# *Marshall Memo 78*

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
March 14, 2005

## In This Issue:



## Quotes of the Week

"Prior to implementation of formative assessments… teachers were shooting in the dark. They were standing at the goal line in a dark gymnasium taking aim at a hoop they could not see. Now, we can see the goal and have a much better chance of ringing the basket!"

Susan Trimble, Anne Gay, and Jan Matthews (see item #1)

"Teachers who have not been trained, prepared, or supported well in using assessment data to modify instruction often become frustrated and resist involvement in analyzing student data."

Susan Trimble, Anne Gay, and Jan Matthews (*ibid*.)

"I believe the greatest challenge facing educators worldwide is in empowering all students to master 21st-century skills. These include "thriving on chaos" (making rapid decisions based on incomplete information to resolve novel situations); collaborating with a diverse team face-to-face or across distance; and creating, sharing, and mastering knowledge by filtering a sea of quasi-accurate information."

Christopher Dede (in *Ed.*, Winter 2004-05, Vol. XLVIII, #2, p. 28, no e-link)

"A student learns honesty in a deep and lasting way when a teacher explains why cheating undermines the academic mission, when a parent demonstrates the importance of telling the truth for family solidarity, when a sports coach discourages deceit because it defeats the purpose of fair competition, and when a friend shows why lies destroy the trust necessary for a close relationship."

William Damon (see item #2)

"The really important part about life is not your clothes, your face, your money, or what's wrong with you; it's you. It's what's beneath it all that makes you!"

An eighth grader after a service learning project (see item #3)

## 1. A Georgia District Uses Interim Assessments to Boost Learning

In this illuminating article, three Georgia educators describe the Camden County Schools' implementation of interim assessments beginning in 1997. By 2002 the district, whose per-pupil spending is among the lowest in the state (171st out of 180 school districts), raised its English language arts and math achievement into the top thirty districts on statewide rankings. Camden County gives much of the credit for this achievement to the implementation of interim assessments and the effective use of data by teacher teams in each school.

What makes this article so helpful is its detailed description of teachers' initial resistance to using interim tests and the process the district used to overcome teachers' misgivings. As the authors put it, "With the current frenzy to raise test scores, there is little attention being paid to teacher development in learning to use data to improve learning. Teachers who have not been trained, prepared, or supported well in using assessment data to modify instruction often become frustrated and resist involvement in analyzing student data. Addressing teachers' phobias about data is an initial step in helping teachers progress through the phases of development in learning to use data."

The district's turning point was realizing that Georgia state tests given every spring in grades 1-8 were not providing student achievement data that teachers could put to work in a timely fashion (results arrived over the summer). "Because of the delay in receiving these tests results," write the authors, "teachers never felt much connection to the data. They commented, 'This information isn't about *my* kids. This is about the kids I had *last* year, and even then, it was just my homeroom. I didn't teach these kids!'"

So Camden decided to start giving elementary and middle-school interim "benchmark" tests aligned to Georgia's curriculum objectives and parallel in format to statewide tests. Given every nine weeks, the interim tests generated "real-time data that applied to current content, current teachers, and current students." The interim

tests identified which objectives taught that trimester had been learned and which needed more attention (either for the whole class or for individual students). Each assessment covered the curriculum taught that trimester; after the first trimester, subsequent assessments covered some objectives covered in the previous trimester(s), so the final benchmark test was a cumulative assessment of the year's learning.

Critical to the success of the interim assessments was the hiring of 13 full-time lead teachers (using grants and Title I money). Each lead teacher is responsible for about 63 teachers in one or two schools. They spend most of their time working with subject-area teams of 6-8 teachers to align instruction, implement the interim tests, analyze scores, and help teachers incorporate the findings into daily instruction. From the beginning, teachers didn't mind expressing their feelings about testing and curriculum to the lead teachers because they were peers, not evaluators. This was important, because as the program unfolded in the late 1990s, teachers voiced "strong emotional reactions and were resistant to the test data." Officials in the district noticed that teachers' responses went through five distinct phases, each lasting 2-3 months:

- *Phase 1: Confusion and overload* – At first, almost all teachers were overwhelmed and frustrated by the flood of numbers, columns, graphs, and percentages from the interim tests. "This is too much!" was a common reaction. "I can't understand any of it. I have enough to do. I was hired to teach, not do statistics." Teachers had a point: the reporting format for the interim assessments (designed by a consulting firm under contract to the district) used a completely different format from statewide tests. Lead teachers listened sympathetically to these concerns, helped simplify the reporting format, and walked teachers through the reports one subject at a time.

- *Phase 2: Feeling inadequate and distrustful* – As teachers analyzed the test results in the early part of the year, they were alarmed at how poorly their students performed on material they had taught. Their first impulse was to blame the test: "How can two questions on a test possibly establish mastery of an objective? These questions are terrible! We don't use this format, vocabulary, terminology, etc. in our classes. I don't teach it that way! These scores can't be right. I taught this concept for a whole week… Something is wrong." The lead teachers, sometimes feeling they needed to wear a suit of armor, listened as teachers vented – and began to see the glimmerings of a desire to investigate the cause of the low scores.

- *Phase 3: Challenging the test* – Teachers insisted on looking at copies of the actual tests, indicating "a need to avoid personal responsibility and to identify the test

as the cause of the low scores." Sitting with their lead teachers, teams looked at items that most students had answered incorrectly, identifying the wording and "tricks" that had thrown their students. One English teacher said, "No wonder those items about business letters scored low; look at this test question. We don't use this word in class – 'editing the letter for *publication*' – publication? There's the reason right there for those low scores." The intrepid lead teachers asked, "Is this a problem with the test question or the instruction?" Teachers continued to blame the test – but said that maybe they would start using the word "publication" in their lessons. With other test items, it was a different story. Looking at an item where the correct answer was *ears* and 30% of students picked *ear's*, teachers groaned, "But we've taught plurals and possessives." When the lead teacher asked, "Is this a test question problem?" teachers had to agree that it wasn't. In Phase 3, the lead teachers continued to listen, offer suggestions, and guide the discussion toward scrutinizing the data for insights about students' progress and confusions. It was clear that teachers had never before looked at test scores, test items, and their own teaching in such a detailed way.

- *Phase 4: Examining the results objectively and looking for causes* – At this point in the year, teachers looked at their classes' test reports without the skepticism and resistance of the earlier phases. They searched for patterns in students' responses, examined similarities among the high-scoring items, and brainstormed possible causes for low-scoring items. "They looked at all the variables, such as the types of students in their classes, the time of day, the time of the week, the sports schedules, the number of attempts to reach parents, sibling rivalry, and their own teaching strategies." Teachers began to compare notes ("What are you doing with symmetry that gets those results?") and sharing teaching techniques that seemed to be working in some classrooms (e.g., using geo-mirrors or having students write in a daily math journal). The threat level of the tests diminished as teachers stopped assuming that low scores reflected on their competence. Teachers began to use the interim tests to answer two questions:
  - Which students need extra help and in what topic?
  - Which topics do I need to re-teach in different ways?

Lead teachers kept the focus on data analysis by persistently asking, "What do these scores tell us?" In this phase, teachers accepted the value of the data for improving their teaching and realized that if students were not understanding, perhaps their teaching strategies needed to be improved. They began asking the questions: Did the test measure the learning objective? If the test item was clear, how was my teaching?

Did I teach the objectives in a manner that showed connections among the concepts and had relevance for these students? Did I give them enough opportunity, enough variety, to allow them to master the content? Was the content interesting to them?

• *Phase 5: Accepting data as useful information, seeking solutions, and modifying instruction* – By this point, teachers fully accepted the usefulness of the interim tests and spent almost all their time searching for more effective teaching strategies. Some teachers conferred with individual students and set SMART goals for the next benchmark test (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-oriented, Time-bound), for example, raising a score from 50% to 70%. Others put together customized study packets. Others encouraged students to analyze their errors and examine their learning style. Teachers also wrote shorter interim tests and quizzes to keep track of students' learning between benchmarks.

Summing up the transformation that the interim assessments brought about, one lead teacher said, "Prior to implementation of formative assessments… teachers were shooting in the dark. They were standing at the goal line in a dark gymnasium taking aim at a hoop they could not see. Now, we can see the goal and have a much better chance of ringing the basket!"

"Using Test Score Data to Focus Instruction" by Susan Trimble, Anne Gay, and Jan Matthews in *Middle School Journal*, March 2005 (Vol. 36, #4, p. 26-32), no e-link available

## 2. Should Schools Be Engaged in Moral Education?

In this compelling article in *Education Next*, Stanford professor William Damon says that most schools have lost their way when it comes to explicit character education. Damon argues that schools must get back into the business of teaching students basic moral precepts: "Since they shape student character no matter what they do, schools may as well try to do a good job at it. Schools must present students with objective standards expressed in a moral language that sharply distinguishes right from wrong and directs students to behave accordingly. Sentiments such as 'feeling better' cannot stand as a sufficient reason for moral choice. A school must help students understand that they are expected to be honest, fair, compassionate, and respectful whether it makes them feel good or not."

Moral education used to be part of every American reading lesson when *McGuffey's Eclectic Readers* were the staple textbook (more than 120 million copies were sold between 1836 and 1922). Although Damon doesn't favor returning to

McGuffey, he bemoans the fact that most current reading textbooks are devoid of moral language. He also lampoons current attempts to educate students about self-esteem and a brand of moral relativism.

Damon believes that students faced with a decision about whether to lie, cheat, or hurt another person need to be asked a simple moral question: "How would it make you feel if someone did that to you?" He quotes variations on the Golden Rule from the religious texts of Christianity ("And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise"), Bahá'í World Faith, Brahmanism ("Do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done to you"), Buddhism, Confucianism ("Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you"), Hinduism, Islam ("None of you [truly] believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself"), Jainism, Judaism ("What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. This is the law: all the rest is commentary"), Sufism, and Zoroastrianism ("Whatever is disagreeable to yourself do not do unto others").

Asking the how-would-it-feel question, Damon believes, is not proselytizing for a particular religion because the Golden Rule is clearly a universal moral principle. The kind of discussion this question can provoke in a classroom has real historical interest and also adds "a dimension of moral gravity and objectivity to what otherwise would stand only as a simple statement of a child's personal feelings… Every child is born with a capacity to feel empathy for a person who is harmed, with a capacity to feel outrage when a social standard is violated, and with a capacity to feel shame or gilt for doing something wrong. This is a natural, emotional basis for character development, but it quickly atrophies without the right kinds of feedback – in particular, guidance that supports the moral sense and shows how it can be applied to the range of social concerns that one encounters in human affairs. A primary way that schools can provide students with this kind of guidance is to teach them the great traditions that have endowed us with our moral standards." In addition to the Golden Rule, Damon quotes several others:

- "Two wrongs don't make a right." (ancient Scots)
- "You are only as good as your word." (early American)
- "Honesty is the best policy." (Cervantes, Ben Franklin)
- "It's better to light a single candle than to curse the darkness." (Chinese proverb)

"What these ancient maxims suggest," says Damon, "is that societies distant from us in time and place have something important to tell us regarding our efforts to educate

young people for character. Among other things, they remind us that neither we nor our children need to invent civilization from scratch… We are inheritors of a wealth of moral knowledge, a set of universal truths drawn from the forge of human experience over the centuries… [In] our role as guardians of the young, we must share the obligation to pass on to our children that which civilization has given to us."

Isn't learning moral maxims rote memorization? Won't they go in one ear and out the other? Not so, says Damon. He believes that the debate between memorization and discovery learning is a false dichotomy. "Children benefit from both, they require both, and the two complement rather than fight each other in the actual dynamics of mastering knowledge." Damon believes that "memorized bits of wisdom can be stored away and used at later times, when they are better understood in the light of lived experience."

Most important, says Damon, children develop character "when they confront clear and consistent messages in numerous ways and in multiple contexts… [Y]oung people need to hear moral messages from all the respected people in their lives if they are to take the messages to heart. A student learns honesty in a deep and lasting way when a teacher explains why cheating undermines the academic mission, when a parent demonstrates the importance of telling the truth for family solidarity, when a sports coach discourages deceit because it defeats the purpose of fair competition, and when a friend shows why lies destroy the trust necessary for a close relationship. The student then acquires a sense of why honesty is important to all the human relationships that the student will participate in, now and in the future."

"Good? Bad? or None of the Above? The Time-Honored, Unavoidable Mandate to Teach Character" by William Damon in *Education Next*, Spring 2005 (Vol. 5, #2, p. 20-27) http://www.educationnext.org/20052/20.html

## 3. A Middle School Uses Community Service as a Performance Task

In this article, a Connecticut eighth-grade teacher describes how he and his colleagues used an authentic assessment in a 12-week English unit. Using the Wiggins/McTighe backwards-planning process, teachers started with the end in sight, looking at eighth-grade learning expectations to identify six goals for the unit:

- Conduct an in-depth literary analysis;
- Apply research in a meaningful context;
- Write a persuasive essay under specific time constraints;

- Communicate ideas clearly in an oral presentation with appropriate emphasis, tone, and delivery;
- Demonstrate strong listening skills;
- Develop one's social conscience.

Teachers then decided to use an authentic performance task to measure students' mastery of the curriculum goals – a service learning project in which students would work in local community agencies, link the experience to a book they read, and do a culminating presentation. The school's service learning director linked each student to a community agency where students made at least seven visits. Students were required to keep a journal responding to six essential questions:

- What are the needs of my chosen site?
- What can I do to help?
- What did I actually contribute?
- How did my research increase my understanding?
- How has the experience changed me?
- Looking back, what would I have done differently?

English teachers helped each student select a book linked to their service site, for example, *Flowers for Algernon* for a girl working with autistic children and *Tuesdays with Morey* for a boy helping out in an assisted living facility.

As the 12-week unit proceeded, students met five times in discussion groups with faculty advisors to discuss their service projects, make links with the book they were reading, and resolve any misunderstandings and confusions. Toward the end of the unit, each student was required to word-process a 1,000-word essay that:

- Answered the six essential questions;
- Analyzed the links between their book and their service experience;
- Analyzed their research (with proper bibliographic references);
- Ended with a "call to action."

Teachers found that students became quite passionate about their service projects and were extraordinarily focused as they typed their essays. One student said, "It feels so good to get all of that out of me; it was hard, but I feel good about what I wrote." In answer to the essential question *How has the experience changed me?* a girl wrote, "The really important part about life is not your clothes, your face, your money, or what's wrong with you; it's you. It's what's beneath it all that makes you!"

At the end of the unit, each student made a 20-minute presentation in front of classmates and a panel of judges (an English teacher, the middle school director, the assistant head of school, and the service learning director). Students summarized their responses to the six essential questions using posters, charts, computer graphics, slides, videos or a white board. The judges then asked questions designed to tap into students' understanding of each aspect of the assessment (for example, the English teacher asked about rising and falling action, foils, and conflicts; the service director asked "What are the most critical needs of your site?"). Students were assessed on a five-category rubric covering content, resources, organization, presentation aids, and delivery. When the presentations were finished, teachers gave feedback to each student in a one-on-one conference and sent a detailed report home to parents. Finally, students were asked to reflect on the unit and suggest any changes that might be made the next year.

The school's staff declared the unit a resounding success. They felt that it helped students develop important reading, writing, and analytical skills, integrated academics into a real-world setting, exposed them to the needs of their community, and showed them how good it feels to lend a helping hand. Students, they reported, "expressed new confidence in their ability to tackle complex tasks, communicate their ideas clearly to others, and think on their feet."

"Accountability for Academics and Social Responsibility Through Service Learning" by David Smith in *Middle School Journal*, March 2005 (Vol. 36, #4, p. 20-25), no e-link available

## 4. What Keeps Middle-School Students Engaged?

In this *Middle School Journal* article, two Vermont educators describe a research project in which they tried to identify what captures and holds students' attention in class. They were curious about why some students "pretend attend" while thinking of other matters, while others are deeply engaged while giving every appearance of daydreaming. To get inside kids' heads, the researchers conducted a series of one-on-one interviews with an economically diverse group of middle-school students and asked each to describe two classroom experiences – one where they were engaged and one were they were not. Students were also asked to draw a picture illustrating each scenario. The major findings were:

• *Active involvement* – Not surprisingly, students said they were much more engaged in lessons that involved active learning. Conversely, students were bored to

tears in lessons where they were required to listen passively to a lecture or copy material from the board.

• *Relevance* – Peak learning moments came when students felt the subject matter was relevant to their lives – but relevance was not limited to students' pre-existing interests: "Challenging curriculum creates new interests; it open doors to new knowledge and opportunities; it 'stretches' students" (quoted from a 1995 NMSA document).

• *Pace* – Students were more engaged in lessons where they were able to work at their own pace in materials at an appropriate level of challenge. Conversely, they were turned off by rigid lessons where they were forced to march through too-hard materials in set time limits.

• *Choice* – Students were more engaged when they could exercise some choice in what and how they were learning.

• *Collaboration* – Students were also more engaged when they were allowed to work with peers in purposeful ways.

• *Technology* – Many of the classroom experiences that students described as engaging involved working on computers.

The researchers conclude with a plea to middle school educators to listen to what students have to say about their experiences in classrooms. They quote Cook-Sather: "There is something fundamentally amiss about building and rebuilding an entire system without consulting at any point those it is ostensibly designed to serve." (2002)

"Student Perceptions of Action, Relevance, and Pace" by Penny Bishop and Susanna Pflaum in *Middle School Journal*, March 2005 (Vol. 36, #4, p. 4-12)
http://www.nmsa.org/services/msj/msj_march2005.htm (unfortunately the delightful student illustrations in the print article are not included in this link)

## 5. Learning Contracts Improve Students' Self-Efficacy

In this *Middle School Journal* article, two literacy educators describe how they helped a teacher get a handle on student motivation problems that were plaguing students in his sixth-grade classroom (especially Samantha, a student who was convinced that she and all her family were no good at reading) and implement an effective system of learning contracts.

The authors say that the key to a student's willingness to work hard on a learning task is "self-efficacy" – a belief that he or she can be successful. "People tend to avoid tasks and situations they believe exceed their capabilities, but they undertake

and perform assuredly activities they judge themselves capable of handling." (Bandura, 1986). Samantha believed she was incompetent at reading and was therefore unwilling to commit any meaningful effort to the subject.

Guided by his mentors, the teacher implemented learning contracts to see if the system would get Samantha and other students working harder and learning more. He started with a highly structured learning contract that looked something like this:

**Developmental Reading Contract 1**

I, _____, being of sound mind and body, do hereby agree to complete the following tasks. I understand that more flexible contracts with more student choices will follow this year, if I do a good job with this one.

A. Sustained Silent Reading (SSR): (title)_____

B. SSR extension of my choice: _____

C. Five dialogue journal pages

D. Crossword puzzle Set 1

E. Collage on lyrics of a song or poetry

F. Student choice: _____

I understand that this contract is worth 125 points toward my first quarter grade. This contract has been explained to me, and I have seen samples of past students' work. I will self correct to the best of my ability and twelve-inch talk when appropriate.

(x) _____ (student)

I will continually offer guidance and help and prompt feedback so that students will achieve their best results

(x) _____ (teacher)

(x) _____ (parent)

The teacher's contracts had the following characteristics:

- *A clear criterion for success* – The teacher chose, sequenced, and tailored tasks that were aligned with the curriculum and had rubrics and exemplars.
- *Short-term goals* – The first round of contracts had structured, short-term objectives. In later contracts, these were extended into long-term personal goals.
- *Intrinsic value* – The teacher chose tasks and projects that had personal meaning to students.
- *User-friendly reading matter* – What students were asked to read independently was manageable in terms of interest, readability, font size, spacing, margin width, and use of illustrations.
- *Manageable workload* – In the first contracts, the amount of was not overwhelming. "Less is more" was the teacher's watchword, and he was

careful not to overdo contract time each week, interspersing it with whole-class instruction and down-time.

- *A different teacher role* – During the portions of the day when students were working on their contracts, the teacher took on the role of roving consultant, answering questions and solving learning and behavioral problems. He gradually overcame his initial fear of losing control of the class and allowed students to work more and more independently.

The authors report that learning contracts solved this teacher's classroom management and student motivation problems. Samantha's and other students' self-efficacy was boosted by their success fulfilling the goals in their learning contracts and dealing with increasingly more challenging and demanding learning projects with less and less structure. The authors believe that the learning contracts were successful because:

- Students found the learning tasks manageable and they experienced success.
- Students vicariously picked up pointers and encouragement from their peers.
- Students got encouragement and praise from their teacher.
- Students were encouraged to see their success as the result of ability and hard work, not luck.

"Using Learning Contracts to Enhance Students' Self-Efficacy for Reading and Writing" by Patrick McCabe and Scott Greenwood in *Middle School Journal*, March 2005 (Vol. 36, #4, p. 13-19), no e-link available

## 6. A Gay Teacher Decides Not to Come Out to His Students

In this "My Turn" column in *Newsweek*, Nick Divito, a middle-school literacy teacher in New York City, wrestles with the question of whether to disclose his homosexuality in class. He is horrified by his students' homophobia ("Anyone who talks is a faggot!" is a surefire way for one student to get the class perfectly silent for dismissal, and one students shouts the F word at Divito when he doesn't deny being gay).

Divito decides not to come out to his students, convincing himself that "my job was not to get them to like gay people. It was to get them to like writing." He is also influenced by colleagues and the principal, who tell him to check his belief system at the door and not be seen as "promoting gayness." But Divito continues to agonize about being in the closet and fantasizes about winning his students' respect through

his effectiveness as a teacher and then revealing his homosexuality at the end of the year and being accepted for who he is.

But during the winter, Divoto is tripped up by a different issue. Discussing Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, he and his students explore the issue of whether African-American kids should be calling each other "nigger." Divito (who is white) challenges them to see the word as a vestige of slavery that "tacitly cements stereotypes that work against them" and assigns them a homework essay on the topic "Are We Really Free and Equal?" Eighty-seven percent of students complete the assignment (compared to his usual 13 percent homework yield), but a number of parents complain to the principal about the use of the N word in class. Divito is admonished, and ends up resigning in disgust.

Looking back, he regrets that he didn't leave his job "challenging my students' use of the F word as well as the N word. If I couldn't teach them tolerance, maybe I could have shown them how to be true to themselves."

"I Kept Quiet, and Lost My Job Anyway" by Nick Divito in *Newsweek*, March 7, 2005, Vol. CXLV, #10, p. 18), no e-link available

## 7. Ten Suggestions for Parents

Families First, a Massachusetts-based parenting advice program, offers the following tips for families:

• Come together for a family meal as many times a week as possible. Let the answering machine do its job and make sure the TV is off.

• Notice the small steps and the good efforts your child makes. Don't overvalue the final product, which can serve to discourage a child from trying.

• Apply this same generous attitude toward yourself and other family members.

• Avoid asking too many questions. Questions often make children feel quizzed, attacked, and/or invaded. Make statements and observations instead.

• Listen carefully to your children. Try to understand where they are coming from – their wishes and concerns – and how it is that they see a situation.

• Be clear in your own mind what your expectations are. Then let children know clearly and calmly, in advance whenever possible, what these expectations are.

• Promote laughter with your child. Have fun and good times in the family. Cultivate your own sense of humor.

• Pay attention to each other. FOCUS. Listen with both ears and let your children know when you can't listen or pay attention to them.

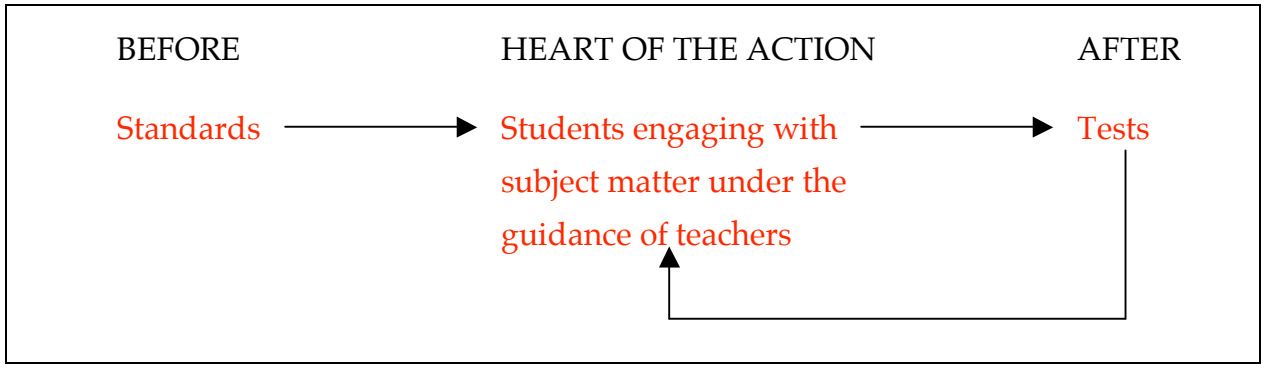
• Beware of over-scheduling and filling every minute with "productive" activity. Create blocks of time for just hanging out and being there. These are the times that children will remember with fondness.

• Make time for the things that give YOU pleasure – that nurture and nourish you mentally, physically, and emotionally. Your well-being is crucial to your family.

"Families First's Ten Resolutions for Parents in 2005" at http://www.families-first.org/tenresol-233.asp (spotted in *PEN Weekly NewsBlast*, March 10, 2005)

## 8. Standards, Instruction, and Tests

On the editor's page in the new issue of *Middle School Journal*, Tom Erb has a nice graphic on the relationship between standards, instruction and tests.




"Transforming Abstract Standards into Solid Performances" by Tom Erb in *Middle School Journal*, March 2005 (Vol. 36, #4, p. 2), no e-link available

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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 best practices in K-12 education. Kim Marshall, drawing on 35 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 39 carefully-chosen publications (see list to the right), sifts through scores of 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, provide e-links to full articles when available, and e-mails the memo to subscribers every Monday (with occasional breaks; there were 50 issues in 2003-04).

## *Subscriptions:*

Individual subscriptions are $50 for the school year ($25 for a half-year, beginning late January). Rates decline steeply for multiple readers within the same organization. See the website for these rates and information on paying by check or credit card.

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## *Publications covered:*

(those read this week are underlined)

American Educational Research Journal
American Educator
American School Board Journal
ASCD SmartBrief
Atlantic Monthly
Bay State Banner
Boston Globe
CommonWealth Magazine
District Administration
Ed. Magazine (Harvard School of Education)
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Update (ASCD)
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Elementary School Journal
Harper's
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
Journal of Staff Development
Middle School Journal
NASSP Bulletin
New York Times
New Yorker
Newsweek
PEN Weekly NewsBlast
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal Magazine
Principal Leadership
Psychology Today
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
Teachers College Record
Teacher Magazine

E-links will be provided whenever possible.