# Marshall Memo 286

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
May 18, 2009

## In This Issue:



## Quotes of the Week

"In the mind of the students, when a teacher teaches straight from the book, it is the teacher being lazy."

Deborah Schussler, "Beyond Content: How Teachers Manage Classrooms to Facilitate Intellectual Engagement for Disengaged Students" in *Theory Into Practice*, Spring 2009 (Vol. 48, #2, p. 118)

"The best teachers don't simply teach content; they teach people."

Joan Walker (see item #1)

"Don't yell at us."

Elementary students, when asked what rule they would like to make for their teachers to follow, in "Teachers' Emotion Regulation and Classroom Management" by Rosemary Sutton, Reneé Mudrey-Camino, and Catharine Knight in *Theory Into Practice*, Spring 2009 (Vol. 48, #2, p. 136)

"You do an intervention with a 2nd grader, you're changing direction on a speedboat, but when you do an intervention with a 5th grader, you're changing direction on an oil tanker."

Catherine Snow (see item #11)

"Organizations that fail to achieve transparency will have it forced upon them. There's no way to keep a lot of secrets in the age of the Internet."

James O'Toole and Warren Bennis (see item #5)

"The only messenger I would ever shoot is one who arrived too late."

A manager quoted by O'Toole and Bennis (*ibid.*)

## 1. What Can Effective Parenting Tell Us About Teaching?

"The best teachers don't simply teach content; they teach people," says Long Island University professor Joan Walker in this thoughtful article in *Theory Into Practice*. To have a significant long-term impact on students, she believes, classrooms must provide good instruction *and* build positive relationships. This balance is particularly important for students who enter school with low academic and social skills. What's astonishing is how seldom teachers manage to implement both. A three-year study of 2,500 first, third, and fifth graders found that only *seven percent* of classrooms had high-quality instruction and a healthy emotional climate (Pianta et al., 2007).

Walker believes that balanced teaching is the key to reducing dropouts and teacher burnout, and sees "authoritative" parenting as a helpful model. She cites the work of Diana Baumrind (1967, 1978) who identified four parenting styles:

- Authoritative – High control, high nurturance: these parents expect mature behavior, use reason to gain compliance, and are warm and supportive.
- Authoritarian – High control, low nurturance: these parents value strict obedience but rely on coercion and are less nurturing.
- Permissive – Low control, moderate nurturance and involvement.
- Neglectful – Low control, low nurturance.

When Baumrind followed children who had been raised under each parenting style through adolescence, she found that those raised by authoritative parents consistently had the best academic and social outcomes; they had high self-control, were achievement oriented, friendly with peers, and cooperative with adults. Children reared in authoritarian homes had less positive academic and social outcomes; boys tended to be more aggressive, girls less independent. Children reared in permissive homes had low levels of self-control and self-reliance, lower academic achievement, and were often unsuccessful in social relationships. And children raised in neglectful homes had the worst outcomes: low self-esteem, and high levels of aggression and impulsivity (1991). Since Baumrind's groundbreaking work, other researchers have consistently found authoritative parenting to be the optimal model.

Parenting style has a direct bearing on how open children are to adult influence. Children raised in authoritarian homes (*Do it because I say so*) often resist rules and injunctions, whereas children raised in authoritative homes (*Here's why this is important, Honey*) are more likely to internalize their parents' values and goals. Part of what makes authoritative parents more effective is that they listen. With a teenager's curfew, for example,

an authoritarian parent will use firm control and punish the child every time the curfew is broken, whereas the authoritative parent will be equally strong on the need for a curfew but adjust it as the teen becomes more able to assume personal responsibility, providing a scaffold for increasingly mature behavior.

"Authoritative parents seem to know when to get out of the child's way," says Walker. When helping their children with homework, for example, "The best teachers were parents who provided increased support in response to failure and did not interfere with the child's autonomy after success… So, if one thinks about style as an ambient radio signal that is transmitted from parent to child, then authoritative parenting style is more effective because it functions well in two ways: first, it has higher fidelity (i.e., it's a better signal) and second, it has listeners who want to tune in."

How does this relate to classrooms? To explore the question, Walker studied three fifth-grade math teachers of comparable experience and instructional practices, each representing a different style: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. She spent considerable time in each classroom over a semester, interviewed the teachers, had students fill out a survey, and looked at achievement results. At the beginning of the semester, students were similar in their attitudes and math achievement, felt optimistic about the year ahead, and were positive about their teachers' ability to teach them well. But as the weeks passed, students' attitudes and achievement in the three classrooms diverged. Those with the authoritative teacher were confident, engaged, and made significant year-end achievement gains. This teacher was highly controlling and nurturing, making consistent demands for compliance and frequent demands for self-management (*Okay, pair up. One of you is going to be the problem-solver and the other one is going to be the problem checker. If you are the checker you need to explain how to get the right answer*). This teacher also made twice as many nurturing statements as the other two.

Students in the authoritarian classroom also did well academically, but they used avoidant, ego-protecting learning strategies. The teacher demanded compliance, but rarely demanded student self-management, and she made a number of non-nurturing statements (*That's irrelevant. I'll zap you*). Students in the permissive classroom made smaller achievement gains; their teacher was nurturing but didn't push them as hard (*Since the students who forgot their math books have gone to get them from their locker, the girls can go to the bathroom and the boys can get a snack*). Using the radio-signal metaphor, the authoritative teacher had a high-quality signal and students were tuned in, the authoritarian teacher had a strong signal but students weren't always tuned in, and the permissive teacher's students were tuned in but were getting a low-quality signal.

Walker believes the key crossover points from the parenting research are that control and nurturance are both essential for teaching to be effective, and nurturance isn't just a nice add-on. Students pick up on this from a young age, she says, and by adolescence, they can articulate it very well. Teenagers who see their teachers as mean or distant "described their academic work as coercive and irrelevant, whereas students who had positive relationships with teachers viewed their tasks as fun and meaningful… Students' remarkable sensitivity to

the relational quality of classrooms is also consistent with the idea that the effectiveness of a specific teaching practice can be mediated by students' receptivity to adult influence. Style can lead students to tune in and tune out."

In interviews, teachers acknowledge the importance of relationships to their effectiveness. They said (Davis and Ashley, 2003):

- Positive relationships allowed them to push students to do more challenging work.
- Positive relationships made it psychologically safe for students to open up.
- Positive relationships enhanced teachers' own creativity, persistence, and motivation.

Walker believes all teachers need to find the right balance between control and nurturance – "when to *lighten up* and when to *tighten up*." She acknowledges that she doesn't know all the answers, but believes the parent model provides a good way to ask the right questions.

"Authoritative Classroom Management: How Control and Nurturance Work Together" by Joan Walker in *Theory Into Practice*, Spring 2009 (Vol. 48, #2, p. 122-129), no e-link; Walker can be reached at joan.walker@liu.edu.

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## 2. Purpose-Driven School Work

(Originally titled "The Moral North Star")

In this *Educational Leadership* article, Stanford professor William Damon describes two experiences that transformed him from a lackadaisical ninth grader into a young man with purpose. The first happened when he turned in a mediocre English paper, mumbling, "I didn't spend much time on this, but I know these weekly assignments don't count for much." The teacher peered over his glasses and said sternly, "Mr. Damon, *everything* you do in this world counts."

The second occurred when he covered a soccer game for the school newspaper. After the game, the visiting players, who were recent immigrants, spoke passionately about coming to America, the lives they left behind, and their hopes for the future. Damon's story attracted attention, and he was hooked. "I had found an enthralling purpose," he says. "After that, I had no trouble devoting attention to my school writing assignments. I was determined to learn the skills that I would need to successfully pursue the mission I had found so captivating."

In his research, Damon has found that others had similar turnaround experiences. The key ingredients are:

- Finding a reason to strive for excellence;
- Thinking about the kind of person you are and what you could accomplish with the knowledge offered by schools.
- The idea that your efforts could serve a useful purpose if you make good choices.

Damon is struck by the fact that none of these are part of the current educational debate. Our focus on test scores, accountability, and computers doesn't address purpose. "Only when students discover personal meaning in their work do they apply their efforts with focus and imagination," he says. "Purpose acts as a moral north star on the route to excellence: It offers a

steady beacon for inspiring and directing students' best efforts over the long haul, within the classroom and beyond."

But it's all too rare. In one study, Damon and his colleagues found that only about 20 percent of students approach their studies with a clear sense of purpose. Another 25 percent live day to day. The rest have glimmerings of purpose and dabble in areas of strong interest but don't have a clear sense of where they are going. To motivate these students, Damon says, "teachers must address the question of why academic knowledge is important… Why do people need to learn history or math? Why is it useful to read and write well or to spell words correctly? Why do we expect you and your fellow students to excel in the work that we assign you?" He urges schools to find ways, every day, to inject purpose and direction:

- Talk to students about their aspirations.
- Recognize work that shows beyond-the-self concerns.
- Link activities to future plans.
- When students give cryptic answers, ask, Why?
- Connect lessons to larger world issues.
- Give the reasons behind a particular lesson or activity.
- Show how students' actions contribute to wider systems.
- Discuss links to vocations.
- Teach biographies of purposeful people – Nelson Mandela, Vaclav Havel, Katherine Graham – and also less-famous locals.
- Encourage citizenship within the school.

In his study, Damon was distressed to find that civic purpose was mentioned least often by students; few aspired to be mayors, city councilors, senators, or president. "A democratic society will wither if it does not benefit from the talents and energies of each generation as it comes of age," he says.

"The Moral North Star" by William Damon in *Educational Leadership*, October 2008 (Vol. 66, #2, p. 8-12) http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/oct08/vol66/num02/toc.aspx
Damon can be reached at wdamon@stanford.edu.

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## 3. Three Additional R's: Reasoning, Resilience, and Responsibility

(Originally titled "Excellence for All")

In this *Educational Leadership* article, Tufts psychologist and dean Robert Sternberg asks what it means for a school to be "excellent" and describes four schools with very different approaches:

- School #1 focuses on AYP and boosting the performance of low performers (while lobbying to shift district lines so these students go to other schools).
- School #2 is located in an affluent suburb and focuses on its top-performing students and how many will get into Ivy League colleges.

- School #3 focuses on the middle and celebrates social and intellectual conformity. The school and the community believe in well-rounded children who do what they are told and don't stick out as exceptionally strong or weak.
- School #4 gauges its success by statistical averages, ignoring students as individuals.

None of these schools is excellent, says Sternberg, and he makes the case for pursuing excellence for *all* students and letting "the numbers emerge as a result of seeking excellence, rather than the main goal." What are the criteria? The traditional three R's – reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic – plus three more Rs:

• *Reasoning* – These are the thinking skills needed to be an engaged, active citizen in the 21st century, says Sternberg. They include:

- Creative thinking to generate new and powerful ideas;
- Critical and analytical thinking to ensure those ideas are good;
- Practical thinking to implement the best ideas and persuade others to adopt them;
- Wise thinking to make sure the ideas foster the common good.

"Good reasoning complements knowledge by enabling students to use that knowledge well," he says.

• *Resilience* – This is the persistence to pursue worthwhile goals despite life's obstacles and includes:

- The willingness to "defy the crowd in your thinking and actions;"
- The ability to surmount obstacles;
- Passion in your pursuits;
- Self-efficacy – belief in your ability to achieve goals.

Schools can build resilience by modeling it, by implementing programs that develop it, and by "creating challenging experiences for students that require resilience to see them through." Another important ingredient is teaching students an incremental view of intelligence – that you can get smarter through effective effort.

• *Responsibility* – This is the ethical and moral dimension of development, consisting of:

- Ethics – Telling right from wrong;
- Wisdom – Balancing your own interests with others';
- Care – Real empathy for the well-being of others;
- Right action – "Not only knowing the right thing to do, but doing it."

"Schools can teach responsibility by modeling it, by providing case studies, and by challenging students with situations that require them to develop their own unique and personal sense of responsibility," says Sternberg. An effective method is having students read biographies of those who have shown wisdom and lived ethical lives, and then reflecting on their own lives: have they worked for the common good or looked out only for themselves?

"Our society is moving in the wrong direction," concludes Sternberg. "If we continue to turn our schools into test-preparation centers, we are neglecting the important three *Rs* of reasoning, resilience, and responsibility. What's more, test prep is not even an adequate way of teaching the first three Rs. We need to educate students, not merely prepare them for tests…

We must not just concentrate on the top, bottom, middle, or statistical average of the distribution. We must concentrate on *all* students and teach them how to be active, productive citizens in a rapidly changing world."

"Excellence for All" by Robert Sternberg in *Educational Leadership*, October 2008 (Vol. 66, #2, p. 14-19) http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/oct08/vol66/num02/toc.aspx Sternberg can be reached at robert.sternberg@tufts.edu.

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## 4. Ten Ways to Support Students' Resilience

In this thoughtful *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, Regis University/Denver mental-health specialist Sally Spencer-Thomas suggests ways that educators can encourage mental resilience in stressed-out students. The article is written for college professors and counselors, but see how much of it applies in K-12:

• *Scan the environment*. "We should open our minds as if we were anthropologists 50 years from now, returning to our campuses to understand students' stress in 2009," says Spencer-Thomas. What are the explicit and implicit media messages and cultural cues students receive? Who are the heroes? What are the rituals? How do staff members talk to students about coping?

• *Serve as models of emotional intelligence and mental wellness*. "We can forget that, at times, we feel as overwhelmed as our students do," says Spencer-Thomas. She describes a presenter asking an audience of student-life professionals how many of them in the last year had ever felt so overwhelmed that it was difficult to function. Every person said yes. Students watch us, she says, and it's important to model taking care of our whole selves.

• *Normalize and integrate mental health*. Spencer-Thomas says that many people embrace wellness for their bodies but don't include mental health in the package. Insomnia, changes in weight and energy, and other physical issues may be symptoms of psychological troubles, she says. "We should educate students to view mental-health practices as normal, everyday activities that we do to keep ourselves fit – whether taking medication, seeing a counselor, setting limits, keeping a journal, sharing concerns with a friend, meditating, or learning new coping strategies."

• *Offer easy access to an array of services*. Some students will not voluntarily seek mental-health services, says Spencer-Thomas. Others don't need therapy or medication; they need financial assistance, spiritual guidance, or tutoring. The key is having a wide variety of services readily available to all students.

• *Foster multiple identities*. If a student's identity is all wrapped up in one activity – academic success, athletics, a relationship – and that activity goes sour, there's a real risk of psychological distress. Students need to diversify their "portfolios" and pursue interests with a degree of moderation, says Spencer-Thomas. "We should help students find balance between work and play, between activity and rest, between being and doing."

• *Train students in life skills*. Too many students have been raised by hovering, over-protective parents, says Spencer-Thomas. They need workshops in how to manage money and

time, and also in communication skills and how to help a friend. A recent study at the University of Texas found that 67 percent of students who had felt suicidal had first disclosed this to a peer.

• *Engage student leaders in mental-health advocacy*. In her university leadership class, Spencer-Thomas preaches that mental health is a social-justice issue. "I have found that once students learn how many people suffer in silence because of the social and financial barriers our society places in the way of dealing with mental-health conditions, and suicide in particular," she says, "they become passionate about making change."

• *Explore the wisdom of the crucible*. Many young people haven't yet experienced life's great traumas, says Spencer-Thomas, or, if they have, they don't absorb the lessons. "We must help students understand that wounding is inevitable and part of a leadership cycle," she says. "That will allow them to view the experience as a catalyst for the next stage of growth and accomplishment."

• *Increase a sense of belonging*. Having more social-networking "friends" doesn't mean students have more true friendships. A recent study asked students in 1985 and 2004 how many confidants they had; in 1985, the number was at least three; in 2004, it was one. Adults must help strengthen social bonds by encouraging small-group interactions – retreats, dialogues, and clubs, for example – says Spencer-Thomas.

• *Help students in their search for meaning*. Educators should help students identify their talents and passions and begin to direct them toward life goals. "Once they get a compelling mental picture of what the future could be like," concludes Spencer-Thomas, "they will have the energy to help them through the dark nights of the soul."

"Top 10 Strategies for Bolstering Students' Mental Resilience" by Sally Spencer-Thomas in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 15, 2009 (Vol. LV, #36, p. A26), no e-link available

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## 5. Building Trust

In this *Harvard Business Review* article, leadership professors James O'Toole and Warren Bennis say that being honest inside an organization is vital to creating a culture of trust, but it's harder than you think. "People hoard information, engage in groupthink, tell their boss only what they think he wants to hear, and ignore facts that are staring them in the face," say the authors. "To counter these natural tendencies, leaders need to make a conscious decision to support transparency and create a culture of candor. Organizations that fail to achieve transparency will have it forced upon them. There's no way to keep a lot of secrets in the age of the Internet." Here are their suggestions:

- *Tell the truth*. Wise leaders tell everyone the same information. "Once you develop a reputation for straight talk, people return the favor," say O'Toole and Bennis.
- *Encourage people to speak truth to power*. Often employees have information their leaders don't have, and smart managers create a climate in which that information

reaches them. "The only messenger I would ever shoot is one who arrived too late," said one leader to the authors.

- *Reward contrarians*. Assumptions need to be challenged – otherwise organizations stagnate. "Find colleagues who can help you do that," say O'Toole and Bennis.
- *Practice having unpleasant conversations*. "The best leaders learn how to deliver bad news kindly so that people don't get unnecessarily hurt," say O'Toole and Bennis. "That's no easy – so find a safe place to practice."
- *Diversify your sources of information*. Everyone in the organization has biases, so it's vital to talk regularly with people in different roles.
- *Admit your mistakes*. Then the people around you will be more able to do the same. O'Toole and Bennis think that President Obama's frank statement in his third week in office that he "screwed up" on an issue set a great example.
- *Build organizational support for transparency*. Hire people who can help create a culture of candor.
- *Set information free*. The default should be sharing information unless there's a clear reason not to do so.

"What's Needed Next: A Culture of Candor" by James O'Toole and Warren Bennis in *Harvard Business Review*, June 2009 (Vol. 87, #6, p. 54-61), no e-link available

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## 6. Ten Fatal Leadership Flaws

In this *Harvard Business Review* article, consultants Jack Zenger and Joseph Folkman report their findings in two 360-degree studies of business leaders who were either fired or considered ineffective. Here were the ten common characteristics:

- *Lack of energy and enthusiasm*. They "suck all the energy out of any room." They rarely volunteer and see new initiatives as a burden.
- *Accept their own mediocre performance*. Their mantra is "under-promise and over-deliver."
- *Lack clear vision and direction*, They believe execution is their only job. "Like a hiker who sticks close to the trail, they're fine until they come to a fork," say Zenger and Folkman.
- *Have poor judgment*. They make decisions not in the best interests of the organization.
- *Don't collaborate*. "They avoid peers, act independently, and view other leaders as competitors," say the authors. As a result, their colleagues don't help them succeed.
- *Don't walk the talk*. Their colleagues see them as lacking integrity, setting standards and then violating them.
- *Resist new ideas*. The reject suggestions from subordinates and peers and good ideas aren't implemented.
- *Don't learn from mistakes*. They hide their errors and brood about them, failing to use setbacks as opportunities for growth.

- *Lack interpersonal skills*. They're abrasive or aloof and stingy with praise.
- *Fail to develop others*. "They focus on themselves to the exclusion of developing subordinates, causing individuals and teams to disengage," say Zenger and Folkman.

Another key finding was that ineffective leaders were often unaware of their flaws, rating themselves much higher than did the people around them. "Leaders should take a very hard look at themselves and ask for candid feedback on performance in these specific areas," conclude Zenger and Folkman. "Their jobs may depend on it."

"Ten Fatal Flaws That Derail Leaders" by Jack Zenger and Joseph Folkman in *Harvard Business Review*, June 2009 (Vol. 87, #6, p. 18), no e-link available

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## 7. Neutralizing "Stereotype Threat"

When women are made aware of positive as well as negative stereotypes on math performance, they identify more closely with the positive stereotype, according to a new *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* study reported in *Science Daily*. This neutralized "stereotype threat" and produced better performance, according to Robert Rydell of Indiana University, who led the study. The researchers also gained insights into how stereotype threat harms performance: it seems to encroach on working memory, leaving less brain power for the task at hand. By introducing a positive stereotype beforehand, the negative thought is neutralized, making it possible for the person to perform normally.

The study involved asking groups of female undergraduates to solve difficult math problems. One group was given no information about stereotypes; one was told that men are better at math than women; one was told that college students perform better at math than non-college students; and one heard both negative and positive stereotypes about math performance. The women who were told the negative stereotype performed worst, while the other three groups performed about the same.

"This research shows that because people are members of multiple social groups that often have contradictory performance stereotypes (for example, Asian females in the domain of math)," said Rydell, "making them aware of both a positive group stereotype and a negative stereotype eliminates the threat and underperformance that is usually seen when they dwell only on their membership in a negatively stereotyped group. People seem motivated to align themselves with positively stereotyped groups and, as a byproduct, can eliminate the worry, stress and cognitive depletion brought about by negative performance stereotypes, increasing actual performance." In this study, the women seemed to identify more strongly with their identity as college students than their identity as women.

One way that stereotype threat can be triggered is asking students for their gender or race before an important performance. In situations as diverse as math, cooking, and driving cars, being asked for this information reduces the performance of stereotyped groups. But Rydell and his colleagues found that if women were also asked for other demographic information such as their educational level, that neutralized the stereotype threat. The simplest

thing, though, is to ask for student information *after the test is over*, says Rydell. The researchers found that another way stereotype threat can be triggered is for a woman to sit between two men during an exam. "The activation of the stereotype is relatively automatic and hard to control," said Rydell. "Whether you choose to endorse or believe the stereotype, however, is under your control. One option is to think about the positive groups you're associated with that are related to the task at hand."

"Psyched Out by Stereotypes: Research Suggests Thinking About the Positive" in *Science Daily*, May 5, 2009 http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/05/090504094300.htm. The study was "Multiple Social Identities and Stereotype Threat: Imbalance, Accessibility, and Working Memory" by Robert Rydell, Allen McConnell, and Sian Beilock in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2009 (Vol. 96, #5); adapted from material provided by Indiana University, via EurekAlert!, a service of AAAS; spotted in *PEN Weekly NewsBlast*, May 15, 2009

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## 8. A Program to Build Academic Vocabulary in Middle School

In this *Education Week* article, Debra Viadero describes Word Generation, a program developed by the Strategic Education Research Partnership (SERP) to increase middle-school students' academic vocabulary. Boston teachers were eager to pilot the program because their students were tripped up by words like *gross domestic product*, *notwithstanding*, *analyze, eligible*, and *deduce*. Students either misinterpreted words (GDP was something icky found in the home) or glossed over them without comprehension. Initial results of the program are encouraging, and SERP is now making Word Generation available nationwide for free (see http://wordgeneration.org/ for details).

According to Catherine Snow of Harvard University, one of the program's developers, the program had to overcome two challenges:

• Making academic vocabulary engaging – Word Generation addresses this by embedding new vocabulary in readings on provocative, current topics like steroid use among professional athletes, the Iraq war, or cyberbullying.

• Avoiding too much burden on English language arts teachers – Word Generation attacks this by presenting vocabulary in 15-minute lessons that can be taught by ELA, science, social studies, or math teachers and include debates and discussions. The culminating activity takes place on Friday, when students use the words to write a position paper on the reading topic of the week.

"Partnership's First Product Aimed at Middle School Vocabulary" by Debra Viadero in *Education Week*, May 13, 2009 (Vol. 28, #31, p. 1, 14-15); this article can be purchased at http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2009/05/13/index.html

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## 9. Early Identification and Treatment of Alcohol Abuse

In this *New York Times* column, health specialist Jane Brody reports on Rethinking Drinking, a new program for nipping alcohol abuse in the bud produced by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. An interactive website just launched by the Institute, http://RethinkingDrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/, has quizzes, calculators, and other tools that might help teens who have begun to drink come to grips with a potential problem. "Most people who drink alcohol are not alcoholics and never will be," writes Brody. But 30 percent of people 18 and older drink at levels that may develop into abuse, and the program is designed to help these people identify themselves before they begin suffering the medical, social, and legal problems of alcoholism.

"This is a wellness project, patterned on the risk-reduction concept used to prevent other chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes," says Dr. Mark Willenbring, who developed the program with Maureen Gardner. "As with lowering cholesterol or high blood pressure to prevent heart disease, the idea is early identification of risky drinking patterns and early intervention instead of waiting until the person is chronically ill. Once they know who they are, most people at risk of becoming alcohol abusers can cut down on their alcohol consumption and reduce their risk. We know that many heavy drinkers are able to change on their own."

Willenbring lists five early symptoms that a person is already an alcohol abuser or is at risk of becoming one:

- Repeatedly drinking more than self-set limits;
- Having a persistent desire to quit or cut down;
- Drinking and driving;
- Spending too much time drinking;
- Having hangovers or a sleep disorder.

"Program Tries to Identify Problem Drinkers Before Problems Start" by Jane Brody, *New York Times*, May 12, 2009
http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/12/health/12brod.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=Program%20Tries%20to%20Identify%20Problem%20Drinkers%20Before%20Problems%20Start&st=cse

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## 10. A National Poll of Students' State of Mind

In this *Education Week* article, Ann Bradley reports on a new Gallup poll designed to track the "state of mind" of grade 5-12 students over the next decade via online surveys. The first poll (in March 2009) surveyed 70,000 students in 18 states and the District of Columbia on three key areas that have been shown to have an impact on educational outcomes:

- *Hope* – 50% of students were hopeful, 33% said they were "stuck", and 17% said they were "discouraged."
- *Engagement* – 50% were "engaged", 30% "not engaged" and 20% "actively disengaged."

- *Well-being* – 63% said they were "thriving" (thinking about their present and future life in positive terms, being in good health, and having strong social supports), 36% were "struggling" (evaluating life in negative terms, having difficulty meeting daily demands, and lacking resources they need to succeed), and 1% were "suffering."

Despite the problems and concerns, 94% said they would graduate from high school and 80% were confident they would find a good job after graduation.

"Poll Adds 'Youth Voice' on Schools" by Ann Bradley in *Education Week*, May 13, 2009 (Vol. 28, #31, p. 4); the Gallup Student Poll National Report can be accessed at http://www.gallupstudentpoll.com/gtmp/object_utils.display_object?id=922358&dummy=0

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## 11. Negative Findings on Four Supplementary Reading Programs

This *Education Week* article by Mary Ann Zehr reports that a large-scale Mathematica study of urban fifth graders found that four supplementary reading programs – Project CRISS, Read-About, Read for Real, and Reading for Knowledge – were not effective in boosting students' reading achievement. "It's very distressing how hard it is to get bumps in the reading performance of students who are below grade level in reading after the primary grades," said Catherine Snow of Harvard's Graduate School of Education. "You do an intervention with a 2nd grader, you're changing direction on a speedboat, but when you do an intervention with a 5th grader, you're changing direction on an oil tanker."

"Supplementary Reading Programs Found Ineffective" by Mary Ann Zehr in *Education Week*, May 13, 2009 (Vol. 28, #31, p. 11) http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2009/05/13/index.html

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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 37 years' experience as a teacher, principal, central office administrator, and writer, lightens the load of busy educators by serving as their "designated reader."

To produce the Marshall Memo, Kim subscribes to 44 carefully-chosen publications (see list to the right), sifts through more than a hundred articles each week, and selects 5-10 that have the greatest potential to improve teaching, leadership, and learning. He then writes a brief summary of each article, pulls out several striking quotes, provides e-links to full articles when available, and e-mails the Memo to subscribers every Monday evening (with occasional breaks; there are about 50 issues a year).

### *Subscriptions:*

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### *Website:*

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### *Publications covered*

*Those read this week are underlined.*

American Educator
American Journal of Education
American School Board Journal
ASCD, CEC SmartBriefs, Daily EdNews
Catalyst Chicago
Changing Schools (McREL)
Ed. Magazine
EDge
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher (TESOL)
s
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
JESPAR
Journal of Staff Development
Language Learner (NABE)
Middle Ground
Middle School Journal
New York Times
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 (online)
Teachers College Record
The Atlantic Monthly
The Language Educator
The New Yorker
The Reading Teacher
Theory Into Practice
Tools for Schools/The Learning Principal