Marshall Memo 433

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
April 23, 2012

In This Issue:

Quotes of the Week

"Teams of teachers, rather than collections of teachers, build instructional capacity within a school over time."

Susan Moore Johnson (see item #1)

"Increased illiteracy in science has troubling implications all its own, but illiteracy in civics is arguably an arteriosclerosis of our democratic circulatory system, effectively blocking understanding and progress, bringing us close to a civic stroke."

Rick Wormeli (see item #6)

"What are the two things you are least apt to catch students doing during the school day?"

Mike Schmoker (see item #3 – The answer? Reading and writing.)

"Embrace change, but don't change if there is not a problem."

Robert Weintraub (see item #4)

"The idea that great teaching is somehow magic is crazy! I cannot get over how *wrong* that is."

Steven Farr (see item #2)

"We are all imperfect, teenagers in particular."

Robert Weintraub (*ibid.*)

"Our jobs are perhaps the fourth or fifth most important part of our lives. The first three are about being a good husband, wife, or partner, dad or mom, brother, sister, and friend."

Jim Walsh (quoted in *ibid.*)

1. The Best Strategies for Improving What Goes on in Classrooms

In this thoughtful *Harvard Educational Review* article, Harvard professor Susan Moore Johnson compares two approaches to improving teaching. The first focuses on recruiting strong teachers and holding them accountable for classroom performance and their students' test scores – a "no excuses" strategy that assumes teachers can do it all. The second focuses on workplace conditions – teachers' access to expert colleagues and instructional coaching, time with grade-level or subject teams, helpful supervision by knowledgeable principals or peers, and support from a high-functioning school culture that values effective teaching and results.

There are strong advocates for using the first approach to turning around failing schools – recruiting high-performing teachers through cash incentives and draconian removal of less-effective teachers. Johnson is skeptical that this, by itself, will be effective. "Changing people without changing the context in which they work is not likely to substantially improve the school," she says, noting that "even an ineffective teacher's chances for success would be enhanced by a supportive school context."

There's no question that school conditions have a major impact on teachers' success. According to researchers' interviews with one group of novice teachers, "Some schools were well-organized, purposeful, and supportive places for teaching and learning," says Johnson. "Teachers in such schools described how they had been hired in a thorough and informative process that allowed for a rich exchange of information between the candidates and their prospective colleagues and administrators. As candidates, they not only interviewed with the principal but also observed classes, talked with prospective colleagues, and sometimes were asked to teach sample lessons.

"These schools also ensured that new teachers' assignments matched their subject knowledge and preparation. They were not expected to teach in two subjects, mixed-grade classes, or to split their time between school buildings. Induction included regular opportunities to observe and work with experienced colleagues… They also were granted periodic release from administrative assignments, such as cafeteria duty, to observe their colleagues teaching. They received regular feedback about their instruction not only from their mentors and supervisors but also from the coordinators of their induction program."

Other teachers entered dysfunctional, under-resourced schools where they were hired at the last minute, isolated from colleagues, given challenging schedules and students, expected to teach out of their field, were rarely observed, and had few opportunities to observe other

teachers. "Few such schools provided an approach to discipline that would promote schoolwide order and a focus on learning," says Johnson, "leaving individual teachers to manage student behavior one classroom at a time." It's hardly surprising that many new teachers are not successful in such schools, and either leave the profession or take the first opportunity to move to higher-functioning schools – often wealthier, whiter communities. "This repeated turnover as teachers seek more supportive environments for teaching and learning takes a high toll on students who attend underperforming, high-minority, high-need schools," says Johnson.

But Johnson is skeptical that just focusing on working conditions will turn around schools. What gets results, she believes, is a *balanced* approach focused on workplace conditions *and* the hiring process, classroom observation, and student results.

Many educators and politicians have bought into the idea that students' value-added test scores should be used to decide individual teachers' dismissal, tenure, and compensation. Johnson disagrees. "There are well-documented problems with using these statistical methods to make important decisions about individuals," she says. "They are too unstable and too vulnerable to sources of error to be used in something as important as a teacher's evaluation." In addition to psychometric shortcomings, value-added data also fail to take into account other factors that affect classroom performance: teachers' prior preparation, years of experience, type of assignment, school conditions, the principal's leadership, classroom resources, opportunities for collaboration with colleagues, and relations with parents. "Although the methods for assessing individual teachers' value-added accomplishments are statistically sophisticated," she says, "they are organizationally agnostic and, therefore, insufficient."

Johnson has specific criticisms of two other popular ideas: firing the bottom 5-10 percent of teachers and offering merit pay to high performers. "Legislators and the public find such proposals very attractive," she says, "both because they seem to make sense and because they introduce the precision usually associated with quantitative analysis." Here are her concerns:

• *Swap-out strategies* – "The calculus for improving schools by replacing teachers is straightforward," says Johnson: "substitute a low-scoring, failing teacher with a high-scoring, successful teacher and schools will improve." This affirms people's belief in the importance of the individual teacher and builds on research showing the huge difference that consecutive years with good or bad teachers makes for students. The Race to the Top competition puts a premium on districts adopting this approach – despite the absence of evidence that it works. Its biggest shortcoming, says Johnson, is that it doesn't take into account school conditions, which are a major cause of low achievement.

• *Performance-based pay* – The theory of change is that monetary rewards will (a) lead current teachers to work harder and improve their practice in hopes of winning a bonus, and (b) induce ineffective teachers to leave (since they won't be getting a bonus) and increase the number of highly effective teachers who enter and stay. Team rewards have shown some positive results, but individual merit pay has had serious problems: value-added data are problematic, says Johnson, and merit pay "does nothing to help motivated teachers solve the

instructional challenges they face." A recent five-year study of merit pay in Nashville, Tennessee found that $10,000 bonuses to teachers made no difference to student achievement.

Of course most teachers' pay isn't where it should be and many salary structures are dysfunctional. But Johnson cites research from Chicago on why teachers decided to leave a school or stay: "The working conditions that mattered most to teachers were those that shaped the social context of teaching and learning in their school – the school culture, the principal's leadership, and the teachers' relationships with their colleagues."

"Notably, across all communities," Johnson continues, "schools with better work environments for teachers also achieved greater growth in student learning… [S]chools that change students' lives are more than a collection of independent units, each of which may have a good, mediocre, or poor teacher. Researchers have repeatedly demonstrated that successful efforts to improve failing schools are deliberately school based. They recognize that, because students move through many classrooms from grade to grade and subject to subject, the curriculum and teachers' efforts must be coordinated. If a student's education is to be coherent, then [his or her] her teachers must work in concert. Teams of teachers, rather than collections of teachers, build instructional capacity within a school over time."

All this leads Johnson to conclude that a school-improvement strategy based on rewarding and penalizing individual teachers for their students' test scores "fails to capitalize on the potential of some teachers to improve the performance of other teachers and, therefore, will always be limited, since the benefits of greater expertise will be concentrated in individual classrooms rather than extended throughout the school."

So how does a school ensure that all students have excellent teaching each year? Johnson says it should put its energy into these areas:

• *Selection and assignment* – "Schools arguably make their most important decisions when they select and assign new teachers," she says. "Yet, often those decisions are late, poorly informed, and haphazard, especially in large urban districts." It's crucial that budget delays, transfer policies, and information glitches give way to a hiring process that selects the best candidates early, assigns them to well-matched classes, and gives them time to get to know colleagues and prepare for the first day of school.

• *Maximizing teamwork* – Within a school, there are always variations in teachers' strengths – for example, an elementary teacher might be highly proficient teaching reading and less skilled in math. One of the best ways to improve instruction is giving teachers common planning time and getting them analyzing student data, reviewing student work, and planning units and lessons together. This way, they capitalize on each others' strengths and learn from their colleagues. "Peer-induced learning" is especially important for new teachers. "Conversely," says Johnson, "assessing or rewarding teachers for their individual success may lead them to withdraw from their colleagues and concentrate exclusively on their assigned students, thus undermining, rather than promoting, productive collaboration."

• *Instructional coaches* – When they are well chosen and well trained, coaches can add great value by providing immediate feedback after classroom observations, teaching model lessons, responding to teachers' individual needs, pushing teacher teams to plan and analyze

better, and advising administrators on pedagogical issues. Johnson bemoans the fact that many coaches have been laid off in the current budget crunch.

• *Career-based pay* – Most beginning pay levels don't always attract the best and the brightest, says Johnson, and most salary structures reward loyalty and longevity rather than collaboration and expanded roles within schools. She and her colleagues in the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers have proposed a four-tier pay-and-career structure that allows effective teachers to reach higher salaries more quickly and provides extra pay for responsibilities outside one's classroom.

Johnson closes with plea to politicians and policymakers who are falling for simplistic, faddish, untested approaches to school improvement: "What we have learned from countries with more successful school systems, such as Finland, Canada, and Singapore, is that achieving success is a complex enterprise that requires sustained effort and substantial investment. Until policymakers and practitioners recognize that complexity and respond to it meaningfully, students – especially those who most depend on public education for their future success – will continue to be unevenly and meagerly served."

"Having It Both Ways: Building the Capacity of Individual Teachers and Their Schools" by Susan Moore Johnson in *Harvard Educational Review*, Spring 2012 (Vol. 82, #1, p. 107-122), http://www.rsssearchhub.com/preview/harvard-educational-review-all-content-items-rss-AJDqp/

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2. A Discussion of Teachers and Teaching

In this *Harvard Educational Review* article, Anthony Bryk (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Learning), Heather Harding (Teach for America), and consultant Sharon Greenberg coordinate a round-table discussion about teaching and learning. Some excerpts:

• "The idea that great teaching is somehow magic is crazy!" says Steven Farr of Teach for America. "I cannot get over how *wrong* that is." Ten years ago, we didn't know exactly what characterized effective teaching. Now we have specifics on teaching practices that work. "Sadly," Farr continues, "what we see in less-successful schools is a very diluted definition of 'great teaching.' In some schools where we place TFA teachers, out teachers are told they are 'great' simply because their students are generally on task and the room is generally quiet. The definition of 'great' is really, really watered down and too often is about what kids are not doing instead of about dramatic student progress."

• Edward Liu of the Boston Teacher Residency Program says we need to talk more broadly about teaching rather than teachers. "Teachers are coworkers," he says. "They are in a joint social enterprise, and I think that is what makes teaching quite unique and especially challenging as a profession. So I think the challenge is how do we spread effective teaching practices, and how do we build supportive context, organizations, and policies for the development and use of these practices with focus on increasing effective teaching to teach the neediest kids and all kids as well?"

• Pam Grossman of Stanford University says, "I've watched people watch teaching where they think, 'Oh, this is fabulous teaching!' And they miss the fact that the content is

wrong. It's not fabulous teaching if the content is wrong, and you *need* to know the content in order to assess the content." This makes her worry about teacher evaluation done by generalists. Even elementary reading requires a particular kind of expertise.

• What does it take to get a highly effective teacher to work in a high-need school? Money is nowhere near the top of most people's list, says Ann Clark, chief academic officer of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools. What they say is, "I want to go as part of a team of highly effective teachers, and, by the way, I want you to take some highly toxic teachers out of that school before I get there." Clark describes how the district has organized teachers by grade level and subject and provided "just in time" coaching support for those teams. "This has probably stretched our teachers more than anything else that we've ever done," she says, "rather than just hoping it's going to happen within the school context."

• "You can mitigate individual weaknesses in dispositions and skills by having a good culture around people," says Farr, "so people who may not be able to do it on their own can do it in a collaborative world… Healthy, supportive context is what turns this work from heroic to sustainable. Great leadership, especially at the campus level, creating a culture of excellence is how we will take great teaching to scale."

• "Watching a lot of classrooms," says Grossman, "in general, I think there is a lack of intellectual challenge. Even when kids are busy and doing work, they're not being pushed, and at other times there is that push without the kind of support to help them be successful." Jesse Solomon of the Boston Plan for Excellence agrees: "The level of intellectual demand in pretty much every classroom that I go into is nowhere near where I think it needs to be."

• Grossman also worries that the push for individual teacher accountability misses the importance of teacher teams. "In my work with English departments," she says, "it's really the collective work that's going to contribute to student learning, and we all need to be responsible for this and provide the rewards to teams – grade-level teams or departments as opposed to individuals. This might press for more collective accountability, because part of what you want to see is teachers pushing each other to get better, teachers being responsible for the improvement of a colleague's practice. Right now, that is so far from the norm in teaching. You know the teacher down the hall maybe isn't doing a good job, you get her students, so you actually have evidence… but most teachers would say, 'That's not my job, that's not my problem.'"

"Contextual Influences on Inquiries into Effective Teaching and Their Implications for Improving Student Learning" by Anthony Bryk, Heather Harding, and Sharon Greenberg in *Harvard Educational Review*, Spring 2012 (Vol. 82, #1, p. 83-106), http://www.hepg.org/main/her/Index.html

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3. How Much Can Schools Affect the Wealth/Poverty Gap?

In this *Kappan* article, author/consultant Mike Schmoker takes issue with a recent Diane Ravitch quote: "America does not have a general education crisis; we have a poverty crisis." True, poverty affects student achievement, Schmoker acknowledges. "It is important

then to fight for social justice, for programs we know will mitigate the effects of poverty." But he believes that if we improve the way students spend their *time* in school, we will greatly improve schools' impact on students' college and career success.

Schmoker's main concern: "disastrous literacy policies." He frequently asks audiences of educators, "What are the two things you are least apt to catch students doing during the school day?" The immediate choral response: "Reading and writing." It's not uncommon for students to spend less than 10 minutes a day actually reading, much less engaging in the kind of close, thoughtful, text-based reading they need to boost their skills and knowledge. Because "test prep, worksheets, and other forms of malpractice have systematically supplanted actual reading and writing in our schools," says Schmoker, all too many students arrive at college unable to read their textbooks with any degree of understanding.

The solution? "An immediate, exponential increase in the amount of quality fiction and nonfiction students read, across the disciplines," says Schmoker. One study found that a single month of this kind of high-quality reading experience produces a year's growth in reading ability.

What about writing? Studies show that students write almost as little as they read, and largely miss out on the kind of academic, argumentative, text-based writing they need for post-secondary studies. Here again, radically increasing the amount of writing students do in all their courses is the key to preparing students for success – and boosting the importance of schools in closing the achievement gap.

"Can Schools Close the Gap?" by Mike Schmoker in *Phi Delta Kappan*, April 2012 (Vol. 93, #7, p. 70-71), http://www.kappanmagazine.org; Schmoker can be reached at Schmoker@futureone.com.

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4. Leadership Lessons from Brookline, Massachusetts

In this wise *Kappan* article, recently retired principal Robert Weintraub shares leadership lessons from his 19 years leading a large suburban high school (which both of my children attended and loved):

• *Develop a unified adult voice in support of kids*. This means making a concerted effort to get teachers, parents, and community members on the same page. "Adolescents need us to present clear expectations and values so they can push back, and then figure out what they believe and who they're becoming," says Weintraub.

• *Respond to every phone call and e-mail every day*. "You don't have to solve every problem or agree with every inquiry," he says, "but just responding quickly helps people feel they matter."

• *Get out of your office*. "That's not where school happens," Weintraub insists. Being out and about "shows that you care about the school, helps provide supervision, allows you to interact with students and staff, helps you observe the main business of the school, makes you a visible, daily presence, and makes you human."

• *Teach or co-teach a class*. Weintraub insisted that all administrators teach at least one class. Actually teaching "gets you into the rhythm of academic life of planning and teaching lessons, correcting and grading papers, talking to and helping students, communicating with parents about student progress, and completing interim progress reports and report cards. It's a killer," he says, "but it's worth it… Teachers can never say, 'The leaders make stupid decisions because they've been out of the classroom for so long.' Instead, they just say, 'The leaders make stupid decisions.'"

• *Be happy*. "No one wants to see an unhappy leader," says Weintraub. "The principal is supposed to be the happiest person in the building."

• *Display energy*. Schools are "infested with youth," he says. "Fit in."

• *Don't let students be anonymous*. Notice their clothing, hairdos, tattoos, expressions, moods, accomplishments, and drama.

• *Be present for people*. "With so many distractions today, simple undisturbed human interaction is a treat," says Weintraub.

• *Communicate*. Especially in a crisis, it's vital that people hear four things from the leader: What happened, what it means, what we're doing, and why.

• *Work really hard*. "There's a lot to do," he says. "Hard work earns the respect of the school community."

• *Hire people who love kids and support their work*. Weintraub made a point of catching people doing good things and thanking them – including secretaries, custodians, and cafeteria workers.

• *Nurture an intellectual environment*. "Use inspirational words – yours and others' – to motivate colleagues," Weintraub advises. "Host intellectual events, which are both inspiring and symbolic. They polish the mystique of your school."

• *Embrace change, but don't change if there is not a problem*. "Do we really need individually wrapped bananas?"

• *Acknowledge imperfections and give everyone a chance at redemption*. "We are all imperfect," says Weintraub, "teenagers in particular." Enforcing the rules should not be our reason for being. "We come to work each day to inspire students, build strong relationships, and pick them up when they fall… It is about our faith in all human beings – that they ultimately want to do the right thing and to be responsible citizens of their community. It's about our humanity."

• *Create a family within the school*. Have regular staff breakfasts. Serve good food at meetings and retreats. Celebrate teachers earning tenure and serving for many years. Respect that people have priorities beyond the school. Weintraub quotes his former superintendent, Jim Walsh, who frequently reminded Brookline leaders, "Our jobs are perhaps the fourth or fifth most important part of our lives. The first three are about being a good husband, wife, or partner, dad or mom, brother, sister, and friend."

"15 Lessons on Leadership" by Robert Weintraub in *Phi Delta Kappan*, April 2012 (Vol. 93, #7, p. 80), http://www.kappanmagazine.org; Weintraub is at bobw9090@gmail.com.

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5. What Habits of Mind Do Students Need to Be Successful?

(Originally titled "Habits of Success")

In this *Educational Leadership* article, Jenny Edwards (Fielding Graduate University) and Arthur Costa (California State University/Sacramento) present 16 "habits of mind" that they believe are as important to students' future success as academic learning:

- Persistence
- Managing impulsivity
- Listening with understanding and empathy
- Thinking flexibly
- Controlling and executing metacognitive processes
- Striving for accuracy and precision
- Asking questions and posing problems
- Applying knowledge to new situations
- Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision
- Gathering data through all their senses
- Creating, imagining, and innovating
- Responding with wonderment and awe
- Taking responsible risks
- Finding humor in the world around them
- Thinking independently
- Remaining open to continual learning

One study found a significant positive correlation between these habits and college grade-point averages – especially these three: managing impulsivity, persistence, and metacognition.

How can schools inculcate the habits of mind? Edwards and Costa say that successful schools:

- Share a common vision – All staff should present, discuss, reinforce, and revisit the 16 habits of mind.
- Map the curriculum using the habits of mind – They should be named as goals and outcomes, built into instructional strategies, and regularly assessed.
- Apply the habits to adults as well.
- Model the habits and infuse the vocabulary in classrooms and around the school.
- Monitor students' growth – How are students becoming more skillful and strategic in the way they use the habits?
- Provide leadership – An administrator, department chair, mentor teacher, or other staff member needs to be the cheerleader for the habits.

"Habits of Success" by Jenny Edwards and Arthur Costa in *Educational Leadership*, April 2012 (Vol. 69, #7, online only), http://www.ascd.org; the authors can be reached at jedwards@fielding.edu and Artcosta@aol.com.

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6. Improving Civics Education in American Schools

(Originally titled "iCivics")

"Increased illiteracy in science has troubling implications all its own," says author/consultant Rick Wormeli in this *Educational Leadership* article, "but illiteracy in civics is arguably an arteriosclerosis of our democratic circulatory system, effectively blocking understanding and progress, bringing us close to a civic stroke." Only one in four students performed at the proficient level in the 2010 NAEP civics test, and fewer than half of eighth graders knew the purpose of the Bill of Rights. Less than 20 percent of eighth graders know why the Declaration of Independence was written, and barely one-third of Americans can name the three branches of government.

"Without knowledge and the tools for constructive civic participation," says Wormeli, "individuals often resort to uniformed, ill-considered acts of 'me first,' the antithesis of the American ethic. This exacerbates worsening social, economic, and education gaps, limiting what we can achieve as a country. This has a real effect on business, technology, civil rights, medical care, retirement, raising children, owning a home, and even what we put on the dinner table each night."

What is to be done? Wormeli touts iCivics, a website inspired by retired Supreme Court justice Sandra Day O'Connor – http://www.icivics.org – which has a wealth of curriculum games, webquests, lesson plans, curriculum units, and impact projects.

Here is some of the civics content from the NAEP assessment at the basic, proficient, and advanced level:

Basic:

- Grade 4: Recognize taxes as the main source of government funding.
- Grade 8: Identify a right protected by the First Amendment.
- Grade 12: Interpret a political cartoon.

Proficient:

- Grade 4: Identify a purpose of the U.S. Constitution.
- Grade 8: Recognize a role performed by the Supreme Court.
- Grade 12: Define the term "melting pot" and argue whether it applies to the U.S.

Advanced:

- Grade 4: Explain two ways countries can deal with shared problems.
- Grade 8: Name two actions citizens can take to encourage Congress to pass a law.
- Grade 12: Compare U.S. citizenship requirements with those of other countries.

"iCivics" by Rick Wormeli in *Educational Leadership*, April 2012 (Vol. 69, #7, p. 50-54), http://www.ascd.org; Wormeli can be reached at rwormeli@cox.net.

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7. Robert Marzano on Using Movement to Boost Learning and Attention

(Originally titled "A Moving Proposal")

In this *Educational Leadership* article, author/consultant Robert Marzano says getting students moving increases engagement and learning:

• *Movement that deepens understanding* – Some ideas:

- Give one, get one: Students stand up, find a partner, compare notes on a topic, then sit down and record new learning.
- Voting with your feet: The teacher poses an A, B, C, D multiple-choice question and students go to the wall where the teacher has posted that letter and justify their answer.
- Corners activity: Students are divided into four groups and spend five minutes in each corner discussing a question posted there – for example, What characterizes civil disobedience? How can it advance democracy? Impede democracy? When have you used civil disobedience? A student recorder stays in each corner and writes ideas from each group, sharing them as each new group arrives. The recorders then present a summary to the whole class and students come up with generalizations.
- Drama: A math teacher might have students do brief sketches illustrating mean, median, and mode.
- Body representations: A math teacher might have students form a rectangle and a square.

• *Movement that boosts energy* – Sometimes standing up, stretching, or running in place can be used to energize students when their attention is waning and their brains need an oxygen boost.

"A Moving Proposal" by Robert Marzano in *Educational Leadership*, April 2012 (Vol. 69, #7, p. 88-89), http://www.ascd.org

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8. A New Explanation for the STEM Gender Gap

In this *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, Theodore Hill and Erika Rogers note the dearth of women in mathematically intensive STEM majors and careers – engineering, physics, chemistry, operations research, computer science, and mathematics – while less mathematically intensive areas like biology and medicine have an abundance of women. Researchers have suggested a variety of explanations for the underrepresentation of women in the hard sciences: lack of early encouragement, cultural bias, the conflicts of motherhood, biological differences in mathematical ability, and an innate female affinity for people (versus the male affinity for things).

Hill and Rogers say these might be playing a part, but they believe a more important reason is a creativity gap. It turns out that creativity is essential to success in the hard sciences, and many women seem to have less of three key elements: playfulness, curiosity, and willingness to take risks. "Studies have found that boys and men are generally more playful than girls and women," report Hill and Rogers, "and are more curious and more willing to take risks, which could help explain why men are more creatively productive than women in general, and in particular, in the hard sciences." Could this be why there are so few female visual artists, composers, film directors, playwrights, architects – and scientists?

Hill and Rogers don't accept that this is inevitable, and suggest some possible remedies. Schools, colleges, and universities should encourage more spontaneity "on the job", emulating Google, Bell Labs, and IDEO by setting up "playrooms" and allocating time specifically

devoted to creativity. Another idea is setting up "innovation hothouses" that put a premium on using imagination, choosing risky, out-of-the-box solutions, and working through repeated failures.

"For Women to Think Mathematically, Colleges Should Think Creatively" by Theodore Hill and Erika Rogers in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Apr. 20, 2012 (Vol. LVIII, #33, p. A25), http://chronicle.com/article/For-Women-to-Think/131547/

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9. Websites:

a. Frenchified Teaching and Learning 2.0 – This website http://www.frenchified.com helps students learn French using cinema, humor, culture, music, and language.

"WebWatch – Teaching French Using Web 2.0" in *The Language Educator*, April 2012 (Vol. 7, #3, p. 60)

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b. Spanish exercises – This website http://www.laits.utexas.edu/spe/index.html from the University of Texas/Austin has video clips in which native Spanish speakers demonstrate various language tasks – grammar, vocabulary, and phrases.

"WebWatch – Spanish Proficiency Exercises" in *The Language Educator*, April 2012 (Vol. 7, #3, p. 60)

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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.marshall48@gmail.com

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 43 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
Better Evidence-Based Education
Ed. Magazine
EDge
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher (TESOL)
Harvard Business Review
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Journal of Staff Development
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Language Learner (NABE)
Middle Ground
Middle School Journal
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PEN Weekly NewsBlast
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal
Principal Leadership
Principal's Research Review
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
Teachers College Record
Teaching Children Mathematics
The Atlantic Monthly
The Chronicle of Higher Education
The Language Educator
The New Yorker
The Reading Teacher
The School Administrator
Theory Into Practice