

# Marshall Memo 126

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education

March 6, 2006

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## Quotes of the Week

“I am no wizard. I am a teacher.”

John Wooden, UCLA basketball coach (see item #1)

“Failure to prepare is preparing to fail.”

John Wooden (*ibid.*)

“We have to work very hard to eliminate mystery and secrecy, so that the student never says, ‘I don’t know what you want.’”

Grant Wiggins (*Curriculum Update*, Feb. 2006, p. 6)

“Feedback tells you what you just did. Feedback is information you can use. It’s descriptive and useful information about what you did and didn’t do in light of a goal.”

Grant Wiggins (*ibid.*)

“I don’t want to be part of a schoolwide anything, unless it really is schoolwide.”

A San Diego high-school department head (see item #2)

“The schedule is God. You can implement any innovation you want in your classroom as long as you don’t mess with the schedule.”

Watts and Castle (1993), quoted in item #7

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## 1. Great Teaching Lessons from a Winning Basketball Coach

“I am no wizard,” said legendary basketball coach John Wooden, who led UCLA to numerous championships in the 1960s and early 1970s. “I am a teacher.” This article in the current *Education Week* describes the techniques that Wooden, a former English teacher, used to get such great results on the basketball court. They are surprisingly consonant with recent findings on classroom teaching.

- Wooden seldom used general praise or “scolds” with his players. He never lectured.
- Instead, when a player made a mistake, he got a brief message packed with specific information and knowledge.
  - Wooden’s “corrections” (as he called them) came two or three times a minute during practice sessions, and each one was usually less than 15 seconds.
  - Players got feedback the instant they made a mistake. For example, when a young center hesitated after taking a rebound (he was supposed to wheel and pass the ball to begin a fast break), the coach immediately corrected him: “Pass it to someone short!”
  - About 10 percent of the coach’s corrections included a demonstration.
  - Practice sessions were fast-paced, well-organized, and challenging. Bill Walton, a UCLA player who went on to become a Hall of Fame professional player, once wrote that games seemed slow compared to Coach Wooden’s practices.
    - Relentless repetition was a feature of all practices, based on Wooden’s belief that when players had the fundamentals down at an automatic level, they were more likely to show imagination and initiative. He once said that he hoped to be “as surprised as our opponent at what my team came up with when confronted with an unexpected challenge.”
    - Wooden also taught his players basic concepts. Asked to choose between skills and concepts, he said a basketball team needed both. To Wooden, skills were servants of concepts, but no less important. Flexibility under pressure came from a mastery of both.
    - Wooden’s feedback to players during practices was carefully planned in advance based on what each young player needed to work on. “Failure to prepare is preparing to fail,” the coach said – a lesson he learned as an English teacher when he didn’t anticipate what might go wrong in a lesson.
      - As a coach, Wooden kept detailed records of every practice, noting what worked and what didn’t work to help his players learn.
      - Wooden’s preparation was especially meticulous with less-talented players. He looked for ways to keep them learning, active, and engaged in practice sessions. “I learned to focus on studying people, especially young people,” he said. “I study the way they react, the way they are motivated, the way they are frustrated, and the way they work. This will help me discover the way they learn, and when I discover that, I’m halfway there.”

- Wooden was a student of basketball right up to his final season in 1974. Every summer, he picked an area on which to focus his attention, did library research, and then systematically surveyed experts who had achieved results in that area.

“What John Wooden Can Teach Us” by Ronald Gallimore in *Education Week*, March 1, 2006 (Vol. 25, #25, p. 30-31), no free e-link available

## **2. A San Diego High School Boosts Literacy Instruction**

In this article in the March issue of *Principal Leadership*, San Diego State professors Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey describe a successful schoolwide literacy effort at Hoover High School in their city (the school made a 136-point gain on the state’s Academic Performance Index between 1999 to 2005). How did this happen? After extensive discussion, the faculty bought into the idea that all teachers should continuously use these eight approaches in their classrooms:

- *Anticipatory activities* – To get students engaged from the very beginning of each lesson and activate prior knowledge, teachers agreed to use bellwork, anticipatory guides, and KWL charts (what I know, what I want to know, what I learned).

- *Cornell note-taking* – Students split the page of their notebooks in half, taking notes on the right side and identifying key ideas on the left, with a summary at the end of each section. This improved listening comprehension and taught students a valuable study tool.

- *Graphic organizers* – Teachers taught students how to use appropriate tools for displaying information in visual form, including semantic webs, cause-and-effect charts, Venn diagrams, matrices, and flowcharts.

- *Read-alouds and shared reading* – On a daily basis, teachers read aloud for 3-5 minutes, using material relevant to the content area and lesson. This gives students a context for learning, builds background knowledge, improves vocabulary, and models fluent reading.

- *Reciprocal teaching* – In groups of four, students read a text and then summarize, clarify, question, and predict. This helps them practice the strategies that good readers use when they read for information.

- *Vocabulary development* – All teachers explicitly teach content vocabulary in their subject area.

- *Writing to learn* – Across subject areas, teachers have students complete brief writing prompts to clarify their understanding. These pieces of writing give teachers a glimpse of students’ thinking and tell them when re-teaching and clarification are necessary.

- *Daily silent reading* – Teachers reserve 20 minutes of “sacred” time each day for students to read self-selected material. This required Hoover to spend heavily on building up classroom libraries, but the school felt the cost was well worth it. An unanticipated benefit of the daily reading was that it improved students’ stamina for high-stakes tests.

Hoover High also has a thoughtful approach to professional development, gearing activities according to the ratio of people who are engaged in different time slots:

- *1:125* – Whole-faculty meetings are used to introduce new initiatives, motivate and challenge the staff, praise high-performing staff members, and provide a sense of the larger community. Some of these meetings have featured high-profile speakers like Jaime Escalante, Jonathan Kozol, and Harry Wong.

- *1:35* – Twice a month during teachers’ 90-minute prep periods (the school is using block scheduling), groups of teachers focus on content literacy strategies and the school-wide literacy effort. In these sessions, teachers demonstrate strategies for their colleagues and get into discussions about how well techniques are working in the classroom.

- *1:4* – In other prep periods, teachers meet in groups of four to practice specific teaching strategies. Teachers sign up for a specific strategy and go to a designated classroom (four groups meet in each room, using the four corners), where a teacher who has volunteered to coach that strategy gives a 10-minute overview of how he or she uses it. Then the other three teachers practice the strategy and get feedback from their peers.

- *1:1* – Teachers coach each other in dyads, focusing on a specific classroom strategy that each pair decides on. Teachers are paid to attend two 2-hour after-school sessions on peer coaching, observing peers, and structuring feedback. Teachers are also paid for three periods when they observe their partners teaching and give them feedback.

Is the Hoover High program really happening in every classroom? When the idea was first broached, some teachers expressed skepticism because they’d seen other programs where not everyone took part. “I don’t want to be part of a schoolwide anything, unless it really is schoolwide,” said the head of the English department. Doug Williams, the principal, responded to this concern by promising that he and his three assistant principals would visit classrooms every day and give feedback to all teachers on their implementation (or lack of implementation) of the literacy program. So is every teacher on board? No, admits Williams. But the fact that there are a few holdouts has not prevented the effort from moving forward. “We didn’t spend our time watering the rocks,” said Williams. “We watered the plants and watched them grow over the rocks.”

Fisher and Frey take this analogy a little further: “We know that, by watering and feeding the plants, they will grow. In growing, they begin to drip on the rocks, creating small changes over time in the rocks’ surface and structure. Even the rocks can change.”

“Majority Rules: A Schoolwide Literacy Success” by Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey in *Principal Leadership*, March 2006 (Vol. 6, #7, p. 16-20), no e-link available

### **3. Ways That Principals Can Help Teachers “Think Like Assessors”**

In this thoughtful piece in *Principal*, Marcella Emberger presents the key points of a professional development program developed for principals by the Maryland Assessment Consortium. It urges the following shifts in thinking:

- *From traditional supervision of teaching to looking at what students are learning* – This means moving away from observing teaching as a performance to working as partners with teachers in “collecting evidence of student understanding.”

- *From “covering the curriculum” to ensuring that what is taught is learned* – The premium should be on students demonstrating what they know and are able to do in a variety of ways.

- *From textbook-driven instruction to using multiple sources of information* – Principals should encourage teachers to develop “meaningful, complex activities based on their ability; to seek out a variety of appropriate sources.”

- *From scheduled quizzes and tests to frequent formative assessments* – Principals should help teachers see that frequent ongoing assessment is a better way to evaluate how well students understand, versus Friday, midterm, and final examinations to see “who got it and who didn’t.”

- *From assessments that grade students to assessments that support student learning* – Teachers need prodding to move from seeing assessments as summative (grades in their mark books) to seeing them as ways of giving students feedback on their progress.

- *From considering reading and writing as separately taught processes to providing instruction in all curricular areas* – Students need instruction in both reading and writing in all content areas.

- *From working individually to working with teams* – When teachers work alone looking at student work, they are isolated from their colleagues and standards are inconsistent. Principals need to lead and schedule around the idea of collegial examination of student assessments.

How can principals bring about these shifts in thinking among their teachers? Step one is taking an honest look at the level of assessment literacy in their staff: Who is proficient? Who is developing proficiency? Who is a novice? Step two is developing trust: “This requires the most intense effort by principals,” says Emberger, “because they must override deeply held beliefs that it is ‘unfair’ to judge teaching based on how well students learn.”

“Helping Teachers ‘Think Like Assessors’” by Marcella Emberger in *Principal*, March/April 2006 (Vol. 85, #4, p. 38-40), no e-link available

#### **4. Embracing Assessment**

In her monthly Urban Connections column in *Principal*, Cheryl Riggins of the National Association of Elementary School Principals quotes Rick Stiggins on the three things that students need if they are to achieve at high levels:

- Accessible models of what good work looks like;
- Frequent assessments giving feedback on how their work compares with models;
- Help and support closing the gap between the exemplars and where they are.

“We’re constantly working with students right at the edge of their capabilities,” says Stiggins. “We’re helping them take the next step. It’s this kind of interaction that turns out to be critical.” The trick, says Riggins, is to take advantage of students’ intrinsic love of self-improvement and give them a scaffold they can ascend, step by step.

“It feels good to succeed,” Stiggins says. “When the human brain experiences success, it feels good and we’re wired to want more. The mirror image of that is when we experience the humiliation of failure, which will cause the brain to lock itself down in self-defense and make learning impossible. You know, in the schools that we grew up in, a low level of performance was called ‘failure.’ There was humiliation associated with it and it caused a lot of us to give up in hopelessness. What we’re trying to get to here is a place where people understand that when you first start to learn something, you’re probably not very good at it. It’s not that students shouldn’t be held accountable; they should. But while they’re learning, it’s got to be OK not to be good at it at first. We don’t want the word ‘failure’ coming into play. It has nothing to do with the grade book.”

“Embracing Assessment, Erasing Failure” by Cheryl Riggins in *Principal*, March/April 2006 (Vol. 85, #4, p. 8), no e-link available

## 5. Popham on What Makes for Good Classroom Assessments

In this article in the March issue of *Principal*, UCLA testing guru James Popham suggests three qualities that day-to-day classroom assessments should possess:

- *Useful interim feedback* – “A classroom assessment *for* learning has a mission,” says Popham: “to help kids learn better... A teacher who is an adroit user of good classroom assessments will always provide students with readily understandable follow-up activities that can shore up shortcomings or build on prior accomplishments.

- *Less is more* – Teachers need to focus on a few really important curriculum goals and not have a curriculum that’s a mile wide and an inch deep, says Popham. The “cover-everything” curriculum “doesn’t help kids learn what they truly need to learn,” he continues. “If teachers select what they regard as the most worthwhile of a state’s curricular aims, and do a terrific job of getting their students to *deeply* master them, I assure you that those students will perform as well on NCLB tests as those who receive superficial, touch-all-bases instruction.”

- *Meaningful involvement of students* – “There are enormous instructional payoffs,” says Popham, “in making students active, assessment-informed partners in the learning process.”

“A Tale of Two Test Types” by James Popham in *Principal*, March/April 2006 (Vol. 85, #4, p. 12-16), no e-link available

## 6. The Skinny on Homework

In this 62-page article in the spring issue of *Review of Educational Research*, three Duke University researchers synthesize the research on homework from 1987 to 2003. Noting that all studies they examined had design flaws, the authors nevertheless found credible evidence that homework has a positive influence on student achievement in the middle- and high-school grades (50 correlations were positive and 19 were negative). The evidence on the impact of homework in the elementary grades is very sparse and firm conclusions can’t be

drawn. As for non-academic benefits of homework, the researchers concluded that “most have never been put to empirical test.”

Beyond these not-very-earth-shattering conclusions, the authors have a number of interesting observations about homework:

- Since not all teachers assign homework and not all students complete the homework they are assigned, the impact of homework is very hard to pin down.

- Some studies suggest that the positive effects of homework on high-school achievement kick in when students do at least an hour a night. But the researchers note that it’s hard to interpret data on the correlation between time spent on homework and academic achievement, since students who are struggling academically may spend a great deal of time on their homework – or none at all.

- Homework is an on-going source of friction between home and school, with parents complaining about it being too short or too long, too hard or too easy.

- Teachers give homework for a variety of purposes, including: (a) to have students practice or review material presented in class; (b) to establish communication between parent and child; (c) to fulfill directives from the principal or school district; and (d) to punish students.

- Studies have theorized about a number of potentially positive effects of homework, including:

- Immediate achievement and learning, including better retention of factual knowledge, increased understanding, better critical thinking, concept formation, and information processing, and curriculum enrichment;
- Long-term academic benefits, including more learning during leisure time, improved attitude toward school, and better study habits and skills
- Nonacademic benefits, including great self-direction, greater self-discipline, better time management, more inquisitiveness, and more independent problem-solving;
- Parent and family benefits, including greater parental appreciation of and involvement in schooling, parental demonstrations of interest in children’s academic progress, and student awareness of the connection between home and school.

- Studies have also postulated some potentially negative effects of homework, which can operate in the same homes as the positives:

- Student satiation, including loss of interest in academic material and physical and emotional fatigue;
- Denial of access to leisure time and community activities;
- Parental interference, including pressure to complete homework and perform well and confusion of instructional techniques;
- Cheating, including copying from other students and help beyond tutoring;
- Increased differences between high and low achievers.

- This last point is interesting: critics of homework argue homework actually widens the achievement gap, since more economically-advantaged students tend to have greater

parental support and assistance, quieter places to study, and greater resources, including access to computers and the Internet.

“Does Homework Improve Academic Achievement? A Synthesis of Research 1987-2003” by Harris Cooper, Jorgianne Civey Robinson, and Erika Patall in *Review of Educational Research*, Spring 2006 (Vol. 76, #1, p. 1-62), no e-link available

## 7. Does Block Scheduling Work?

“Is block scheduling a real reform strategy for schools, or is it merely a different bell schedule?” ask two researchers in this article in the spring issue of *Review of Educational Research*. After analyzing 58 empirical studies, they concluded that the research is “shallow... Our analysis revealed a body of research characterized by inconsistent findings reported in studies that in many cases did not provide the kind of information about settings, populations studied, and methodologies expected in scholarly writing. Moreover, much of the research was based on limited data collected at schools where block scheduling has only recently been implemented.”

So what’s the bottom line? “The research failed to provide the evidence necessary to declare unequivocally that teachers’ practices and student learning had changed and, therefore, that block scheduling was a real reform,” conclude the researchers. “Yet the research also failed to provide convincing evidence that block scheduling was *not* a real reform. In fact, the research provided little at all that could be *definitively* said about block scheduling.”

Nevertheless, the researchers offer the following specifics gleaned from the studies they examined:

- Block scheduling has not been linked to improved student achievement on standardized tests. More research is needed to pin down the exact effect on long-term student achievement.

- Students’ grades and grade-point averages improve under block scheduling, but we don’t know why. One theory is that teachers cover less material in block-scheduled schools, so students have less to remember for tests.

- Discipline referrals went down in schools implementing block scheduling.

- Block scheduling is quite popular with students and teachers. Both report opportunities for increased interaction, and students believe they get better grades.

- Administrative support and professional development are vital in schools implementing block scheduling. Here’s a checklist:

- Determine why a change in the schedule is necessary and desirable.
    - Involve all stakeholders.
    - Identify available internal and external resources.
    - Provide ongoing professional development to support teachers’ efforts to change their classroom practices, namely instruction, assessment, and management.
    - Conduct periodic evaluations of the new schedule.

“An Analysis of Research on Block Scheduling” by Sally Zepeda and Stewart Mayers in *Review of Educational Research*, Spring 2006 (Vol. 76, #1, p. 137-170), no e-link available

## **8. How the Norfolk, Virginia Schools Went About “Reculturing”**

In this *Education Week* commentary piece, Scott Thompson, head of the Panasonic Foundation, shares what he’s learned about creating a culture of trust, openness, and collaboration in which everyone shares ownership for a compelling vision. What is a school’s culture? It’s “the way we do things around here” – the underlying shared beliefs, history, assumptions, norms, and values that manifest themselves in how people behave in an organization. “Leaders of high-performing school systems,” says Thompson, “train much of their strategic attention on reculturing, because that’s where the mother lode of leverage for lasting change is located.” Using the Norfolk, Virginia school district as an example, he lists the following key steps:

- *Establishing a ‘no excuses’ philosophy* – Prior to 1998, Norfolk had an “excuses mentality” – poverty and race were seen as explanations for the low academic achievement of many students. John Simpson, who became superintendent in 1998, worked forcefully to make that attitude taboo.

- *Developing a district-wide philosophy of teaching and learning* – Aiming to be “World Class by 2010,” the district hammered out a one-page statement describing the responsibilities of administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members.

- *Building trust and encouraging risk-taking* – The new superintendent focused on assuring staff that it was okay to take risks and make mistakes.

- *Shifting the focus of the central office from monitoring schools for compliance to active support of schools* – Simpson reorganized the central office to be more service- and instruction-oriented, insisting that staffers spend 70 percent of their time in schools. He eliminated numerous layers and merged the instruction and professional development offices.

- *Basing decisions on data, not favoritism or politics* – It was no longer a question of who knew whom on the school board; promotions were based on demonstrated results.

- *Establishing a system of shared accountability focused on results* – This included a system of quarterly interim assessments with rapid analysis by teachers and follow-up with students.

- *Fostering a culture of continuous learning* – District leadership members read and discuss a selected book each month. The superintendent modeled this, constantly talking about what he was reading and thinking about.

“The Importance of ‘Reculturing:’ Case Studies in Mining the ‘Mother Lode of Leverage’ for School Change” by Scott Thompson in *Education Week*, March 1, 2006 (Vol. 25, #25, p. 44, 30, 31), no free e-link available

## **9. Ten No-No’s for Principals**

Retired Miami-Dade middle-school principal Allan Bonilla offers the following advice on what *not* to do as a school leader:

- *Don't be invisible.* Being out and about the school is essential, especially visiting classrooms on a systematic basis.

- *Don't get chained to your desk.* “Save the desk work for those times when teachers and students are not in the building,” says Bonilla. “Distribute as much of the administrivia among support staff members as possible.” And keep your door open most of the time you're in your office.

- *Don't micromanage – or under-manage.* “Delegation is very much like walking a tightrope,” says Bonilla. If you try to micromanage everything, you'll go crazy. But if you give away too much, you'll lose touch with the pulse of the school.

- *Don't value programs more than people.* Centrally-mandated curriculum programs can drive teachers crazy. The principal must consider the human side of implementation and strike a balance.

- *Don't have an egotistical, dictatorial style.* “If you don't like how things are run here, find another school” is an example of this. Bonilla makes the case for involving all staff in decisions and being a good listener.

- *Don't forget to praise and recognize people.* “Celebrating successes as a school family through acknowledging and recognizing positive aspects of the daily life is a sure road to a winning culture,” writes Bonilla.

- *Don't over-criticize.* In their haste and impatience, principals sometimes trample on feelings and talk down to staff members. “A school full of non-creative, non-thinking individuals develops a toxic culture in which forward movement is impossible,” says Bonilla.

- *Don't focus on the negatives.* This means noticing the positive even when a lot needs fixing. Staff members can “catch” negativity the way they catch a cold, says Bonilla.

- *Don't lose your cool.* “Office tantrums, shouting at staff members and students, angry public announcements, and moody behavior will only create fear and confusion in others,” says Bonilla. “People cannot function in an environment where they do not know what to expect from their leader daily.” Humor is a marvelous antidote to anger.

- *Don't forget the kids.* “A good administrator will make time to get to know students, to attend student activities, and to be where students are,” concludes Bonilla.

“10 Don'ts of Successful School Leadership” by Allan Bonilla in *Principal Leadership*, March 2006 (Vol. 6, #7, p. 40-43), no e-link available

## **10. Helping Students Deal with Anger**

In this *Principal Leadership* article, Pennsylvania psychologist David Leaman offers his advice on dealing with angry students. He asks us to picture a 1-10 scale, with 1 representing calm and 10 out-of-control rage. At around 9, he says, “the primitive brain, which is built for survival, takes over and the creative reasoning cortex temporarily shuts down. That is the point of no return, and raw aggressive behavior is dramatically manifested. There is no reasoning or calming a person once he or she has reached that explosive biochemical state. During anger arousal, people perform as if they had a thought disorder or learning disability.”

Anger management, explains Leaman, is all about helping people put on the brakes before they reach this point, or de-escalating if they're already there. He says that certain techniques can be taught to a whole class – and these are important life skills:

- *Somatic awareness* – Learning the physical signs of anger, which may include tense muscles in the back of the neck, a tightened fist, a queasy feeling, and a shortness of breath.

- *Negative thinking or self-talk* – Here are some examples: these tend to escalate anger and make the problem worse:

“You did this on purpose!”

“No one is going to treat me that way!”

“It’s your fault! You’re a jerk!”

“I’ll teach you to never do that to me again!”

“It’s not fair!”

Students need to be taught how to replace these with more positive self-talk:

“It’s no big deal. I can handle this.”

“Stay calm. Getting angry doesn’t help.”

“I’m in control because I keep cool.”

“Accidents happen. I can deal with this.”

- *The roots of anger* – Like a tree whose roots are not visible at ground level, anger usually stems from deep, unnamed feelings of hurt, helplessness, fear, and guilt. Leaman says that anger “may become like a drug, anesthetizing a person to the deeper emotional pain and blocking him or her from appropriate social solutions.” The key is identifying and naming the roots of anger and dealing with them out in the open.

- *Time out for de-escalation* – Once the biochemical anger response has been triggered, it takes people as much as 20 minutes to get the adrenaline out of their bloodstream and calm down. Staff should help students get to a “neutral corner” where they can calm down, and students can be taught self-soothing strategies like taking deep breaths, pushing one hand against the other, and pushing against a wall.

- *Using I-messages* – Students should also be taught how to express their anger in ways that get their feelings out without making things worse. An effective I-message has three parts:

- When... (describe what happened)

- I feel... (share feelings honestly)

- I would like... (make a simple request)

For example, a teacher who is angry at a chronically late student might say, “When you come late to class and slam the door loudly, I feel disappointed and irritated. I would like you to come on time and show respect to the class by shutting the door quietly.”

“Helping Students Keep Their Cool” by David Leaman in *Principal Leadership*, March 2006 (Vol. 6, #7, p. 28-32), no e-link available

## 11. Short Items:

*a. Advisory groups in a Wisconsin high school* – In this article in *Principal Leadership*, Ryan Champeau, principal of Waukesha North High School in Wisconsin, describes his school’s implementation of advisory groups as part of a broader effort to counteract sliding academic achievement and increasing discipline referrals. In their advisories, students get involved in friendly competitions, school service efforts (including hurricane relief), homecoming, and other activities, and teachers keep tabs on their academic progress. “An advisory teacher is one more caring adult who supports individual students, reminds them that they are valued and that their contributions in the school are important, and encourages them to feel confident that they are able to achieve at high levels,” says Champeau.

Here is the schedule the school is using to implement the advisory groups:

Time	A Day	B Day	C Day	Duration
7:20 – 8:30	1	2	1	70 mins.
8:35 – 9:45	3	3	2	70 mins.
9:50 – 10:20	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	30 mins.
10:20 – 11:00	1 <sup>st</sup> lunch	1 <sup>st</sup> lunch	1 <sup>st</sup> lunch	40 mins.
10:25 – 11:35	4A	4A	6A	70 mins.
11:05 – 12:15	4B	4B	6B	70 mins.
11:35 – 12:15	2 <sup>nd</sup> lunch	2 <sup>nd</sup> lunch	2 <sup>nd</sup> lunch	40 mins.
12:20 – 1:30	7	5 (study hall)	7	70 mins.
1:35 – 2:45	8	6	8	70 mins.

“Doing Advisories” by Ryan Champeau in *Principal Leadership*, March 2006 (Vol. 6, #7, p. 22-26), no e-link available

*b. A protocol for success with ELLs* – This *Education Week* article on the challenges of getting English language learners up to speed for high-stakes NCLB tests mentions the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), a model for simultaneously teaching students academic content and English. Developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C., the protocol asks teachers to do the following:

- Write content objectives clearly for all students.
- Write language objectives clearly for all students.
- Explicitly link concepts to students’ background and experiences.
- Emphasize key vocabulary (e.g., introduce, write, repeat, highlight) for students.
- Use a variety of techniques to make content concepts clear (e.g., visuals, hands-on activities, demonstrations, and gestures).

- Provide frequent opportunities for interactions and discussion between teacher and student and among students, and encourage elaborated responses.
- Give students plenty of wait-time after asking a question.
- At the end of the lesson, having students say a sentence beginning with any of the following: “I think...”, “I know...”, “I learned...”, or “I wonder...”

“No Child’ Effect on English-Learners Mulled” by Mary Ann Zehr in *Education Week*, March 1, 2006 (Vol. 25, #25, p. 1, 14, 15), no free e-link available

**c. Should high schools have valedictorians?** – In answer to a question about students trying to beat their school’s weighted grading system in “the mad dash to be named valedictorian,” *Principal Leadership* magazine notes that some schools have eliminated valedictorian status in favor of honors diplomas, which are awarded to students who meet the following standards:

- Rigorous specified coursework;
- A 3.2 or higher grade-point average;
- A specified level of performance on state exams or the ACT;
- Completion of a school-to-career internship or portfolio
- A juried senior exhibition.

Schools report that honors diplomas have alleviated students’ concerns about weighted grades and eliminated unseemly competition to be valedictorian.

“Asked and Answered” in *Principal Leadership*, March 2006 (Vol. 6, #7, p. 10), no e-link available

**d. What’s more important, the First Amendment or the Simpsons?** – A recent survey found that only 25 percent of Americans can name two or more of the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment (speech, religion, press, assembly, and petition) while more than half can name at least two members of “The Simpsons” cartoon family. The same survey found that more people can name the three “American Idol” judges and familiar advertising slogans than can identify three First Amendment rights. There was also considerable confusion about what the First Amendment guarantees: 20 percent of respondents thought the right to own a pet was protected, and 38 percent said the right against self-incrimination (which is in the Fifth Amendment) was in the First Amendment.

Spotted in *PEN Weekly Newsblast*, March 3, 2006

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-060228museum.1.4808182.story?coll=chi-news-hed&ctrack=1&cset=true>

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# 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:

- How to subscribe or renew
- Why the Marshall Memo?
- Focus topics
- Headlines for all issues
- 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 Educational Research Journal  
American Educator  
American School Board Journal  
ASCD SmartBrief  
Atlantic Monthly  
Boston Globe  
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  
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