

Marshall Memo 436

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

May 14, 2012

In This Issue:

1. [The surprising difference that gender-neutral classrooms can make](#)
2. [What it takes for a rookie teacher to succeed](#)
3. [How to welcome a new teacher into a school](#)
4. [A different way to detect bullying in a middle school](#)
5. [With teacher evaluation, less is more, says Mike Schmoker](#)
6. [A rude student helps a college professor see the light](#)
7. [A Massachusetts school sets up its own innovation venture fund](#)
8. [Pathways to hope](#)
9. [How much change will the Common Core math standards require?](#)

Quotes of the Week

“For much of my first year, the sight of administrators filled me with dread. The idea that they could help me become a better teacher was not even a passing thought; they were menaces to avoid.”

Dan Brown (see item #2)

“Many young people dream the American dream, believe it can be achieved, and haven’t a clue how to make it a reality.”

Shane Lopez (see item #8)

“Students aren’t prepared for college. They think they are, but they aren’t.”

Irma Camacho of El Paso Community College, quoted in “Colleges Offer Incoming Freshmen a Summer ‘Bridge’” by Caralee Adams in *Education Week*, May 9, 2012 (Vol. 31, #30, p. 8), <http://bit.ly/IPZYTZ>

“This isn’t just the school to prison pipeline, but the school to prison superhighway.”

Lael Chester of Boston Citizens for Juvenile Justice on the increasing use of police officers to arrest students in school for discipline offenses that would not merit arrest in the community, in “Policing the Public Schools Creates New Problems” by Caitlin Yoshiko Kandil in *The Boston Banner*, May 10, 2012, <http://bit.ly/IJTDpl>

“We in teacher preparation need to know the learning gains of the students taught by our graduates, and we should know how well they teach. Even if the tests are lousy, narrow, and imperfect, they are important to employers and provide one form of information that could be useful for program-driven planning, quality control, and evaluation.”

Robert Pianta, dean of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia, in “Stop Complaining About Teacher Assessments; Find Alternatives” in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 11, 2012 (Vol. LVIII, #36, p. A35), <http://bit.ly/JIwTFx>

1. The Surprising Difference That Gender-Neutral Classrooms Can Make

In this intriguing *Education Week* article, Sarah Sparks reports that while boys and girls naturally play together as toddlers, by the time they reach kindergarten they are spending only 9 percent of their play time with children of the opposite sex. Girls might have a “no boys allowed” lunch table and boys might exclude a quiet girl from their games. “Separation is a fact of human childhood,” says Lise Eliot, a neuroscience professor at Chicago Medical School and author of *Pink Brain, Blue Brain: How Small Differences Grow Into Troublesome Gaps and What We Can Do About It* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2009). The tendency of young children to sex-segregate creates “two separate cultures that persist throughout childhood.”

But that doesn’t happen in all classrooms, reports Sparks. While children naturally develop gender identity, she says, “classroom demographics and teacher practices can make a big difference in how and whether students develop sex-based stereotypes and prejudices.” Janet Hyde of the University of Wisconsin-Madison has found that although there are small gender differences in preschool children’s activity level (boys tend to be more active) and ability to focus (girls tend to be better at this), there is “no solid evidence that boys and girls actually learn differently.” Hyde is emphatic: “You never hear a good, modern neuroscientist say the brain is hard-wired. In fact, it is characterized by great neural plasticity, so... any differences you see are at least as likely caused by differences in the experiences of males and females as to any kind of anatomical differences present from birth.”

- *Classroom demographics* – Erin Pahlke of Arizona State University/Tempe studied 21,000 early-childhood, kindergarten, and first-grade children and found that gender parity in classrooms improves behavior and achievement:

- In classes with approximately similar numbers of boys and girls, there is better self-control among all children.
- Children in classes in which one or the other sex is the dominant majority (around 80 percent) are less self-controlled – and this is true for girls as well as boys.
- When there is a higher percentage of girls in a class, reading and math achievement improves for boys and girls.

- *Teacher actions* – Teachers’ beliefs about student abilities play an important part, says Pahlke – for example, thinking that boys are better than girls at math. In a class with more boys than girls, a teacher might unconsciously think, “Oh, boys are better at math. I can use more-advanced math approaches.” And the same might be true with giving more-demanding reading assignments in a majority-female classroom.

Also, common classroom practices like addressing students “Boys and girls” and lining them up separately causes children to develop the idea that genders are fundamentally different, say Pahlke and Rebecca Bigler of the University of Texas/Austin. “If you compare it to race,” says Bigler, “if you said to your 1st grade classrooms, ‘Good morning, whites and Latinos; let’s have the Latinos get our pencils,’ what would happen is you would go to federal prison. Labeling children routinely by race in your classroom is a violation of federal law, but, of course, you can do this routinely with gender.”

Bigler says that very young children can tell male from female, but they can also see lots of other human differences – for example, ethnicity and whether people are wearing hats. Kids tune in on how adults talk about differences: “Labeling is especially powerful,” she says – for example, saying that a man is a “hat wearer” makes the description more permanent and intrinsic in children’s minds than saying, “he likes to wear hats.”

Researchers had a group of summer-school teachers randomly distribute red and blue shirts to their students and require that they be worn every day. In some classrooms, teachers didn’t refer to the shirts at all, while in others, teachers used them to group students – for example, lining up by red shirts and blue shirts or “Let’s have the red students turn in their books now.” Bigler reports that in the classrooms where teachers routinely referred to students by shirt color, even though teachers weren’t saying that one color was better than the other, there was stereotyping and prejudice among children. In classrooms where shirt color wasn’t mentioned, that didn’t happen.

This and other experiments lead researchers to conclude that the casual, unconscious use of gender to address and organize students in primary-grade classrooms has a major impact on children’s behavior. They enter preschool playing pretty equally with either gender, but they rapidly move toward self-segregation, playing overwhelmingly with their own gender and becoming less comfortable with children of the opposite sex.

Laura Hanish of Arizona State has found this leads children to behave in more gender-stereotyped ways, with boys playing farther away from teachers and becoming more aggressive with each other and girls playing closer to teachers and interacting in more “female” ways. “As girls play with girls,” says Hanish, “they start to become more skilled in the interactional styles and patterns typical of girls and less skilled in the interactional styles and patterns associated with boys. You start to see increasing segregation. Children develop a fairly limited set of interaction skills: less understanding, appreciation, respect of one another. All of that can translate into a host of problems across classrooms. It can translate to less effective interactions across academic tasks, harassment, bullying.”

The Arizona State researchers created the Sanford Harmony Program to try to change these dynamics and implemented it in several schools, focusing on two critical transition grades – preschool and fifth grade. Teachers got professional development on the impact of gender labeling on children. “It was an eye-opening thing realizing how many times I was inadvertently categorizing the children... based on whether they were boys or girls,” says preschool teacher Jacque Radke. “There was personal self-awareness that came out.”

Throughout the year, Radke and her colleague Erica Flynn did not use gender to address or organize their students. Each Monday, children were paired with a new “class buddy” of the opposite sex, and every day, buddies did an activity together – art, music, active physical games, etc. The classes also had direct instruction in social skills such as listening, sharing, and cooperation. Researchers found that children in the gender-neutral classrooms were more socially competent, less aggressive, less exclusionary, and showed better social skills toward both boys and girls. Teachers reported that students were better behaved and better at following directions than those in traditional classrooms.

“Every Monday, they’re excited to come in and see who their new buddy is,” says Radke. “What we began to see was on their own, they would sit with their buddy for the sit-down, read-aloud activity... Not every buddy partnership works well, but I resisted the temptation to change it, because there were a lot of odd couples that ended up working well.”

Cliquishness also declined, said Flynn, and students became more likely to play together, cooperate, and help each other. “Before, there was a lot more arguing,” she says. “Now, we’ll hear them say ‘Good job’ or ‘It’s OK’ – really supportive words. It’s like they’re kinder to each other.”

In addition, some small-scale bullying that occurred at the beginning of the year – telling a child he was not a friend or she couldn’t sit with a group – completely vanished. “I truly believe that as the children engage in structured buddy activities, they are learning to know each other, and this connection is reflected by growth in their patience and tolerance as they interact together throughout the day,” says Radke. “Not hearing that [bullying] language is a huge change in our class.”

“Researchers Cite Social Benefits of Coed Classes” by Sarah Sparks in *Education Week*, May 9, 2012 (Vol. 31, #30, p. 1, 15), <http://bit.ly/IBXViq>

[Back to page one](#)

2. What It Takes for a Rookie Teacher to Succeed

(Originally titled “Now That I Know What I Know”)

In this *Educational Leadership* article, high-school English teacher Dan Brown describes his naïve assumptions as he started teaching in New York City in 2003 – and the horrible first year that ensued. Brown resigned that summer, wrote a book about his experience, and returned to the classroom a year later, determined to do better. He did, eventually earning National Board Certification. But it was years before he understood why that first year went so badly – for him and thousands of others. The central problem, he now believes, is that new teachers “don’t know what they don’t know.” He had bought into the idea that anybody with intelligence and motivation can succeed at teaching and if they don’t, it’s their fault. Here’s his analysis of the real success factors. If even one is missing, he believes, the whole ship can sink.

- *Comfort with your teacher persona* – “You can’t entirely be yourself as a teacher,” says Brown; “you have to cultivate a *teacher persona* – a blend of your real self and the benevolent pedagogical manipulator and authority figure that teachers must be... As Dan, I

don't really care if a kid tucks in his shirt. As Mr. Brown, little matters more. As Dan, I utter a curse word every now and then. As Mr. Brown, foul language offends me deeply." Brown recommends closely observing a variety of teachers in action, trying some of their strategies, and above all, learning students' names as soon as humanly possible. "It all boils down to coming across as well-organized and kind," he says; "these are the two qualities that stand out to students more than any other... Kids can sense phoniness or fear... Losing your composure in front of students is bad, bad news."

- *Familiarity with the school community* – It's a mistake to think that closing your classroom door and controlling your room will lead to success, says Brown: "Relationships among adults beyond the classroom walls make all the difference in a school. This includes administrators and colleagues, of course – but also parents... Phone calls, e-mails, and conversations on the blacktop are very important."

- *Dedication to the job* – "Part of persevering in this profession," says Brown, "involves carrying a high threshold for bureaucratic blunders, miscarriages of justice, untimely copy machine malfunctions, misguided policies, betrayals of trust, and other epic travesties – as well as one's own mistakes." It's crucial to collaborate with veteran teachers on issues like lesson planning, and if the school doesn't support this, new teachers need to reach out and make it happen underground. "Novice teachers can only figure out so much on their own," he avers. "Dedication to the job means forging relationships and creating opportunities to pick colleagues' brains, figure out what works, and apply it to your class."

- *A high-quality preparation program* – "Extensive observation and student teaching must be a bare minimum before any teacher tries to run a classroom," says Brown. He cites Urban Teacher Residency United as an exemplar – <http://www.utrunited.org>.

- *A supportive school leader* – "For much of my first year, the sight of administrators filled me with dread," he says. "The idea that they could help me become a better teacher was not even a passing thought; they were menaces to avoid." In his current school in Washington, D.C., he has nothing but praise for his leaders; they run a tight ship, build school culture, support teachers, and help him forge external partnerships.

- *High-quality curriculum* – "Administrators who choose scripted test prep are operating from a position of fear," says Brown. "Scripted curriculums are boring for students and teachers. People don't have breakthroughs or epiphanies, and it's deadening for intellectual curiosity." There's exciting and empowering material out there, and teachers need to be able to use it, he says.

- *District policies that promote good teaching* – Brown had bad experiences with district administrators in his early years, including one district superintendent who photographed teachers' bulletin boards and put stinging critiques in their permanent files. "New teachers can't thrive when their supervisors' priorities do not involve excellent teaching," he says.

"Now That I Know What I Know" by Dan Brown in *Educational Leadership*, May 2012 (Vol. 69, #8, p. 24-28), <http://www.ascd.org>; Brown is at danbrownteacher@gmail.com.

[Back to page one](#)

3. How to Welcome a New Teacher Into a School

(Originally titled “Beyond Solo Teaching”)

In this *Educational Leadership* article, Brandeis University professor Sharon Feiman-Nemser bemoans the way many new teachers have been treated over the years – larger classes, more students with special needs, extracurricular duties, and classrooms with inadequate materials and equipment – conditions that amount to “hazing” and result in a high rate of teacher turnover. The good news is that many schools are now making valiant efforts to help new teachers succeed. Feiman-Nemser describes three models for supporting new teachers, each providing more support and stronger links to schoolwide development:

- *Induction as temporary support* – The goals of this model are easing a rookie’s transition into teaching, reducing stress, and addressing problems. Its components are a reduced workload for new teachers, a good orientation to the school and community, and an informal buddy system that offers advice and emotional support. The hoped-for outcome is survival and retention.

- *Induction as individualized professional development* – The goals are fostering new teachers’ development and promoting more-effective teaching and learning. The components include: reduced workload; orientation to school and community; guidance with the curriculum; at least two years of serious mentoring with attention to a good match, training, and time; and administrative support. The hoped-for outcomes are improved teaching and learning and teacher satisfaction and retention.

- *Induction as cultural transformation* – The goals are reduced teacher isolation, welcoming new teachers into an integrated school community that supports continuous learning by all, promoting more effective teaching and learning, and reducing the achievement gap. The components include: reduced workload or a team-teaching assignment; serious mentoring (as above); intergenerational learning teams; and administrative involvement. The hoped-for outcomes include: continuous learning by all teachers; collective responsibility for teaching and learning; a high-quality learning environment for students; increased student achievement; and rewarding career paths for teachers.

“Beyond Solo Teaching” by Sharon Feiman-Nemser in *Educational Leadership*, May 2012 (Vol. 69, #8, p. 10-16), <http://www.ascd.org>; the author is at snemser@brandeis.edu.

[Back to page one](#)

4. A Different Way to Detect Bullying in a Middle School

In this thoughtful article in *Professional School Counseling*, University of Virginia Curry School doctoral student Victoria Phillips and professor Dewey Cornell note that bullying victims are often reluctant to seek help, and staff members seldom observe bullying. And when a school conducts a survey in which students can anonymously report that they have been bullied, staff get a sense of how much bullying is happening but don’t get the names of actual victims.

Phillips and Cornell studied a different approach. Over a period of years, they worked with a Virginia middle school implementing the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program that

conducted surveys in which students, after answering other questions about bullying, were able to *nominate* peers whom they thought had been bullied in the previous month. The survey clarified its terms:

Bullying is defined as the use of one's strength or popularity to injure, threaten, or embarrass another person. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or social. It is *not bullying* when two students of about the same strength argue or fight.

The survey also included a list of all students in the school to make it easier for students to remember the names of students they thought were victims.

Counselors interviewed students who received multiple nominations, carefully watching for signs that a student was denying bullying out of embarrassment or fear of retaliation. They grouped unconfirmed reports in three categories: (a) students who were involved in a peer conflict, which school administrators followed up on; (b) students who were past victims of bullying but not in the last 30 days; and (c) students who were clearly non-victims. Here were the findings on confirmed bullying by number of nominations:

- Two or more – 182 nominations – 78 confirmed victims – Predictive value .429
- Three or more – 117 nominations – 66 confirmed victims – Predictive value .564
- Four or more – 61 nominations – 43 confirmed victims – Predictive value .700
- Five or more – 37 nominations – 27 confirmed victims – Predictive value .730
- Six or more – 25 nominations – 19 confirmed victims – Predictive value .760
- Seven or more – 17 nominations – 14 confirmed victims – Predictive value .824
- Nine or more – 10 nominations – 9 confirmed victims – Predictive value .900

Clearly the number of nominations was strongly correlated with bullying that actually occurred. Phillips and Cornell recommend this approach, as long as counselors are well-trained and use a clear definition of bullying.

“Identifying Victims of Bullying: Use of Counselor Interviews to Confirm Peer Nominations” by Victoria Phillips and Dewey Cornell in *Professional School Counseling*, February 2012 (Vol. 15, #3, p. 123-131), <http://bit.ly/JBnO4l>; Phillips is at vp5rq@virginia.edu.

[Back to page one](#)

5. With Teacher Evaluation Rubrics, Less Is More, Says Mike Schmoker

In this punchy *Kappan* article, writer/consultant Mike Schmoker criticizes some widely used teacher-evaluation rubrics/frameworks as unwieldy, time-consuming, and anxiety-producing. “No one has asked the obvious questions,” he says: “Does this innovation have a track record? Could it have unintended consequences or could it displace much higher priorities that would guarantee a better education for all, e.g., ensuring that every teacher is furnished with a decent, coherent curriculum, without which effective teaching is difficult or impossible?”

Teacher evaluation rubrics become even less helpful, says Schmoker, when administrators are asked to conduct multiple full-lesson observations each year, complete with pre- and post-observation conferences, and teachers are expected to cram numerous rubric

criteria into each lesson. He bemoans the way some rubrics use “thoughtless, tortured prose that continues to mar the education profession.” Some examples:

- Teachers must “facilitate content accessibility” by assembling or modifying curricular materials at the “individual and subgroup level.”
- Lessons must “accommodate prerequisite relationships among concepts and skills” and “reflect understanding of prerequisite relationships among topics and concepts and a link to necessary cognitive structures”
- “simultaneous multisensory representations”
- “facilitation... that results in students’ application of interdisciplinary knowledge through the lens of local and global issues”
- “solidify learning after constructed experience with clear labels”
- “articulation of metacognition.”

“I don’t know about you,” says Schmoker, “but I’m very nervous entrusting our children’s futures to people who write – who think – in this fashion.”

What principals and other administrators should look for in classrooms is very simple, he believes: a clear learning objective that’s introduced in a way that arouses anticipation and readiness for learning; multiple short cycles of teaching and modeling, guided practice, and continuous checks for understanding; and each cycle followed by strategic adjustments to instruction. “These well-known, proven elements matter more than anything else,” he says. “And because these concepts are fairly familiar, clear, and few in number, they’re eminently easier to clarify, monitor, and evaluate than the dozens of confusing boxes and bullet points found in popular evaluation frameworks.... Less. Is. More.”

The fewer criteria principals are asked to manage and evaluate, concludes Schmoker, the more imaginative, focused, and effective teachers will be – and the more successful they will be in preparing students for college and career success.

“The Madness of Teacher Evaluation Frameworks” by Mike Schmoker in *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 2012 (Vol. 93, #8, p. 70-71), <http://www.kappanmagazine.org>; Schmoker can be reached at schmoker@futureone.com.

[Back to page one](#)

6. A Rude Student Helps a College Professor See the Light

In this article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Salisbury University communications professor Jennifer Brannock Cox describes an interaction in her classroom that changed her teaching style. She had just handed out an article for students to read silently when she heard a laptop keyboard clicking. She walked over to the student, who hurriedly picked up the article and pretended to read. Not a big deal, thought Cox – but a minute later, the student had put down the article and was back on her laptop. Now it was a big deal.

“Being in my early 30s, and having recently finished my own coursework, I grew up on the cusp of the instant-gratification generation,” says Cox, “and I understand that short attention spans crave constant stimulation.” She even confesses that when she was a student, she jotted the occasional note to a friend, made to-do lists, or even closed her eyes for a

moment during a lecture. But this was disrespectful! When she polled her students on in-class goofing off, she was shocked to read “I don’t care if I get caught” from several of them.

Cox told the story to several colleagues and got very little sympathy. Should she forbid technology use in class? That didn’t seem like a good idea, given the importance of computers to note-taking and in-class projects. Should she patrol the classroom and issue more frequent reminders of her policy on laptops? That didn’t seem right either.

All this got Cox thinking about her pedagogy, especially the use of PowerPoint. “I was trying to use technology to reach students, and they were using it to tune me out,” she says. “What I needed – what we all needed – was a return to the kind of old-fashioned teaching that allows for the interaction and flexibility that will keep me and my students on their toes.” She noticed that students pay attention when she walks away from her computer and tells them stories – for example, all the places she’d been kicked out of when she was a beat reporter. “The discussion that ensues not only captures their attention (and distracts them from the keyboard), but it also allows me to covertly teach them about media law and journalistic ethics,” says Cox.

Her big turnaround was asking students to start their own reporting blog on a topic of their choosing. “Suddenly, they began to see themselves as the authoritative source on dormitory-living issues or campus crime or international affairs,” says Cox. “They soon became eager to add their fame as a campus blogger to their résumés. As the excitement over their work mounted, and their impulses to glance at e-mail during class waned, I overheard one student after class say, ‘I haven’t been this excited about journalism in a long time!’ And somehow, that gap between our versions of acceptable classroom behavior didn’t seem so big anymore.”

“Reclaiming the Classroom With Old-Fashioned Teaching” by Jennifer Brannock Cox in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 4, 2012 (Vol. LVIII, #35, p. B24),

[Back to page one](#)

7. A Massachusetts School Sets Up Its Own Innovation Venture Fund

In this *Kappan* article, Brookline High School social studies teacher Daniel Green describes how his diverse suburban school set up its own foundation to support teacher mentoring, narrow the achievement gap, and pilot other innovative projects [see Marshall Memo 120 for a description of the school’s exemplary mentoring program]. Green believes that every community can establish this kind of fund, and, based on Brookline’s experience, recommends the following steps:

- *Establish an exploratory team.* The goal of this group is to think about the mission, governance structure, and fundraising strategy, creating a “snowball effect” that gets other community members involved, brings expertise to the table, and crystallizes a leadership team.

- *Develop a clear mission statement.* “Donors are more apt to provide funds to an organization possessing a clearly articulated goal,” says Green. This might range from raising \$5,000 to augment existing literacy initiatives to raising tens of thousands of dollars for a teacher-led social justice program.

- *Create an inclusive governance structure.* Key stakeholders need to be included – parents, teachers, administrators, district personnel, and school board members.
- *Negotiate with other groups to avoid competition and duplication.* Meet with representatives of PTOs, nonprofits, alumni associations, and any other groups that are currently raising funds and hammer out a coordinated strategy.
- *Locate available money and raise funds.* Sources might include government grants, foundations, corporations, and other commercial and private donors. Getting 501(c)(3) status gives donors tax exemptions for their gifts.
- *Prepare guidelines for program development and evaluation.* It has to be clear how teachers can apply for funds, the criteria that will be used, and how programs will be evaluated.
- *Invite teachers to apply for funding.* Each year, one or two innovative programs with real potential are funded.
- *Provide ongoing support.* Green suggests tapping alumni, school personnel, and parents to provide teacher leaders with advice and resources throughout the year.
- *Evaluate and institutionalize.* Collect data from students and other stakeholders to evaluate each program, and work to get successful programs funded through the regular school budget.

“Investing in High School” by Daniel Green in *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 2012 (Vol. 93, #8, p. 28-33), <http://www.kappanmagazine.org>; Green is at daniel_green@brookline.k12.edu.ma.
[Back to page one](#)

8. Pathways to Hope

“Many young people dream the American dream, believe it can be achieved, and haven’t a clue how to make it a reality,” says Shane Lopez, who runs the Gallup Student Poll, in this *Kappan* article. “Students generally are confident. They think ‘I can do anything!’... But, where there is a will, there is not always a way. Students often lack strategies to reach the big goals such as graduation and employment.” For example, 92% of students strongly believe they will graduate from high school, but only 62% are confident they can get good grades and only 35% believe they can find ways around problems that will arise in life.

What they lack, says Lopez, is the ability to devise multiple routes to a goal, problem-solve, be creative, and constantly experiment and innovate – skills that are vital to success in the 21st century. His favorite idea for developing these skills and bridging the gulf between noble aspirations and a better future is the Hope Camera Project, which was implemented by school counselor Jennifer Magnuson-Stressman with fifth and sixth graders in Omaha, Nebraska. Each student was given a disposable camera and asked to take photos that showed hope in their lives. Students then chose their best photo, matted and framed it, and wrote a brief essay telling the story behind the photo. Magnuson-Stressman edited the essays and students displayed their work for parents, friends, educators, and community members in the school gym. “I like the way they are learning to see the future,” said one father. “Some of them touch me deeply.”

A variation on this project might be getting students to take photos of people who love their jobs, teaching students the pathways people take to a particular career.

Essential to the success of this kind of project is funding – Lopez estimates \$30 per child – and a caring adult who can steer students through the ups and downs of the process. “So, with the help of a caring, hopeful adult and \$1,000, a classroom of students could learn how to create pathways and share hope with dozens of friends and family.”

“The *How of Hope*” by Shane Lopez in *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 2012 (Vol. 93, #8, p. 72-73), <http://www.kappanmagazine.org>; Lopez is at shane@strengths.org.

[Back to page one](#)

9. How Much Change Will the Common Core Math Standards Require?

In this *Education Week* article, Catherine Gewertz reports that, according to a 40-state study led by William Schmidt at Michigan State University, “Many math teachers are teaching topics at higher or lower grade levels – and for more years – than the Common Core State Standards recommend... That finding suggests that when the new standards are fully implemented, many math teachers could face significant shifts in what they will teach.”

Schmidt and his colleagues conducted surveys and focus groups of math teachers across the country and found overwhelming support for the Common Core standards – less than 1 percent of teachers said they “don’t like and won’t teach” the new standards. But teachers are not fully aware of significant differences between CCSS standards and those they currently teach, are reluctant to stop teaching a topic that CCSS says should be taught at a different level, and feel unprepared to take on new topics assigned to their grade. Among teachers’ concerns: textbooks and other materials that cover the standards, alignment with high-stakes state tests, training, student understanding, and parent support.

“Math Teaching Often Doesn’t Fit With Common-Core Standards” by Catherine Gewertz in *Education Week*, May 9, 2012 (Vol. 31, #30, p. 7), <http://bit.ly/J92jEL>

[Back to page one](#)

© Copyright 2012 Marshall Memo LLC

Do you have feedback? Is anything missing?

If you have comments or suggestions, if you saw an article or web item in the last week that you think should have been summarized, or if you would like to suggest additional publications that should be covered by the Marshall Memo, please e-mail: kim.marshall48@gmail.com

About the Marshall Memo

Mission and focus:

This weekly memo is designed to keep principals, teachers, superintendents, and others very well-informed on current research and effective practices in K-12 education. Kim Marshall, drawing on 43 years' experience as a teacher, principal, central office administrator, and writer, lightens the load of busy educators by serving as their "designated reader."

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

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
- 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
- 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 log-in

Publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educator
American Journal of Education
American School Board Journal
ASCD, CEC SmartBriefs, Daily EdNews
Better Evidence-Based Education
Ed. Magazine
EDge
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher (TESOL)
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
JESPAR
Journal of Staff Development
Kappa Delta Pi Record
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
Teachers College Record
Teaching Children Mathematics
The Atlantic Monthly
The Chronicle of Higher Education
The Language Educator
The New Yorker
The Reading Teacher
The School Administrator
Theory Into Practice