

Marshall Memo 160

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
November 13, 2006

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Quotes of the Week

“Even when parents are deeply committed to the education of their children, by the time students are in secondary school they are largely making their own choices about homework, commitment, planning and follow-through.”

Douglas Reeves (see item #2)

“[Students] can make a lot of choices, but we won't let them choose to fail.”

Joel McKinney, Indianapolis high-school principal (see item #2)

“Each of our students needs at least one adult at school whom they know believes the best, knows the best, and wants the best for them.”

Beth Balkus, Omaha, Nebraska middle-school principal (see item #6)

“The girl isn't fat, but they call her cow, and they moo at her.”

A student about teasing of middle-school girls (see item #1)

“When victims are told to accept the harassment or try to ignore it, the negative effects of sexual harassment multiply.”

Linda Raffaele Mendez, Ellie Young, Stephanie Mihalas, Dale Cusumano, and Laura Hoffman (see item #1)

“I say, ‘I'm gonna lose, I'm gonna lose, I better read faster,’ and then I skip words or say the words wrong.”

Yolanda, a fourth grader, talking about timed reading drills (see item #4)

1. Hidden Problems That Afflict Middle-School Girls

In this *Middle School Journal* article, a team of university and middle-school educators identify four stressors in the lives of middle-school girls and suggest ways that schools can help alleviate them. The authors contend that not enough attention is being paid to these issues because of the current swing toward focusing on boys' problems, the subtext of which is that girls are "fine" in school. These four problems are less noticeable to teachers, and girls tend to suffer in silence, resulting, say the authors, "in a deterioration of feelings of competency, which, for some girls, will persist for years."

- *Body image concerns and disordered eating* – One study found that up to 70 percent of girls whose weight is normal nevertheless feel fat and engage in unhealthy eating behaviors to lose weight. These girls seem to have internalized the American ideal of body size and shape from the media. Even though girls will say that fashion models are "all skin and bones," they still believe their shape is an ideal to be emulated. A lot of teasing revolves around the issue of weight; one study found that "girls are teased for how they looked and boys for how they acted." Describing such teasing, one student said, "The girl isn't fat, but they call her cow, and they moo at her." For girls who reach puberty earlier than their peers, teasing and self-consciousness are even more intense.

What can schools do? Teachers are ideally situated to help girls deconstruct the media's powerful messages about body size and shape, learn about the way magazines doctor images of women to eliminate "imperfections," and understand what truly matters in a girl's personality as she relates to friends and the world. Teachers need to keep an eye out for students who show signs of severe eating disorders (e.g., a girl who is wearing several layers of clothing in warm weather) and refer them for counseling. Finally, teachers should be quick to stop jokes about "fat" people and make sure bulletin boards and displays show people of varying body types.

- *Academic gender role stereotyping* – There are three issues here: girls' perceptions that males are better at math and science; a tendency for girls to avoid courses in these areas; and social consequences for girls who pursue and excel in these subjects. The authors say it's discouraging that girls are still subject to these prejudices and that women are still dramatically underrepresented in STEM careers (science, technology, engineering, and math).

What can schools do? First, teachers should examine their own biases in this area. If a girl isn't doing well in math and science, do we assume she lacks ability – rather than looking at instructional practices that fail to meet her learning needs? If a teacher is having trouble with the VCR or computer, is a boy always called upon to help? Teachers can also address gender stereotyping in class discussions and writing assignments, by strongly encouraging girls to take courses and work hard in science and math courses, and through individual counseling. Finally,

science and math teachers can use pedagogy that fosters success for both genders. Girls are more likely to continue taking secondary math courses if (a) they view their classes as fun and relaxed, (b) hands-on activities and problem solving are emphasized, and (c) teachers explain and answer student questions while focusing on mastery of concepts.

- *Sexual harassment* – A 2001 study found that 81 percent of girls in grades 8 through 11 said they had experienced unwanted and unwelcome sexual behavior that interferes with their lives while at school, including sexual jokes, comments, gestures, or looks; spreading sexual rumors or being called gay or lesbian; touching, grabbing, or pinching in a sexual way; being forced to do something sexual at school other than kissing; or having their clothes pulled off or down. Another study found that 35 percent of girls said they were harassed at school on a daily basis. As a result of harassment, some girls don't want to go to school, don't talk as much in class, and find it hard to pay attention. Many girls get the feeling that their school doesn't take harassment seriously ("It was a joke, just forget about it" or "Boys will be boys"). One middle-school study found that only 6 percent of students reported harassment to an adult at school. Students who did report harassment felt the response discouraged further reports, seldom stopped the harassment, and left students feeling as though adults could not or did not want to help.

What can schools do? First, teachers should be aware of how common sexual harassment is and let students know that it won't be tolerated in their classrooms. Second, staff need to realize that most harassment takes place in thinly-supervised hallways, cafeterias, and parking lots and take steps to watch these areas more carefully. "A very simple preventive technique that teachers can take," write the authors, "is to be present in the hallway outside of their classrooms between classes." Third, when a student does report harassment, *support* the student while the investigation is proceeding. "Students reporting sexual harassment may experience a 'second victimization' because of the tendency for teachers or other authority figures to minimize the harassment and its emotional impact," write the authors. "When victims are told to accept the harassment or try to ignore it, the negative effects of sexual harassment multiply."

- *Relational aggression* – This is covert verbal or nonverbal activity such as excluding a peer from a party, giving a peer the silent treatment, or cyberbullying. Relational aggression is more common among girls, and it tends to continue over time, whereas physical aggression is shorter-lived. Victims of relational aggression tend to have elevated rates of depression and anxiety, develop negative attitudes toward peers, have problems with emotional self-regulation, and develop self-hatred. Perversely, the victims tend to remain in the harmful relationship with the aggressor and fail to reach out to more positive friends. "As such," write the authors, "there is a clear need for teachers and mental health professionals to intervene as early as possible to help girls avoid these types of negative social interactions with peers."

What can schools do? First, intervene directly with individual students. This is critical because students often perceive lack of involvement by teachers as a sign that they are condoning the aggression. Increased awareness will result in more reporting, which will begin to squelch the activity. Second, conduct group training with students to increase pro-social

behavior. Available programs include CASS (Creating a Safe Social Climate in Our School from the Ophelia Project in Erie, Pennsylvania), Allies in Action (from Girls, Inc.), and Owning Up for Teens (from the Empower Program in Washington, D.C.). Third, implement schoolwide prevention programs. “The reality,” say the authors, “is that relational aggression functions within a larger context that includes the perpetrator, the victim, the bystander, and the climate that permits the behavior.” Principals should implement schoolwide programs that will reach all students and staff as well as parents, and include staff training.

“What Teachers Can Do To Reduce Hidden Stressors for Girls in Middle School” by Linda Raffaele Mendez, Ellie Young, Stephanie Mihalas, Dale Cusumano, and Laura Hoffman in *Middle School Journal*, November 2006 (Vol. 38, #2, p. 13-22), no e-link available

2. How a High School Reduced Its Course Failures by 1,000

In this *Educational Leadership* article, author/consultant Douglas Reeves describes how Ben Davis High School in Indianapolis (3,000 students, 45 percent eligible for free and reduced-price meals) launched a “no failure” campaign last spring and reduced the number of course failures by 1,006 compared to the previous year. Here’s what they’re doing:

- *Early reading assessment* – All incoming students take a half-hour diagnostic reading test and counselors use the results to identify students who need help in reading.
- *Early, frequent, and decisive intervention* – Every three weeks, teachers give administrators the names of students who are at risk of failure, and administrators follow up with personalized assistance that might include homework support, basic literacy tutoring, help with time management, and guidance keeping their assignment notebooks.
- *Personal connection with struggling students* – Within weeks of the beginning of each semester, teachers, counselors, and administrators meet individually with students who are at risk of failure. Even though Davis is a large high school, it’s clear to struggling students that adults care about them as individuals.
- *Tutoring* – Students get one-on-one tutorials, and they also benefit from submitting their writing to a Web-based scoring program that gives them rapid 4-3-2-1 feedback. Reeves says that when students get a 2 on one of their electronically scored essays, they react as they do to a low score in a computer game – they figure out how to improve it. “Computerized scoring will never replace teachers,” says Reeves, “but education leaders can leverage teachers’ time by making maximum use of technology.”
- *Managing students’ choices* – If a student is trending toward failure, staff members make mid-semester course and schedule changes to provide additional instruction and intervention. According to Joel McKinney, the principal, “[Students] can make a lot of choices, but we won’t let them choose to fail.”
- *In-school assistance* – The school’s philosophy is that in many cases it can’t rely on parents to rescue struggling students. “Even when parents are deeply committed to the education of their children,” writes Reeves, “by the time students are in secondary school they are largely making their own choices about homework, commitment, planning and follow-

through.” The school doesn’t rely on after-school or summer programs, focusing instead on providing support during the school day.

- *Reformed grading system* – Teachers have largely done away with zero grades, the inappropriate use of averages, and giving low grades as a punishment for poor behavior. Reeves describes the way another high school has split apart academic and work habits because they realize that “students can be proficient in math and deficient in work habits; and students can be delightful, compliant, and sociable, yet deficient in math.”

“Preventing 1,000 Failures” by Doug Reeves in *Educational Leadership*, November 2006 (Vol. 64, #3, p. 88-89),

http://www.ascd.org/portal/site/ascd/template.MAXIMIZE/menuitem.459dee008f99653fb85516f762108a0c/?javax.portlet.tpst=d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c_ws_MX&javax.portlet.prp_d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c_journaltypeheaderimage=%2FASCD%2Fimages%2Fmultifiles%2Fpublications%2Felmast.gif&javax.portlet.prp_d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c_viewID=article_view&javax.portlet.prp_d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c_journalmoid=b7e6e4534ef9e010VgnVCM1000003d01a8c0RCRD&javax.portlet.prp_d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c_articlemoid=e9480812aef9e010VgnVCM1000003d01a8c0RCRD&javax.portlet.prp_d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c_journalTypePersonalization=ASCD_EL&javax.portlet.begCacheTok=token&javax.portlet.endCacheTok=token

3. Eight Ways to Improve Adolescent Literacy Achievement

In this *American School Board Journal* article, former editor Rebecca Jones synthesizes research and best practices into the following recommendations for meeting the needs of struggling adolescent readers:

- *Make literacy a top priority.* Setting a clear, school- or district-wide goal that everyone knows about is crucial. Sioux City, Iowa, for example, focused on increasing all students’ reading comprehension over a period of four years. “If you walked in here and asked, ‘What is your district focused on?’ everyone could articulate it,” said Matt Ludwig, a middle-school principal.

- *Use diagnostic assessments.* Detailed assessments up front are essential to identifying students’ needs – Decoding? Fluency? Comprehension? Vocabulary? If we don’t give good initial assessments, says Don Deshler of the University of Kansas, “we’re going to be spending 99 percent of the school year shooting in the dark.”

- *Make time for literacy.* Researchers recommend that every student get two to four hours of literacy instruction every day, not just in language arts classes but in every course from physical education to calculus. Students who are two or more years below grade level need a 90-minute block of daily literacy intervention carved out of their day. This may mean limiting the number of electives that struggling students are allowed to take, adding minutes to the school day, and/or offering extra literacy instruction after school and during the summer.

- *Provide all teachers with high-quality professional development.* This means PD based on teachers’ needs and a solid research base, with continuous support, instruction, and in-classroom follow-up. It’s also essential to train subject-area teachers in ways they can provide literacy instruction in their areas.

- *Make sure the principal is a literacy leader.* “The most important person in a schoolwide literacy effort is the principal,” says Jones. This means training current principals and making literacy an important criterion for choosing new school leaders. In Sioux City, the

message to candidates is, “If we hire you, just realize that reading comprehension will be your number one focus, and we’ll hold you to that.”

- *Invest in what works.* This means directing professional development money in first-rate literacy training for all students – which will help 2/3 of students – and then developing or purchasing more focused intervention programs for struggling students. Muskegon High School in Michigan, for example, assigned certified teachers to do one-on-one tutoring with high-risk students – at a time when the district was laying off employees in other areas.

- *Keep track of what’s happening.* This means measuring student progress with interim assessments and using classroom visits to see how faithfully the program is being implemented (some teachers take liberties with content and cut corners on the time that should be allocated).

- *Bring in the community.* Volunteers can make a difference as long as they receive substantive training (which is not cheap) before they work with students.

In a sidebar to this article, Jones reprints the fifteen recommendations for effective adolescent literacy instruction from the 2004 Carnegie Corporation’s report, *Reading Next – A Vision of Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy*:

- Direct, explicit comprehension instruction
- Effective instructional principles embedded in content
- Motivation and self-directed learning
- Text-based collaborative learning
- Strategic tutoring
- Diverse texts
- Intensive writing
- A technology component
- Ongoing formative assessment of students
- Extended time for literacy
- Professional development
- Ongoing summative assessment of students and programs
- Teacher teams
- Leadership
- A comprehensive and coordinated literacy program

The Carnegie report is at: <http://www.all4ed.org/publications/ReadingNext/ReadingNext.pdf>

“Literacy: The Next Generation” by Rebecca Jones in *American School Board Journal*, November 2006 (Vol. 193, #11, p. 32-35), no e-link available

4. Do Timed Reading Speed Drills Improve Student Achievement?

In this haunting article in *Educational Leadership*, California teacher Jennifer Corn describes the reading fluency speed drills she felt compelled to do every day with her fourth-grade bilingual students. “On your marks, get set, go!” she would say as she timed students reading to partners for one minute. She then had them count how many words they read,

subtract those read inaccurately, and record the results in their personal reading-fluency logs. The district's benchmark for fourth-grade reading was 117 words per minute.

Corn started doing these daily drills because of the pressure she felt from her principal to raise her students' scores on the district's fluency assessments, which were one part of the Open Court assessments administered five times a year. Although Open Court interim tests also covered reading comprehension, grammar and usage skills, writing, vocabulary, and spelling, the district focused most heavily on reading speed. District administrators closely monitored timed fluency scores as a primary indicator of student achievement, and Corn's principal discussed her students' scores during evaluation conferences and demanded a plan for improving them.

The district was pushing teachers to increase their students' reading speed because it believed that speed was associated with fluency and fluency predicted success on the California language arts test. The rationale was that reading rate, fluency, and automaticity were part of making decoding routine so the reader could focus on comprehending the text.

But reading fluency, says Corn, is not just about speed. It also involves phrasing and expressiveness – with the ultimate goal of improving comprehension. Reading faster, she says, is a result, not a cause, of good fluency instruction. If teachers do the right thing with their reading instruction, students will become more fluent and read faster. Explicitly emphasizing reading speed, she says, is like pushing a string.

At the end of the 2004-05 school year, Corn looked at her data and learned the following. First, only three of her students scored proficient on the California test. Second, the six students who ended up hitting the reading speed benchmark all began the year reading faster than their classmates – and had better English skills. During the year, the six who started ahead increased their reading speed by 37 words a minute. Other students increased their speed at half or a third of that rate. In other words, the gap between high-achieving and low-achieving students *grew* during the year.

Third, there was a very uneven correlation between students' reading speed and their scores on the Open Court interim assessments and the California Standards Test. Students who read fastest were not consistently the highest scorers on the California test.

While admitting that she's generalizing from a small sample, Corn does not hesitate to draw some conclusions from her students' experience. "Explicitly teaching students to read quickly," she writes, "may have undermined their progress toward the underlying goal of fluency instruction – comprehension."

Corn believes this is especially true for English language learners. "Practice in fast reading was not what my students needed," she says. "They really needed decoding and comprehension instruction. Interestingly, my students themselves knew this. In class discussions, I asked my students what makes a good reader and whether it's important to read fast. All except one told me that good readers read slowly, reread, and ask and answer questions about the text as they read to help them get meaning." Careful, unhurried reading helps them decode unfamiliar words and go back if they make a mistake. Being pushed to read

quickly made students nervous. “I say, ‘I’m gonna lose, I’m gonna lose, I better read faster,’” said Yolanda, one of Corn’s students, “and then I skip words or say the words wrong.”

As a footnote, Corn’s school didn’t make AYP and was closed, redesigned, and reopened as a “small autonomous school.” Despite its experience, she reports that it continues to emphasize rapid reading drills.

“A Tale of Unintended Consequences” by Jennifer Corn in *Educational Leadership*, November 2006 (Vol. 64, #3, p. 74-78),

5. Laying Students’ Science Misconceptions to Rest

In this *American School Board Journal* article, researcher/consultant Susan Black explores ways that science teachers can dislodge the naïve yet deeply rooted misconceptions with which many of their students enter school. Asked why the seasons change or what causes the phases of the moon, it’s common for students (and well-educated adults) to say the darndest things, and even if people “learn” the right answers at some point in their schooling, many revert to their childhood notions once they graduate.

To make matters worse, reports Black, science textbooks contain errors, for example, one says the earth rotates around the sun (it *revolves* around the sun while *rotating* on its axis), and most do not explain concepts well, burying oversimplified explanations in a clutter of graphics and illustrations.

So what are teachers supposed to do? It’s important that they get a good grasp of science concepts themselves and go beyond textbooks, using a variety of approaches to get scientifically correct explanations into kids’ heads. Here is a list of suggested strategies adapted from Howard Gardner’s 2004 book, *Changing Minds: The Art and Science of Changing Our Own and Other People’s Minds*:

- *Mix it up* – Introduce students to new ideas and concepts in as many ways as possible – stories, songs, puzzles, diagrams, and models – to help them get a foothold in new concepts.
- *Spiral* – Revisit and reinforce important concepts until students are able to conceptualize and understand the big ideas.
- *Confront (nicely)* – Challenge students’ misconceptions in a sincere and friendly way so students are willing to try new ideas.
- *Differentiate* – Know the way individual students think and learn. Some learn best through discussion and conversations, others through writing, and still others by sketching, drawing, or making models.
- *Make connections* – Show students how concepts overlap and connect (with each other and with students’ prior knowledge) instead of presenting isolated topics and units in a strictly linear fashion.
- *Hit students’ levels* – Be sure lessons are not too advanced or simplistic for students’ level of learning.
- *Go deep* – Help students go beyond factual information and give them opportunities to delve into the complexities of scientific theories.

- *Show students how to think, question, and act like real scientists*, including working in teams.

“Is Science Education Failing Students? By Susan Black in *American School Board Journal*, November 2006 (Vol. 193, #11, p. 48-50), no e-link available

6. A Middle-School Advisory-Group Program in Omaha

“Each of our students needs at least one adult at school whom they know believes the best, knows the best, and wants the best for them,” writes Beth Balkus, an Omaha, Nebraska principal in this article in *Middle School Journal*. She goes on to outline the struggles that many middle schools have with advisory groups:

- Teachers are uncomfortable or ill-equipped to handle what many perceive as “touchy-feely” content. That’s for the guidance counselors, they say.
- Advisory groups are mandated from above without proper training and staff buy-in.
- Many middle-school teachers love their content area more than they love young adolescents and have little knowledge of the developmental needs of their students.
- Some teachers’ personalities don’t lend themselves to building rapport with middle-school students.
- Some advisory periods turn into unstructured free time as unprepared teachers simply supervise students as they interact with each other.
- Teachers and parents resent the time taken away from academics.
- Advisory groups become too large for meaningful support and interaction.
- Specialist teachers (art, physical education) are asked to run advisory groups but are not briefed properly by core subject teachers.
- When students and/or teachers aren’t given choices about who is in which advisory group, the chemistry in some groups can be ineffective.

Balkus goes on to describe the 12-student “homeroom” groups her school has scheduled for 23 minutes every Tuesday and Thursday. She feels their system has been able to overcome the pitfalls listed above by focusing on these six functions and providing support to homeroom group teachers:

- *Advocacy* – Teachers use the time to build a relationship with their homeroom students through group and individual conversations. Teachers work with each student to develop SMART goals for the year and keep a folder on each student.

- *Community* – Homeroom teachers have their students take part in schoolwide activities such as “No Put-Down Week” and “Mix It Up Lunch,” and develop other ways of building community and having fun together.

- *Skills* – Homerooms are ideal for teaching the school’s developmental guidance and life skills curriculums – including decision-making, self-understanding, and developing integrity and perseverance. Guidance counselors provide specific lessons through the year.

- *Invigoration* – The purpose of this component is to recharge, relax, and motivate students; it includes a “Free to Read” time every Thursday.

- *Academic* – Every three weeks, homeroom teachers get copies of each student’s progress report and discuss them with advisees individually, checking on progress toward goals, praising successes, and giving advice on areas that need improvement.

- *Administrative* – This includes housekeeping items like announcements, fundraising, and distribution of materials.

Balkus and her colleagues realized that their homeroom/advisory program didn’t allow for the kind of handpicked one-on-one mentor relationship that some high-risk students needed, so they implemented the Good Friends and TeamMate Mentors programs.

- *Good Friends* – At the beginning of the year, teacher teams generate a list of the ten students most at risk. After a period of time in which teachers get to know students in their team, a teacher volunteers to work with each of these students to provide close support. Each student is moved to that teacher’s homeroom and a year-long relationship ensues. Although students aren’t told explicitly about the special relationship, the fact that they are seeing the Good Friend as a homeroom advisor, academic teacher, and study hall teacher several times a day makes it possible for the teacher to keep a close eye on progress and provide support where needed, including basics like making sure the student gets organized in the morning, checking their assignment notebook and homework folder at the end of the day, and contacting parents on a regular basis.

- *TeamMate Mentors* – This is a program sponsored by a local Congressman that brings about twenty volunteers into the school one period a week to meet with individual mentees based on common interests. Mentors play board games, draw, or work on a service project, and several times a year they go out for a special activity like bowling or miniature golf.

“An Advocate for Every Student at Millard Central Middle School” by Beth Balkus in *Middle School Journal*, November 2006 (Vol. 38, #2, p. 4-12), no e-link available

7. Using Short Stories to Combat Bullying

This *Middle School Journal* article by two Illinois educators argues that effective use of well-chosen short stories is an effective way to combat teenage bullying – a two-fer of literacy and crime reduction. “The function of a piece of literature is first and always the transmission of the inner life and feelings of one individual to another,” they write, quoting Sherril and Ley. “As teachers, it is our job to help in the process.” After scanning the literature, they have found several stories that are effective:

Sixth grade:

- “A Letter From the Fringe” by Joan Bauer (2001) in *On the Fringe* – An ostracized victim receives a powerful letter of support in a birthday card from a stronger student who is also “on the fringe” socially.

- “Tuesday of the Other June” by Norma Fox Mazer (1986) in *Short Takes: A Short Story Collection for Young Readers* - A victim finally is victorious in her struggle with a bully who shares the same first name.

Seventh grade:

- “Muffin” by Susan Cooper (1996) in *When I Was Your Age* – Set in England during World War II, it tells how Daisy is comforted by a dog named Muffin, as both prove to be survivors.

- “Shortcut” by Nancy Werlin (2001) in *On the Fringe* – Victims of bullying find confidence and power in their own alliance.

Eighth grade:

- “Your Turn, Norma” by Gary Soto (1998) in *Petty Crimes* – Norma derives comfort from a doll named Amber that she cares for as a surrogate baby in social studies class when both are tormented by a bully.

- “Safyagraha” by Alden Carter (2001) in *On the Fringe* – This story tells how the nonviolent philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi is effective against a bully on the football team.

The authors recommend that teachers have students make predictions and draw connections to school experiences – and also link the literature experiences to activities in other classes (e.g., music classes discussing songs such as *Beautiful* by Christina Aguilera, *Don’t Laugh at Me* by Peter, Paul, and Mary, *In the Middle* by Jimmy Eat World, and *We Can Work It Out* by the Beatles), and schoolwide anti-bullying speakers and events.

“Young Adult Literature as the Centerpiece of an Anti-Bullying Program in Middle School” by Carol Hillsberg and Helene Spak in *Middle School Journal*, November 2006 (Vol. 38, #2, p. 23-28), no e-link available

8. Blogger No-Nos

In this helpful *American School Board Journal* sidebar, Charlotte-Mecklenburg school communications officer Nora Carr has the following suggestions for language that might be added to a school’s or district’s acceptable use policy to cover the uncharted waters of blogging. She recommends adding these items to the list of unacceptable activities:

- Blogging on school or district time
- Revealing confidential information
- Bullying or attacking another student online, or disrupting school climate, whether using school or home computers
- Inappropriate contact with students via personal blogs
- Violating student privacy or any local, state, or federal laws
- Writing defamatory comments about colleagues, students, parents, school, or district
- Posting obscene, abusive, harassing, threatening, intimidating, hateful, or embarrassing information about another person or organization

“A Blogging Policy Checklist” by Nora Carr in *American School Board Journal*, November 2006 (Vol. 193, #11, p. 46), no e-link available

9. Short Item:

Cool technology websites – The November *Kappan* has a number of websites that might be of interest:

• *West Point bridge-building contest* – <http://bridgecontest.usma.edu> - This site from the U.S. Military Academy offers free software to build a bridge and put it through a simulated-load test. Students from age 13 through high-school seniors may register for the competition, whose goal is the strongest bridge for the lowest cost.

• *Construct virtual bridges, skyscrapers, etc.* – <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/buildingbig> - This Public Broadcasting website allows students to take part in the construction of virtual domes, skyscrapers, and other structures.

• *The history of wind tunnels and flight* from the U.S. Centennial of Flight Commission http://centennialofflight.gov/essay/Evolution_of_Technology/first_wind_tunnels/Tech34.htm

• *Rocket technology and a lunar design challenge* - <http://www.quest.arc.nasa.gov> - This NASA site has a teacher's guide about rocket technology and a lunar design challenge for students in grades 6-8.

• *The physics of water rockets* – <http://www.et.byu.edu/~wheeler/benchtop> - The Dean's Benchtop site is for rocket enthusiasts who want to explore the physics of rockets.

• *Mechanics and motion* – <http://www.flying-pig.co.uk/mechanisms/index.html> - The Flying Pig website has information and animations showing linkages, cams, pistons and the six types of motion. It's a great resource for Rube Goldberg-type activities.

• *Difficult concepts explained, including knee surgery* – <http://edheads.org/index.htm> - The Edheads website is sponsored by the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation and features explanations that help teachers integrate technology into their classrooms.

• *Significant inventions* – <http://library.thinkquest.org/C002942/home.shtml> - This ThinkQuest site focuses on great inventions in history.

• *Technology teacher resources* – <http://www.iteaconnect.org> - The International Technology Education Association's website has a wealth of professional resources for technology educators.

“Web Watch: Technology for Technology's Sake” by John Targia and Matthew Gregoire in *Phi Delta Kappan*, November 2006 (Vol. 88, #3, p. 257)

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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 36 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 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, provides e-links to full articles when available, and e-mails the memo to subscribers every Monday (with occasional breaks; there were 50 issues in 2004-05).

Subscriptions:

Individual subscriptions are \$50 for the school year. 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.

Website:

If you go to <http://www.marshallmemo.com> you will find detailed information on:

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- What readers say
- About Kim Marshall (including links to articles)
- A free sample issue

Marshall Memo subscribers have access to the Members' Area of the website, which has:

- The current issue (in PDF or Word format)
- All back issues (also in PDF or Word)
- A database of all articles to date, searchable by topic, title, author, source, level, etc.
- How to change access e-mail or password

Publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educator
American School Board Journal
ASCD SmartBrief
Atlantic Monthly
CommonWealth Magazine
District Administration
Ed. Magazine
EDge
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Update
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher (TESOL)
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
JESPAR
Jimmy Kilpatrick
Journal of Staff Development
Language Learner
Middle Ground
Middle School Journal
NASSP Bulletin
New York Times
New Yorker
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
Teachers College Record
Theory Into Practice
Times Educational Supplement