

Marshall Memo 313

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
December 7, 2009

In This Issue:

1. [Revisiting Dan Lortie's "unholy trinity" from *Schoolteacher*](#)
2. ["Positive deviance" as a strategy for solving difficult problems](#)
3. [Why turnarounds seldom work](#)
4. [Faculty meetings that build skills and school culture](#)
5. [Nutrition 101](#)
6. [Students getting enough sleep](#)
7. [Teaching civility](#)

Quotes of the Week

"When hearing something unusual, do not pre-emptively reject it, for that would be folly. Indeed, horrible things may be true, and familiar and praised things may prove to be lies. Truth is truth unto itself, not because people say it is."

Ibn al-Nafi, 13th-century Muslim physician, quoted in "Memo from Alexandria: Harnessing Darwin to Push an Ancient Intellectual Center to Evolve" by Michael Slackman in the *New York Times*, Nov. 26, 2009 (p. A10)

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/26/world/middleeast/26egypt.html?_r=1&scp=2&sq=Michael%20Slackman&st=cse

"In reality, most attempts at structured inquiry are confined to a few exceptional outliers, or they disappear at the end of preservice teacher education. School development plans are made irrelevant by unanticipated events within 2 years or less; missions collapse when principals or superintendents leave, and streams of other mission-bearing administrators follow them in rapid succession; whole-school self-evaluation exercises are experienced as so exhausting that teachers often feel unable to endure them more than once; and after repeated failures at long-term, whole-school change, teachers in mid-to late career become cynical and concentrate on immediate issues in their own classrooms even more than they did before the reforms were implemented."

Andy Hargreaves and Dennis Shirley (see item #1)

"It's easier to act your way into a new way of thinking than to think your way into a new way of acting."

A maxim used by "positive deviance" advocates (see item #2)

"Convening people so that they can be read to is a disservice to everyone."

Thomas Hoerr (see item #4)

"If you continually expose children to fat, sugar, and salt, they will find those foods to be their friends. They will use them to feel good. If that's the case, it's hard to break the habit."

David Kessler (see item #5)

1. Revisiting Dan Lortie's "Unholy Trinity" from *Schoolteacher*

In this provocative article in *Teachers College Record*, Boston College professors Andy Hargreaves and Dennis Shirley reexamine Dan Lortie's classic 1975 book, *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study*. Lortie argued that most public school teachers share three characteristics:

- *Presentism* – a short-term perspective that prevents them from envisioning or planning collaboratively for long-term, systemic change;
- *Conservatism* – a mistrust of reform initiatives and a reluctance to change familiar classroom practices, even in the face of research findings and pupil learning outcomes suggesting that better approaches are needed;
- *Individualism* – teachers closing their classroom doors and working in isolation from colleagues and administrators, which has been linked to weak teamwork, lower levels of teacher efficacy and self-efficacy, less relational trust, failed innovations and reforms, and lower student achievement.

Lortie believed these three characteristics were mutually reinforcing, and Hargreaves and Shirley summarize his central conclusion: "Only if educators and their allies among policy makers and the public found ways to break this unholy trinity... could teaching ever become transformed into a powerful professional activity worthy of a nation's children and reflecting the true potential of its educators."

Has there been progress since *Schoolteacher* was published? Cohn and Kottkamp did a study in 1993 and found the three tendencies had become *even more pronounced*. This revived interest in Lortie's book and helped spur a number of initiatives aimed at getting teachers to emerge from their classroom silos and collaborate with colleagues to implement effective practices – including professional learning communities (PLCs) and collaborative coaching and learning (CCL). Hargreaves and Shirley wondered if any of this made a difference, and set about reviewing the literature and looking at a reform initiative in 300 underperforming U.K. schools.

Lortie believed that presentism is *endemic* to teaching. Here's how he put it: "Teachers perceive their psychic rewards as scarce, erratic, and unpredictable. They are vulnerable to the ebb and flow of student response; even highly experienced teachers talk about 'bad years.' Uncertainties in teaching inhibit the feeling that future rewards are ensured, and such doubts support the position that it is unwise to sacrifice present opportunities for future possibilities."

Philip Jackson had a different word for this phenomenon: *immediacy*. "For Jackson," explain Hargreaves and Shirley, "the pressing and insistent nature of crowded classroom life

for teachers was one of its most salient features. The demands on teachers to organize, lead, and react to the vagaries and vicissitudes of large groups of energetic children gathered together in one place meant that teachers had few opportunities for long-term planning to develop cultures of inquiry and instructional modification that might enhance the quality of learning for all children.”

Hargreaves and Shirley examined a number of initiatives designed to encourage teachers to get involved in collaborative, reflective, long-term school improvement, and their findings indicate that these well-intended programs have made teachers’ presentism *worse*. “In reality,” they conclude, “most attempts at structured inquiry are confined to a few exceptional outliers, or they disappear at the end of preservice teacher education. School development plans are made irrelevant by unanticipated events within 2 years or less; missions collapse when principals or superintendents leave, and streams of other mission-bearing administrators follow them in rapid succession; whole-school self-evaluation exercises are experienced as so exhausting that teachers often feel unable to endure them more than once; and after repeated failures at long-term, whole-school change, teachers in mid- to late career become cynical and concentrate on immediate issues in their own classrooms even more than they did before the reforms were implemented.”

So Hargreaves and Shirley believe that the *endemic* presentism of teaching has been exacerbated by what they call *adaptive* presentism – teachers reacting to the pressure of preparing for high-stakes tests, covering wide swaths of curriculum, adopting new teaching materials, being required to take part in poorly implemented “data-driven instruction”, and adjusting (often cynically) to one new initiative after another.

This was true in the U.K. initiative that Hargreaves and Shirley studied, Raising Achievement Transforming Learning (RATL), which was designed to get teachers involved in short-term, medium-term, and long-term reflection on their work. What happened was that teachers leaned heavily toward the short-term aspects of the program. Once again, adaptive presentism was heightened and very few teachers thought beyond immediate issues in their classrooms and schools. “Schools were not merely attracted to short-term strategies,” conclude the authors, “they were *addicted* to them... The rush to raise achievement injected teachers with a parallel ‘rush’ of short-term successes.”

Hargreaves and Shirley believe that the increasing presentism of teaching parallels and is influenced by the presentism of our post-industrial society. The characteristics of the “new capitalism” – quarterly gains, short-term contracts, outsourcing, temporary and flexible labor, the end of tenured and secure careers with benefit awaiting at the end – all these “break apart the relationships of loyalty, trust, and pride in one’s craft or profession that bond working groups together and develop agreed and understood standards among them... In postindustrial presentism, people ‘delay frustration, not gratification.’ They live on credit, lift their faces, spend their children’s inheritance, and shop in orgies of consumption in which everyone is encouraged to imagine that they will be forever young in a world that gives no thought to tomorrow.” Hargreaves and Shirley believe that the U.K. teachers involved in the RATL

schools had their moral purposes displaced and their capacity to develop transformational change agendas of their own eroded by the imperatives of the program.

“In getting teachers and schools to engage in long-term transformation,” they sadly conclude, “educational leaders are therefore confronting much more than an organizational obstacle or a technical impediment to implementation. Contemporary educational change efforts are embedded in a sea of social, economic, and cultural conditions that persistently pull people back to, and endlessly immerse them in, short-term orientations.” The result: all too many educators are still stuck in Lortie’s “unholy trinity” of presentism, conservatism, and individualism and are far less likely to succeed in the core mission of schools – preparing each generation of children for the future.

“Our challenge therefore,” say Hargreaves and Shirley, “is to live like little children no longer, absorbed in the present and oblivious to our future. It is living as morally responsible adults who attend to the present through giving ourselves to the future within an inclusive and inspiring vision and language of educational improvement that connects the learning of individuals to the lives of their communities and the future of their societies. If we can find and form such a vision beyond the immediate arithmetic of narrowed achievement gaps, there is a chance that we can bequeath to the next generation a world that will be worth inheriting.”

“The Persistence of Presentism” by Andy Hargreaves and Dennis Shirley in *Teachers College Record*, November 2009 (Vol. 111, #11, p. 2505-2534), no free e-link available

[Back to page one](#)

2. “Positive Deviance” as a Strategy for Solving Difficult Problems

In this intriguing *Boston Sunday Globe* article, Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow tells how a Save the Children medical team handled itself in a rural area of Pakistan, where three traditional practices resulted in high rates of infant illness and mortality: fathers not being present during childbirth; cutting the umbilical cord with a bamboo stick; and feeding newborns ghutti, a herbal mixture, before beginning nursing. Instead of explaining the benefits of modern methods and trying to get people to change, the outsiders went on a “treasure hunt”, talking at length to people in area villages. They found that not all families were following the traditional practices: a few mothers breast-fed their babies before giving them ghutti; one father had purchased a clean razor blade and asked the attendant to use it to cut his child’s cord; and several fathers got extra food and money for their wives in case something went wrong. Most of the babies born to these outlier families were thriving.

In a series of well-attended meetings in the area, Save the Children staff members described how these unorthodox practices were producing healthier babies. Husbands said to themselves, “If he can do it, why can’t I?” and families began to change their practices. Six months after the Save the Children team left, the villages reported that not a single newborn had died.

This is an example of the “positive deviance” approach to bringing about behavioral and social change. “Instead of imposing solutions from without,” explains Tuhus-Dubrow, “the

method identifies outliers in a community who, despite having no special advantages, are doing exceptionally well. By respecting local ingenuity, proponents say, the approach galvanizes community members and is often more effective and sustainable than imported blueprints... Unlike a lab experiment or ‘best practices’ transferred from elsewhere, the strategies have already been shown to work in context.”

Positive deviance is now being used extensively in developing countries – lowering the elementary-school dropout rate in Argentina, preventing female genital mutilation in Egypt, and reintegrating Ugandan girls who had been abducted by rebel soldiers. It’s also being used in U.S. hospitals, gang-prevention efforts, exercise programs, businesses, and schools. For example, a school in New Jersey noticed that some teachers were greeting every student at the classroom door, creating a friendlier and more caring atmosphere and building personal relationships, and that some students had strong adult role models in their lives. The school set about replicating both practices and began to watch for other practices that seemed to produce better results. “Through this process, you’re having a dialogue,” says Christine DeMarsico, a teacher at the school, contrasting it to a more typical school where “teachers are pretty much islands.” [Social psychologist and Efficacy Institute CEO Jeffrey Howard often talks about “the teacher in Room 306” – the isolated instructor who beats the demographic odds and gets amazing results. The achievement surge in the Brazosport, Texas schools in the 1990s happened when central-office personnel heard about one such teacher, Mary Barclay, and spread her methods to the rest of the district.]

Adherents of this strategy make four interesting observations. First, the positive deviants themselves are often unaware of the value of what they are doing – in fact, they are sometimes ashamed of it, as was the case with bare-subsistence Vietnamese villagers who fed their families crabs – a stigmatized food that nonetheless delivered far more protein than what most other villagers were eating, resulting in healthier family members. Second, the solutions discovered through this process, while ingenious, are often quite obvious, but for some reason were being ignored. “It’s the process of engagement and mobilization that seems to enable people to change their behavior,” says Tuhus-Dubrow.

Third, getting people to try things is more effective than trying to talk them into changing their minds. A favorite maxim of advocates of positive deviance is that “it’s easier to act your way into a new way of thinking than to think your way into a new way of acting.” Once people try effective strategies, their attitudes follow. And finally, positive deviance seems to work best with the most challenging problems, perhaps because everything else has failed and people are highly motivated to find a solution.

This strategy does have limitations. It requires a high degree of motivation and commitment; it seems to work best in cohesive communities; it can’t be a substitute for government aid and vaccines; and it’s limited to ideas that have already been tried and misses brilliant strategies that nobody has thought of yet. But this approach can be highly effective. “At bottom,” concludes Tuhus-Dubrow, “positive deviance amounts to simple common sense. But that may be what’s most revelatory about it. Instead of throwing money at a problem or devising grand solutions, it urges us to look a little more closely at what’s already happening...”

The solutions tend to last longer because it's just human nature that we don't turn our backs on what we create."

"The Power of Positive Deviants: A Promising New Tactic for Changing Communities from the Inside" by Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow in *The Boston Globe*, Nov. 29, 2009 (p. K1-K2); the author can be reached at rebecca.tuhusdubrow@gmail.com.

[Back to page one](#)

3. Why Turnarounds Seldom Work

In this *Education Next* article, Andy Smarick of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute argues that trying to turn around dysfunctional inner-city schools doesn't work and we should close them and start fresh. "Done right," he argues, "not only will this strategy help the students assigned to these failing schools; it will also have a cascading effect on other policies and practices, ultimately helping to bring about healthy systems of urban public schools."

Why is Smarick so pessimistic about turnarounds? First, because of what he calls the "Law of Incessant Inertia" – once a school becomes dysfunctional, it rarely changes. For example, when California targeted its bottom 20 percent schools for intervention, only 109 of 968 elementary schools and only 1 of 394 high schools in this category made exemplary progress, with only 25 percent meeting schoolwide and subgroup growth targets. "Turnaround efforts have for the most part resulted in only marginal improvements," said one group of analysts. "Promising practices have failed to work at scale when imported to troubled schools."

Second, Smarick says that *describing* the characteristics of effective urban schools offers very little guidance on how make a dysfunctional school effective. Turnaround advocates are fond of quoting Immanuel Kant – "The actual proves the possible" – but Smarick says a Thomas B. Fordham Foundation study is more accurate when it says, "Being a high-performing school and becoming a high-performing school are very different challenges." Highly effective urban schools like those run by KIPP and Achievement First are virtually all start-ups, says Smarick, and KIPP's brief foray into turning around existing schools failed.

Third, Smarick cites the "Law of Ongoing Ignorance" – despite years trial and error, we still don't know the secret for turning around failing schools. Interventions that work in some schools don't work in other similar schools, he says, and researchers have been unable to pinpoint a universal set of strategies. "The history of urban education tells us emphatically that turnarounds are not a reliable strategy for improving our very worst schools," he concludes.

Finally, Smarick says that turnaround efforts in the private sector have been equally unsuccessful. A study by Hess and Gift of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Business Process Engineering (BPE) turnaround attempts reported success in only one-third of attempts. And researchers believe turnarounds are more difficult in public schools than they are in the private realm.

A much better solution for failing schools, says Smarick, is establishing a clear process for closing them and allowing successful models to start from scratch. He likes the charter accountability model, with all schools being required to develop a five-year contract with performance measures and a clear understanding that consistent failure to meet goals in key

areas would result in the school being closed. This would prevent students being trapped in schools that aren't improving, would light a fire under leaders and staff in failing schools, and would make way for newcomers who would be much more likely to do better.

Smarick sums up his strategy: close failing schools, open new schools, replicate great schools, repeat. "Those hesitant about replacing turnarounds with closures should simply remember that a failed business doesn't indict capitalism and an unseated incumbent doesn't indict democracy," he says. "Though temporarily painful, both are essential mechanisms for maintaining long-term systemwide quality, responsiveness, and innovation. Closing America's worst urban schools doesn't indict public education nor does it suggest a lack of commitment to disadvantaged students. On the contrary, it reflects our insistence on finally taking the steps necessary to build city school systems that work for the boys and girls most in need."

"The Turnaround Fallacy" by Andy Smarick in *Education Next*, Winter 2010 (Vol. 10, #1, p. 20-26) <http://educationnext.org/the-turnaround-fallacy/>

[Back to page one](#)

4. Faculty Meetings That Build Skills and School Culture

In this *Education Week* article, St. Louis principal Thomas Hoerr says that he often floats a radical suggestion to audiences of teachers and administrators: What if faculty meetings were voluntary? Laughter is a common reaction, along with the assumption that no one would attend. Why? "It's clear that for all our talk about turning schools into learning communities and embracing collegiality and collaboration," says Hoerr, "we have fallen short in making faculty meetings times for learning valued by everyone."

But faculty meetings *can* be substantive and enjoyable, Hoerr says – provided that principals overcome five incorrect beliefs and work with their colleagues to plan effectively:

- *Myth #1 – Faculty meetings are an ideal time to make announcements and share information.* "Convening people so that they can be read to is a disservice to everyone," says Hoerr. Routine information is much more efficiently shared in a staff newsletter or by e-mail. Faculty meetings should be reserved for real discussions about teaching and learning and face-to-face questions and clarifications of policies. "Faculty meetings are a time to develop a sense of teamwork," he says, "to remind everyone that we're all in this together. Schools need to remember to apply the same principles to adult learning that they do to student learning. The chances for success are best when the learner is motivated and engaged, and when the lessons are appropriate to the individual."

- *Myth #2 – Faculty meetings need to be planned and run by administrators.* Not so, says Hoerr. Meetings are far more productive if teachers are heavily involved in planning agendas and play a role in running each meeting. In his school, teachers plan discussions on topics like multiple intelligences, new approaches to improving student behavior, and building community.

- *Myth #3 – Administrators need to be in charge of meetings.* There certainly are times when the principal needs to take the lead, but Hoerr believes that many agenda items are best

facilitated by teachers – for example, sharing insights learned from an outside workshop, discussing a journal article, sharing new skills or information gained by a department or grade-level team, throwing out an issue for discussion, and asking peers for help with a troublesome issue. He also suggests holding meetings in different venues – teachers’ classrooms, perhaps an off-site location every once in a while. “In a good school,” says Hoerr, “teachers and administrators learn with and from one another.”

• *Myth #4 – Faculty meetings should focus only on content.* Hoerr believes that part of every meeting should be spent on more open-ended topics and suggests devoting ten minutes at the beginning of meetings to small-group sharing on questions like:

- What have you done in your classroom during the past week that makes you proud?
- What have you done in the past week that you’d do differently if you had the chance?
- What is frustrating you?
- Who has been helpful to you in the past week?
- How can the administration help you become a better teacher?
- Is there a curriculum topic that we should de-emphasize?
- How would you define “joyful learning”? (This is part of his school’s mission statement.)

“Often, the dialogue that begins at a faculty meeting carries over to the teachers’ lounge or parking lot,” says Hoerr.

• *Myth #5 – Faculty meetings should be all business.* “Congeniality is the base of collegiality,” he says, and recommends injecting into every meeting activities that make people appreciate their colleagues and laugh – for example, sharing successes, stories, humor, food, anything that works.

If principals can overcome these myths, they can orchestrate meetings that build skills and teamwork. The ultimate measure: when a faculty meeting is cancelled, people are genuinely disappointed.

“What If Faculty Meetings Were Voluntary?” by Thomas Hoerr in *Education Week*, Dec. 2, 2009 (Vol. 29. #13, p. 26-27) <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/12/02/13hoerr.h29.html>

[Back to page one](#)

5. Nutrition 101

(Originally titled “Finding Our Way Back to Healthy Eating: A Conversation with David Kessler”)

“Why does that chocolate chip cookie have such power over me?” asks physician and former U.S. Food and Drug Administration commissioner David Kessler in this *Educational Leadership* interview with Amy Azzam. “Once I start eating it, why can’t I stop?” Kessler then zeroes in on the seductive power of three substances that are prime causes of obesity, diabetes, and other ailments. “What we’ve done in the United States is taken fat, sugar, and salt and put them on every corner,” he says. “We’ve made food available 24/7, and we’ve made it socially acceptable to eat anytime.” The cocaine-like effect repeatedly triggers the brain’s dopamine circuitry, creating a craving for more junk food. “If you continually expose

children to fat, sugar, and salt, they will find those foods to be their friends,” Kessler continues. “They will use them to feel good. If that’s the case, it’s hard to break the habit... The greatest gift you can give someone is to lay down healthy eating patterns from the beginning, to find foods that are rewarding as well as healthy.”

Kessler also talks about cues – subconscious associations that trigger the desire for certain foods. “I walk down a street that I walked down six months earlier,” he says. “I’ve forgotten entirely that on that previous walk, I went into a store that sold chocolate-covered pretzels. Now that I’m back on that street, I start thinking about chocolate-covered pretzels... That cue focuses your attention. It stimulates thoughts of wanting. You get this momentary pleasure from responding to the cue – by eating the chocolate-covered pretzels. The next time you get cued, you do it again and repeat the cycle... Once you lay down those motivational circuits... they stay with you for a lifetime. Kids are the most vulnerable.”

Kessler says that all this has profound implications for school lunch programs, what’s in vending machines, when we eat, how we use food, and school nutrition education programs. “The best thing that schools can do is to teach kids about nutrition and help them understand that fat, sugar, and salt – although they taste good for the moment – will only stimulate them to come back for more. That if they use food as a reward or for purposes other than for nutrition and fuel, they’re contributing to laying down that neural circuitry. That if they use food to regulate mood, then they’re going to be stuck in that cycle for the rest of their lives.”

“Finding Our Way Back to Healthy Eating: A Conversation with David Kessler” by Amy Azzam in *Educational Leadership*, December 2009/January 2010 (Vol. 67, #4, p. 6-10), http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership.aspx

[Back to page one](#)

6. Students Getting Enough Sleep

(Originally Titled “Sleep: The E-ZZZ Intervention”)

“Do some of your students appear sleepy, spacey, or groggy?” ask University of Missouri/Columbia professors Christi Bergin and David Bergin in this *Educational Leadership* article. “Do they misbehave or have lower-than-expected achievement?” It’s probably because they’re sleep-deprived! Studies have shown that 85 percent of adolescents are mildly sleep deprived, and 10-40 percent may have serious sleep deprivation. Many teens get into a pattern of staying up late on weeknights, sleeping *a lot* on weekends, and then having a “jet lag” effect the following week. Students who don’t get enough sleep are more restless, irritable, and impulsive. They tend toward depression, have lower self-esteem, and do less well academically. Interestingly, sleep-deprived students may not necessarily feel sleepy; impairment shows up in other ways.

How much sleep do kids need? The Bergins endorse the “10 for 10” rule – 10 hours of sleep for ten-year olds, more for younger children and somewhat less for teens, except during puberty, when young adolescents need 9-10 hours of sleep.

What can schools do to help deal with sleep deprivation? The Bergins suggest the following:

- Communicate basic information about sleep to parents, including the importance of a regular bedtime, with no more than a two-hour difference on weekends.
- Contact parents when a student shows signs of sleep deprivation.
- End school activities by 9:00 p.m. and make sure traveling sports teams and other groups keep sane hours.
- Don't assign homework that requires burning the midnight oil, and give plenty of advance warning for big projects.
- Advocate for a later start time for high schools; studies show that students in schools starting at around 8:40 get five hours more sleep a week and perform better.

“Parents and schools need to join forces to help students develop healthy sleep habits,” conclude the Bergins. “If they do so, students’ socioemotional well-being and academic achievement should improve, and educators’ jobs should become easier.”

“Sleep: The E-ZZZ Intervention” by Christi Bergin and David Bergin in *Educational Leadership*, December 2009/January 2010 (Vol. 67, #4, p. 44-47), http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/dec09/vol67/num04/Sleep@_The_E-ZZZ_Intervention.aspx

[Back to page one](#)

7. Teaching Civility

In this *Education Week* article, Atlanta-based consultant Peter Cobb bemoans the “fractured and hugely uncivil” discourse in the political realm recently – for example, some of last summer’s town hall meetings on health care. “I feel as though we now default to intemperate irascibility as the norm,” he says, “and it is hijacking and handicapping our shared future.” Cobb doesn’t object to people holding strong beliefs and voicing their feelings: “I like it when people declare their passion, when they are willing to state their moral outrage, when they challenge and confront those who would invite complacency in the face of grievous harm and implacable enmity. I am an advocate for the cultivation of maverick sensibilities and the capacity of our students to stand sturdily in places of discomfort.”

But students also need to learn civility in how all this is expressed. “The stakes are high for getting this right,” says Cobb. “We are educating the next generation of citizens and leaders. They are going to have to be able to reach across all kinds of divides, be those ideological, racial, gender-based, generational, national, ethnic, religious, or economic. They are going to have to find ways of listening even when one is disposed not to. They are going to have to find ways of creating new and common ground. They are going to have to be able to put common interest above self-interest, the greater good above parochial good.”

So it’s urgent that schools teach students to carry on a robust debate “in ways that allow for all to be heard,” he concludes. “Let us be deliberate in this coming year about providing public squares and public times for such to be practices, moderated by moderation, facilitated by empathy, guided by reason.”

“Cultivating Civility: Can Schools Play a Role?” by Peter Cobb in *Education Week*, Dec. 2, 2009 (Vol. 29. #13, p. 27) http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/12/02/13cobb_ep.h29.html

[Back to page one](#)

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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 Journal of Education
American School Board Journal
ASCD, CEC SmartBriefs, Daily EdNews
Catalyst Chicago
Changing Schools (McREL)
Ed. Magazine
EDge
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Week
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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
New York Times
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
The Atlantic Monthly
The Language Educator
The New Yorker
The Reading Teacher
Theory Into Practice
Tools for Schools/The Learning Principal