Marshall Memo 616

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
December 14, 2015

In This Issue:

Quotes of the Week

"Trust can be defined as an individual's or group's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open."
Alan Daly et al. (see item #5)

"Good teachers are those who remember being a student."
A.C. Grayling (see item #2)

"Success depends on teachers recognizing when a little timely assistance sustains student persistence but does not prematurely terminate productive struggle and learning."
Brad Ermeling, James Hiebert, and Ron Gallimore (see item #3)

"Independence of endeavor, and soon therefore of mind, should be one of the fundamental aims of education."
A.C. Grayling (*ibid*.)

"Instead of blaming our supposed Age of Distraction or turning the lecture hall into a digital playpen, we should think harder about how we can earn the attention of our students."
Frank Furedi (see item #1)

"Bruises heal and broken bones mend, but neuroscientific research shows that emotional abuse can leave permanent scars on the brain."
Jennifer Fraser (see item #8)

1. Are We Surrendering Too Easily to Digital Distractions?

In this article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Frank Furedi (University of Kent, England) says many U.S. college professors believe that digital devices have made today's students so distracted, fragmented, and unfocused that they can't be expected to read books all the way through. Sadly, he says, "reading is not seen as a cause worth fighting for. Academics who ought to know better have accepted the idea that students no longer possess the attention span required to read a book. Such claims serve as justifications for adopting a narrow, instrumental attitude toward reading… [but this] merely intensifies the problem that it is meant to avoid: intellectually switched-off students will become seriously distracted."

Furedi believes we're suffering from historical amnesia: "Since the invention of writing, people have warned about its supposedly harmful effects." Socrates believed that writing would weaken students' memories. Seneca said that reading too many authors and books would make people "disoriented and weak." The advent of mass-market publications in the 1700s caused some commentators to panic, blaming Goethe's novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther* for a wave of copycat suicides. There was talk of "bibliomania," "book madness," "reading rage," and "reading mania" – that somehow the unrestrained lust for fiction would cause readers to lose control of their lives. In the 1900s, William James devoted an entire chapter of *The Principles of Psychology* to the issue of distraction, and in a 1903 essay, Georg Simmel worried about the "intensification of emotional life due to the swift and continuous shift of external and internal stimuli" in the modern urban environment, leading to a style of studied inattentiveness. In the 20th century, television caused great angst among cultural theorists, and most recently, Sherry Turkle's book, *Reclaiming Conversation*, frets about the current generation of young people fixated on their digital devices.

"The distraction debate reflects an anxiety about how to gain the attention of students," says Furedi. "At the very least, a historical perspective should make us wonder if the apparent decline of attention is a technological or cultural issue. In previous centuries, people sought distraction by reading novels. Today the concern is that people have become distracted from reading itself." The claim is that digitally savvy students are so afflicted by the "hyper attention" style of digital devices that they're incapable of deep attention to extended reading in the humanities.

If this is true, says Furedi, it makes sense to change the classroom to fit today's students. "Demands for getting rid of lectures, written essays, and the serious reading of books are justified on the grounds that education needs to be reorganized around the cognitive styles

of young people," he says. "In some classrooms, texting or browsing online during lectures is represented as a form of educational research."

But Furedi doesn't buy this logic. "Such attempts to hold the attention of students with gadgets simply evade an age-old problem," he says. "Gaining attention has always involved a struggle of ideas and ideals… Captivating content always trumps distraction. In the end, what motivates students is not the availability of fancy gadgets but the quality of the content in their education… Literacy comes into its own when people read what matters to them… Instead of blaming our supposed Age of Distraction or turning the lecture hall into a digital playpen, we should think harder about how we can earn the attention of our students."

"Focus Fracas" by Frank Furedi in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 11, 2015 (Vol. LXII, #15, p. B12-B13), e-link for subscribers only

Back to page one

2. The Qualities of a Good Teacher

In this *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, A.C. Grayling (New College of the Humanities, London) says there are two ways that ineffective teachers can harm students: putting them off a subject and undermining their confidence and self-belief. "Good teachers do exactly the opposite of these things," says Grayling, "and as a result inspire, guide, and give their students a broader sense of life's possibilities… the desire to know more, understand more, achieve greater insight." He lists several qualities that the best teachers possess:

- Enthusiasm – Students often catch this in their classrooms.
- Charisma – Teachers can be Pied Pipers for their subject.
- A capacity to clarify and make sense – This quality illuminates any subject.
- Humor – It lightens the hard work students need to do.
- Kindness – A teacher's power is enhanced when there's a human connection.
- A genuine interest in students' progress – This involves constantly checking for understanding and responding accordingly.

Good teachers have these qualities in varying proportions, and the net effect is that students begin to teach themselves. "And that, paradoxical as it may seem, is the best outcome of good teaching," says Grayling. "Independence of endeavor, and soon therefore of mind, should be one of the fundamental aims of education."

Some novice teachers worry that if they show humor, kindness, and interest, they'll come across as weak. But Grayling says there's "no inconsistency in being both kind and firm, humorous although not prepared to tolerate messing about, and interested without being partial. It is a matter of operational tact and good timing."

"Good teachers are those who remember being a student," he concludes. "They hear themselves as their students hear them. They know which aspects of their subject might present a difficulty, which require to be grasped before which, and what their best students will be keen to know, and why… Students' questions and doubts compel one to think and rethink, often prompting one to see things that had not been noticed before. For this reason it is never boring to teach the same subject repeatedly."

"What Makes a Good Teacher?" by A.C. Grayling in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 11, 2015 (Vol. LXII, #15, p. B4-B5), e-link for subscribers only
Back to page one

3. The Art of Designing Lessons With Desirable Difficulties

In this article in *Education Week Teacher*, author/researchers Brad Ermeling, James Hiebert, and Ron Gallimore applaud U.S. educators' recent emphasis on growth mindset and "grit." They point to clear benefits in having students wrestle with complexity, uncertainty, and difficulty and coming up with their own answers rather than being guided through every step.

But Ermeling, Hiebert, and Gallimore worry that "struggle" may become an end in itself, rather than a means to higher levels of student learning. Cooperative learning has fallen into this trap, they believe: "In many classrooms, students have learned to be better 'cooperators' but often without any distinct benefit for deeper learning. To avoid a similar fate with growth mindset, the instructional goals must be richer learning, not just struggle." The key is getting students engaged with a task that captures the central idea of the lesson or unit.

Here's an example. A teacher is introducing the addition of fractions with unlike denominators (students already understand how to add fractions with like denominators and can solve problems like 2/5 + 1/5). One approach would be for the teacher to ask, "Can you find a common denominator for the problem 1/2 + 1/3?" But this doesn't focus students on the key idea, which is that units or wholes must be broken into same-size parts to find the exact answer to the problem. A better question would be, "Can you find how much juice we would have if we added 1/2 cup and 1/3 cup? Show how you found the answer by drawing a picture or writing how you thought about the problem." This gets students wrestling with the key idea they need to understand – how to think about the quantities of juice in smaller, equal amounts so they can be added together. When students have worked on this problem, they will be much more receptive to learning the concept, perhaps in a direct explanation from the teacher.

Designing learning experiences focused on worthy learning goals is challenging, say Ermeling, Hiebert, and Gallimore; it involves a lot of trial and error and teacher persistence. Here are some other key elements in successful "struggle" lessons:

- Determining the timing and placement in a curriculum unit;
- Crafting the problem so it hits students' zone of proximal development (ZPD) – the level of difficulty that will challenge them without undue frustration;
- Making sure they have the prerequisite knowledge and skills – for example in the problem above, knowing how to add fractions with like denominators before tackling problems with unlike denominators;
- Doing ongoing assessments to gauge students' current level of understanding and proficiency;
- Providing a safe environment that encourages student thinking, collaboration, and risk-taking;
- Using probing questions to nudge students into their ZPD;

- Providing appropriate help – "Success depends on teachers recognizing when a little timely assistance sustains student persistence but does not prematurely terminate productive struggle and learning," say the authors.
- Following up each struggle episode with carefully structured lessons that build on students' ideas, address misconceptions, and help them reflect on their new understandings.

"Beyond Growth Mindset: Creating Classroom Opportunities for Meaningful Struggle" by Brad Ermeling, James Hiebert, and Ron Gallimore in *Education Week Teacher*, December 7, 2015, http://bit.ly/1I52vKR; Ermeling can be reached at brad.ermeling@gmail.com.

Back to page one

4. A Five-Step Model for Leading Classroom Math Discussions

In this article in *Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School*, Margaret Smith, Elizabeth Hughes, and Mary Kay Stein (University of Pittsburgh) and Randi Engle (University of California/Berkeley) suggest a way to conduct classroom math discussions that builds on and honors student thinking while ensuring that the key ideas being taught remain central. The authors use the Bags of Marbles problem as an example:

Bag X contains 75 red and 25 blue marbles.
Bag Y contains 40 red and 20 blue marbles.
Bag Z contains 100 red and 25 blue marbles.
Each bag is shaken and a student, eyes closed, takes out one marble from each bag.
With which bag would the student have the best chance of picking a blue marble?

The challenge with problems like this is how to orchestrate student exploration and an all-class discussion so the different ways of solving it are explored, students can draw on their varying levels of expertise, and students get enough – but not too much – help from the teacher.

Smith, Hughes, Engle, and Stein suggest a particular sequence for conducting a rigorous math discussion. "These practices give teachers control over what is likely to happen in a discussion," they say, "as well as more time to make instructional decisions. This is possible because much of the decision making has been shifted to the planning phase of the lesson."

• *Step 1: Anticipating student responses* – The ideal scenario is for a group of teachers to meet and come up with as many solutions as they can, perhaps also looking at student work from previous years. This will help think through different student strategies and prepare teachers to deal with likely errors and misconceptions. For example, one common but invalid way to solve the Bags of Marbles problem is to look at the number of extra red marbles in each bag (50 in Bag X, 20 in Bag Y, and 75 in Bag Z). Teachers should be ready to ask the right questions of students who are using this strategy.

• *Step 2: Monitoring students' work and engagement* – As students work on the problem (probably in groups), the teacher circulates and pays close attention to their mathematical thinking and solution strategies. It's helpful to have a list of all the possible solutions (fraction, percent, ratio unit rate, ratio scaling up, additive, and others not anticipated)

and jot down which strategies different groups are using. "During this time, the teacher should also ask questions that will make students' thinking visible and help students clarify their thinking," say the authors. "The teacher should also ensure that all members of the group are engaged in the activity and press students to consider aspects of the task to which they need to attend."

• *Step 3: Selecting students to present* – While circulating, the teacher thinks about which students to call on in the all-class discussion. The goal is to get all possible solution strategies on the table (including strategies that students don't come up with) and teach the key concepts, namely: (a) to compare bags of marbles, you need a common basis of comparison, and (b) there are different types of comparisons: part-to-part, part-to-whole, and percents).

• *Step 4: Sequencing student responses for display* – The teacher might start the all-class discussion with the strategy used by most students in the class, which would validate their work and engage as many students as possible. Alternatively, the teacher might begin with a strategy that is the most concrete, using drawings and hands-on models, and move into the more-abstract solutions. Or the teacher might start with incorrect strategies to clear up misconceptions early on. Whatever approach is used, the sequence should allow students to see the differences between different solutions and appreciate the diversity of solutions to a seemingly simple problem.

• *Step 5: Connecting different student responses and linking them to key math ideas* – The closure of this lesson should pull the threads together and help students evaluate the accuracy and efficiency of different solutions and see the mathematical patterns and principles involved.

"Orchestrating Discussions" by Margaret Smith, Elizabeth Hughes, Randi Engle, and Mary Kay Stein in *Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School*, May 2009 (Vol. 14, #9, p. 548-556), available for purchase at http://bit.ly/1Qj8xue

Back to page one

5. Negative Relationships and How They Affect a District's Performance

In this *American Journal of Education* article, Alan Daly (University of California/San Diego), Nienke Moolenaar (Utrecht University), Yi-Hwa Liou (National Taipei University of Education), Melissa Tuytens (Ghent University), and Miguel del Fresno (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia) analyze how negative relationships develop between central-office and school-based leaders, dragging down a district's effort to improve teaching and learning. The authors hypothesize that three key elements affect the quality of relationships:

• *Trust* – "Trust can be defined as an individual's or group's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open," say the authors." Trust plays a key role in whether people at different levels of an organization interact productively with one another. Where there is a low level of trust, there is less collaboration and less chance for positive outcomes.

• *Innovative climate* – How people perceive the practices, procedures, and behaviors that promote new knowledge and ideas is a key factor in their willingness to take risks and

share ideas that improve performance. People won't go out on a limb with new suggestions if the climate isn't receptive.

• *Efficacy* – People's belief that they can take actions resulting in successful outcomes is a key factor in their being persistent in the face of obstacles. "As reform efforts often involve a great deal of interaction," say the authors, "highly efficacious leaders may be better able to connect and motivate others to engage with and sustain change efforts." Conversely, leaders who aren't confident in their ability to produce results will drag down the productivity of their colleagues.

The authors also looked at differences in gender, level of experience in the district, and work level (e.g., central-office or school-based).

The study found that district office leaders were most often the nexus of negative relationships, and that trust and innovative climate were the critical factors: low trust and a climate that didn't support innovation spawned difficult relationships and pulled down performance. Surprisingly, a high level of efficacy was often unhelpful. It appears that high self-confidence is associated with an unwillingness to listen and adapt to change and take others' views into account, leading to difficult relationships. The findings on gender, experience, and work level were mixed.

What are the implications? "First, schools and districts should be aware of the potential existence of difficult ties between district and school leaders," say the authors. "Awareness of challenging relationships allows leaders to potentially interrupt or resolve these difficult interactions… One takeaway from our exploratory case study is for leaders to pay explicit attention to mismatched perceptions of trust and innovative climate across the district. Trust and innovative climate are two fundamental elements in creating a learning organization where members are open to sharing new ideas and taking risks in support of better practice. Low levels of trust and of perceptions of an innovative climate, and misperceptions between the two, can serve as bellwethers for the development of difficult ties, which can inhibit both vertical and horizontal communication."

"[T]hose who are in positions of power in the hierarchy must take the first step in rebuilding and repairing trust," the authors conclude. "Hence, our work indicates the importance of creating learning partnerships between and within the district office and principals to build shared beliefs and a sense of community, which in turn may reduce the formation of negative relationships."

"Why So Difficult? Exploring Negative Relationships Between Educational Leaders: The Role of Trust, Climate, and Efficacy" by Alan Daly, Nienke Moolenaar, Yi-Hwa Liou, Melissa Tuytens, and Miguel del Fresno in *American Journal of Education*, November 2015 (Vol. 122, #1, p. 1-38), available for purchase at http://bit.ly/1mkbM81

Back to page one

6. Teaching Students to Do Google Searches That Go Beneath the Surface

In this *eSchool News* article, tech guru Alan November reports that most students are highly confident that they can find information on the Internet. When he asks students about

their skills, the usual response is, "Of course I know how to use Google. Did he *seriously* just ask that? How old is this guy?" But when they're guided through the steps of doing an advanced search, students quickly see how little they know.

For example, if students are preparing to write a paper on the Iranian hostage crisis, they usually type the assignment into Google. Lots of results pop up (484,000 at this writing), but students usually read only the first page. If they don't find what they're looking for, they often conclude that Google can't help them and look elsewhere.

What most students haven't been taught, says November, is how to navigate their way through the huge amount of knowledge at their fingertips. "To manage overwhelming amounts of information," he says, "it is critical to learn how to design searches that take you past the first page of results. For example, if a student lives in North America, typing "Iranian hostage crisis" into Google will produce results only from the American perspective, depriving students of the opportunity to see the world from the other side.

The good news is that other perspectives are out there in cyberspace – if students know how to find them. Here's how November would walk students through preparing to write a paper on the Iranian hostage crisis:

- Typing "Iranian sources" into the Google search bar won't improve things – students will continue to get content from a Western perspective.
- But if students type in the country code for Iran, IR, they'll get content from an Iranian perspective.
- And if they use the shortcut "site:IR" the search will be more efficient – "site:" is a Google operator that limits results to content from a particular country. (Other country codes can be found at this site: http://www.web-1.com/country-codes/.)
- Having access to Iranian websites raises the question whether Iranians would use the same words to describe the hostage crisis. Exploring this question in Wikipedia, students will learn that the Iranian term is "The Conquest of the American Spy Den."
- So now students know they should type "site:IR Conquest of the American Spy Den" into Google. This will produce a ton of sites, all from the Iranian perspective.
- But how many of these sites are reliable? To improve quality, students could limit their search to sources from Iranian universities by using the code "ac" to indicate an institution of higher education (in the same way that .edu does in the U.S.).
- And wouldn't it be good to narrow the search to the chronology of events from the Iranian perspective?
- Typing "site:ac.ir Chronology of Conquest of the American Spy Den" produces a treasure trove of new information.

"Students will notice that this new search has no resemblance to their first," says November, "and that the information contained in this latest search offers a vastly different account of the American-named 'Iranian hostage crisis.' Using this new search, students are empowered to access a perspective they may not otherwise have considered."

November reports that when he walks students through these steps, they're stunned, embarrassed, and sometimes angry that they haven't been taught them before. *What else don't*

I know? is a common question. "There is great news in this response," says November. "Students do not want to feel inadequate when they use the Internet. Once you start to teach them the tricks of deep research, they will often ask for more. With some minor adjustments in how we think about and teach basic online research skills, teachers can help create an environment where students take pride in their ability to 'zoom in' on a topic as deeply as possible. It makes huge sense for a teacher to ask students to show their search strategies as well as their results."

"The Advanced Google Searches Every Student Should Know" by Alan November in *eSchool News*, November 23, 2015, http://www.eschoolnews.com/2015/11/23/how-search-google-592/

Back to page one

7. How Much Autonomy Should Teachers Have in Their Classrooms?

In this *Education Gadfly* article, Robert Pondiscio reports on the National Center for Education Statistic's School and Staffing Survey (SASS). The researchers looked at teachers' sense of professional control in their classrooms, which is "positively associated with teachers' job satisfaction and teacher retention." Teachers who say they have less autonomy are "more likely to leave their positions, either by moving from one school to another or leaving the professional altogether." Teachers were asked their degree of control in these areas:

- Selecting textbooks and other classroom materials;
- Content, topics, and skills to be taught;
- Teaching techniques;
- Evaluating and grading students;
- Disciplining students;
- Determining the amount of homework to be assigned.

Comparing results from the 2003-04, 2007-08, and 2011-12 school years, the study found a slight decline in all six areas, with the number of teachers saying they had a "great deal" of autonomy declining from 82 percent in 2003-04 to about three quarters in the most recent year – still pretty high. Teachers reported significantly more autonomy in the last four areas than in the first two.

Pondiscio recalls that as a first-year teacher in a South Bronx elementary school, he had a great deal of control over the content he taught and the materials he used. He spent countless hours planning lessons and writing curriculum – "hours that would have been far better spent practicing and mastering my craft," he says. "Sure, I had plenty of 'autonomy,' but I lacked the time to exercise it… Since creating curriculum and lessons from scratch each week took prodigious amounts of valuable time, however, my 'autonomy' yielded more frustration and dissatisfaction."

Compared to other public-sector workers – police officers, fire fighters, civil servants – Pondiscio believes teachers have a great deal of control over their immediate environment. "The question," he says, "is where to strike the balance of accountability and autonomy so as to maximize teacher satisfaction and student outcomes even while fostering innovation." The SASS report doesn't adequately address that issue, he concludes.

"Teacher Autonomy in the Classroom" by Robert Pondiscio in *The Education Gadfly*, December 9, 2015 (Vol. 15, #48), http://edexcellence.net/articles/teacher-autonomy-in-the-classroom; the full study, "Public School Teacher Autonomy in the Classroom Across School Years 2003-04, 2007-08, and 2011-12" by Dinah Sparks and Nat Malkus, U.S. Department of Education, is at http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015089.pdf.

Back to page one

8. Myths About Adult Bullying in Schools and Sports Teams

In this *Edutopia* article, author Jennifer Fraser explores the reasons that some parents don't immediately speak up about – even tolerate – adult bullying of children in school:

- Emotional abuse is difficult to detect and document.
- Psychiatric and psychological studies rely on "soft" evidence from interviews and lived experience, which don't always provide hard evidence that serious harm has occurred.
- Bullying by teachers and coaches is often mistaken for passion and a demand for excellence.

However, says Fraser, "MRI imaging shows the physical harm done by bullying, not to the body, but to the brain. Bruises heal and broken bones mend, but neuroscientific research shows that emotional abuse can leave permanent scars on the brain." Students need to be told to report adult-to-student as well as student-to-student bullying.

The problem is that five common myths about adult bullying of teens are widely believed in schools and competitive athletics:

- *Teens are almost adults and need to develop thick skins*. Just the opposite is true for adolescents, says Fraser. They're at a highly vulnerable state of development.
- *Bullying is actually tough love meant to make kids stronger*. In fact, bullying causes a stress response that releases cortisol to the brain – which is linked to depression and other neurological problems. "None of this makes any child stronger, smarter, more artistic, or more athletic," says Fraser. "It just harms his or her brain permanently."
- *Emotional abuse isn't as serious as physical or sexual abuse*. Nonsense, she says. The damage is just as great and can last a lifetime.
- *Bullying is just part of growing up*. This idea needs to be stamped out, says Fraser.
- *Students and athletes reach their potential under bullying regimes*. Cortisol damages brain structures affecting learning, memory, concentration, and decision making.

"In a world full of passionate teachers and coaches who want the best for their students," concludes Fraser, "I'm hopeful that informed discussions, grounded in psychological and neuroscientific research, will result in finally laying to rest the myths that surround bullying approaches to education."

"What Neuroscience Reveals About Bullying by Educators" by Jennifer Fraser in *Edutopia*, September 21, 2015, http://bit.ly/1NtG7aT

Back to page one

9. Recommended Graphic Novels

In this *School Library Journal* feature, Brigid Alverson and eight contributors list their top ten graphic novels for 2015:

• *Awkward* by Svetlana Chmakova (Hachette/Yen), grade 5 up – A middle-school drama about bullying and competition.

• *Lumberjanes, Vol. 1: Beware the Kitten Holy* by Grace Ellis, Noelle Stevenson, and Shannon Watters, illustrated by Brooke Allen (BOOM! Studios), grade 5 up – Five girls spend the summer at a scout camp with all kinds of strange creatures.

• *Sunny Side Up* by Jennifer Holm, illustrated by Matthew Holm (Scholastic/Graphix), grades 3-7 – A 10-year-old girl has to spend the summer with her grandfather in his Florida retirement community, and they gradually get into the family's difficulties.

• *Lunch Witch* by Deb Lucke (Papercutz), grades 3-7 – A retired witch takes a job as a lunch lady at a school and things get complicated.

• *We Dig Worms!* by Kevin McCloskey (TOON Books), grades K-2 – Worms and their role in the environment.

• *Baba Yaga's Assistant* by Marika McCoola, illustrated by Emily Carroll (Candlewick), grade 5 and up – Masha answers an ad to become a witch's assistant and remembers tales from her grandmother to pass a series of tests.

• *Unbeatable Squirrel Girls, Vol. 1: Squirrel Power* by Ryan North, illustrated by Erica Henderson (Marvel), grade 7 up – Doreen is a mutant with squirrel powers, and the book follows her adventures as she starts in college.

• *Ultraman* by Eiichi Shimizu, illustrated by Tomohiro Shimoguchi (Viz Media), grade 7 up – Teenager Shinjiro learns that his father was more than just a scientist and that he has inherited super powers, which come in handy when aliens invade.

• *Nimona* by Noelle Stevenson (HarperCollins/HarperTeen), grade 7 and up – A shape-shifting young woman teams up with a not-so-terrible villain in a world of knights, dragons, and computers.

• *Human Body Theater: A Nonfiction Revue* by Maris Wicks (First Second), grades 4-8 – A whimsical but factually accurate description of how each body system works.

"Top 10 Graphic Novels" by Brigid Alverson, Robin Brenner, Lori Henderson, Esther Keller, Michael May, Caleb Mozzocco, Mike Pawuk, Scott Robins, and Eva Volin in *School Library Journal*, December 2015 (Vol. 61, #12, p. 44-45), http://bit.ly/1lIUXU8

Back to page one

If you have feedback or suggestions,
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 44 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 64 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 50 issues a year).

Subscriptions:

Individual subscriptions are $50 for a year. Rates decline steeply for multiple readers within the same organization. See the website for these rates and how to pay by check, credit card, or purchase order.

Website:

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

- How to subscribe or renew
- A detailed rationale for the Marshall Memo
- Publications (with a count of articles from each)
- Article selection criteria
- Topics (with a count of articles from each)
- Headlines for all issues
- Reader opinions (with results of an annual survey)
- About Kim Marshall (including links to articles)
- A free sample issue

Subscribers have access to the Members' Area of the website, which has:

- The current issue (in Word or PDF)
- All back issues (also in Word and PDF)
- A database of all articles to date, searchable by topic, title, author, source, level, etc.
- A collection of "classic" articles from all 11 years

Core list of publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educational Research Journal
American Educator
American Journal of Education
American School Board Journal
AMLE Magazine
ASCA School Counselor
ASCD SmartBrief/Public Education NewsBlast
Better: Evidence-Based Education
Center for Performance Assessment Newsletter
District Administration
Ed. Magazine
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Week
Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis
Educational Horizons
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher
Go Teach
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Educational Review
Independent School
Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk (JESPAR)
Journal of Staff Development
Kappa Delta Pi Record
Knowledge Quest
Literacy Today
Middle School Journal
Peabody Journal of Education
Perspectives
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal
Principal Leadership
Principal's Research Review
Reading Research Quarterly
Responsive Classroom Newsletter
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
School Administrator
School Library Journal
Teacher
Teachers College Record
Teaching Children Mathematics
Teaching Exceptional Children/Exceptional Children
The Atlantic
The Chronicle of Higher Education
The District Management Journal
The Journal of the Learning Sciences
The Language Educator
The Learning Principal/Learning System/Tools for Schools
The New York Times
The New Yorker
The Reading Teacher
Theory Into Practice
Time Magazine
Wharton Leadership Digest