest of the funding will be distributed when a Report of Completion is received.**

What is Funded: **Tangibles items needed for the project.**

**What is NOT Funded:** Salaries, stipends, and benefits.

**Application Details:** The application should be no more than two pages in length and should answer the questions listed on the IAMLE website (<http://www.iamle.org>) section for mini-grants.

### Contact Information:

Mr. Bill Soesbe, Northeast Sectional Director  
(319) 352-3632  
[soesbeb@waverly-shellrock.k12.ia.us](mailto:soesbeb@waverly-shellrock.k12.ia.us)

### Submit Application to:

Mr. Steve Kwikkel, Executive Director  
Iowa Association of Middle Level Education  
c/o Waverly-Shell Rock Junior High  
215 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW, Waverly, Iowa 50677  
(319) 352-3632  
[kwikkels@waverly-shellrock.k12.ia.us](mailto:kwikkels@waverly-shellrock.k12.ia.us)

## “Are you shooting postcards?”

Steve Kwikkel – Executive Director

Did the title get your attention? I hope so. I'd like to share with you an idea for a staff development opportunity that you can do

right in your own building and which takes very little time. Whether you can devote thirty minutes or a couple of hours, this video can really challenge your thinking about finding the best answers to everyday problems.

Several years ago I was introduced to a video called *Everyday Creativity*. Produced by Star Thrower Distribution, this video, and the accompanying material, will introduce you to one of National Geographic magazine's top photographers DeWitt Jones. Throughout the video, DeWitt shares with you his philosophy on how he approaches his work as a field photographer and the process he goes through in finding just the right photographs to support someone else's writing. What separates National Geographic magazine from other similar publications is award winning writing AND award winning photography. Being one half of this successful equation requires DeWitt to look beyond the ordinary in search of the extraordinary.

As a field photographer, DeWitt will regularly shoot twenty or more rolls of film or over 400 pictures looking for the photos that will bring to life the featured article. While he admits that most of the photos taken are excellent and could certainly appear in any magazine, he refers to most of these photographs as “postcards.” In other words, most of these ordinary postcard-type photos represent an obvious answer to his current assignment. What he's in search of is that extraordinary photograph or as he refers to it, “Finding the next right answer.”

If it appears this video is about taking risks and moving beyond the obvious you're right on track. As the show continues, DeWitt makes several salient connections between his job as a field photographer for one of the nation's top magazines, and how an individual or system can apply this approach in finding solutions to their own unique challenges. How many times, when faced with a challenge, do we find ourselves accepting or settling on the first right answer that comes our way? While it may appear to be the obvious (best?) solution, do we at all stop and ask ourselves, “Is this THE best solution?” How often are we willing to explore more than one option and truly weigh the merits of each idea? Or, in our rush to move on, are we content to take the first obvious answer allowing us then to move on to our next challenge? In other words, when it comes to finding the best long term solutions to our problems, are we merely shooting postcards?

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St. Paul, MN 551101  
1-800-242-3220 or 651-602-9630



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[www.iamle.org](http://www.iamle.org)

**IAMLE homepage**  
[www.iamle.org](http://www.iamle.org)

The Iowa Association for Middle Level Education - the only affiliate of the National Middle School Association in Iowa - is dedicated to meeting the needs of young adolescents and committed to promoting educational improvement for middle level students.

The IAMLE UPDATE is the official newsletter of the Iowa Association for Middle Level Education and is published four times each academic year. Subscription to the IAMLE UPDATE is included in IAMLE membership dues.

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MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION

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