Marshall Memo 923

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
February 14, 2022

In This Issue:

Quotes of the Week

"During last year's widespread remote schooling, teachers found greater flexibility – no commute, no hallway duty – and liked it, even if they didn't like teaching virtually. After that experience, the relentlessness of the in-person school week is a big reason teachers are finding this year even more stressful."

Simon Rodberg (see item #1)

"Teachers are complex thinking, feeling, and behaving human beings performing in one of the most complex and stressful situations – the classroom. The assumption that simply telling teachers what to do differently will bring about lasting and transferable change, without aligning those new behaviors with the teacher's thoughts, feelings, values, and belief systems, is seriously flawed."

Art Costa and Robert Garmston in a letter to *Educational Leadership* responding to an article about cognitive coaching (the authors' response is also included in this link).

"Equity doesn't always mean all students should get equal speaking time."

Matthew Kay (see item #3)

"I highly recommend educators take and watch video of themselves in all kinds of contexts, including in the classroom, presenting, coaching, or during meetings to see how you lead and collaborate."

Jim Knight in "To Change, Start Where You (Really) Are" in *Educational Leadership*, February 2022 (Vol. 79, #5, pp. 80-81)

"I can still remember having this list of vocabulary words as a kid and sitting at my parents' dining room table and repeating them over and over. Now I know it's one of the least effective

strategies for learning. But when I ask students every semester how many think it's useful and how many do that, a large number raise their hands."

Psychology professor Anne Cleary (Colorado State University), quoted in "Why the Science of Teaching Is Often Ignored" by Beth McMurtrie in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 3, 2022

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1. Radical Ideas for Preventing Educators from Joining "The Big Quit"

In this article in *EdSurge*, consultant/writer Simon Rodberg says U.S. schools are in danger of losing a large number of teachers and administrators. "Every school I know is struggling to keep their teachers and even their principals," he says; "every leader I know is constantly balancing kids' urgent needs with the need to not push teachers too far for fear they'll quit." To prevent this, Rodberg believes schools need to find ways to make educators' professional lives significantly more flexible.

Compared with other white-collar workers, teachers have always found it more challenging to deal with the stuff of life: a sick child, car repairs, doctors' appointments, being home when the plumber arrives. "Just making a personal phone call while at work," says Rodberg, "is something most college-educated professionals take for granted, but it's incredibly difficult for teachers." Covid-19 testing, supporting sick family members, and emergency child care have made these disparities even more evident.

"During last year's widespread remote schooling," says Rodberg, "teachers found greater flexibility – no commute, no hallway duty – and liked it, even if they didn't like teaching virtually. After that experience, the relentlessness of the in-person school week is a big reason teachers are finding this year even more stressful."

How can K-12 work be made more flexible? Remote teaching part of the time? Not going to happen, says Rodberg; it's clear that kids need in-person instruction and socialization. So how can the profession be changed to prevent the loss of as much as a quarter of the educator workforce and to attract a younger generation that's even more interested in flexibility?

Rodberg suggests an idea that he admits will sound impossible, given the "grammar of schooling" to which we've been accustomed for so long: having educators work four out of the five days of the school week. How is this feasible? By letting go of these givens: one elementary teacher for one class all five days of the week; the five-day secondary-school rotation; kids spending all their learning time in groups of 25. If we can introduce some flexibility into these elements of the grammar of schooling, it would be possible to:

• Have elementary classes meet four days a week and, rather than having a "special" every day, devote one full day a week (when the homeroom teacher is at home) to art, music, physical education, STEAM, and other options.

• Give elementary students a day of experiential learning off site with partner organizations. "Think of an arts program that spends a semester's worth of Tuesdays with a school's entire second grade," says Rodberg, "or an environmental group that takes fifth graders on a hike every Friday."

• Put secondary classes on a four-day rotation, with every class meeting five times a month, which gives each teacher an out-of-school day each week.

• Have schools on block schedules adjust their rotations so each teacher has two consecutive blocks of planning time to use as they see fit.

• Have high-school students do internships or community service one day a week with light (or remote) supervision by school adults, who get more flex time elsewhere in the week.

• Have a fourth teacher float among three classes, taking over each class one day a week and spending some time with every class on one other day. Assuming the same staffing and budget, this would involve increasing class size by about 25 percent.

• Have administrators and office staff do part of their jobs from home one day a week, with aides and other support staff taking a half day of personal flex time each week.

If this all seems wildly impractical, Rodberg brings us back to current realities. When he was a teacher, he never took a sick day, and as a principal, he pushed teachers to come to work unless they just couldn't – and there was a logic to that: no substitute teacher or principal could replace the front-line educator. "But I also burned out," he says, "as did too many of the teachers I supervised. We need a system where we can treat teachers and other school staff like adult professionals who can, at least one day a week, manage their own lives and time. It can't come at a cost to students; but if we don't figure out how to do it, the cost may be the teaching profession as we know it. If we don't want a Big Quit, we need a Great Renegotiation."

"Teaching Must Get More Flexible Before It Falls Apart" by Simon Rodberg in *EdSurge*, January 10, 2022

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2. Rethinking How the Holocaust Is Taught

In this article in *Education Week*, Luke Berryman (The Ninth Candle) says that being a Holocaust educator these days "can feel like an uphill struggle": Covid-19 mandates have been likened to Nazi genocide, some teachers have been told to bring in "opposing perspectives," and students have even celebrated Hitler's "accomplishments." Berryman believes we need to do a better job teaching the Holocaust in schools, specifically:

• *Avoid a combative tone*. "Using the language of war and encouraging students to construe antisemitism as an 'adversary' only inflames an already difficult discussion," says Berryman. "It also risks giving antisemites the validation they crave by enabling them to imagine themselves as fighters."

• *Teach what happened*. "Students need to learn what antisemitism is and where it came from," he says. "They need to learn what Nazism is and how it operated… How hatred is normalized and how that normalization opens the door to radical consequences… They need to know what the Holocaust was, how and why it happened, and why it still matters today."

• *Teach the contradictions in historical bigotry*. In Europe in the late 1800s, centuries of religious hatred morphed into racial oppression, says Berryman. "In the antisemitic imagination, Jews are both rich and poor, weak and strong, controlling society and tearing it apart."

• *Put antisemitism in context*. It's more than just a "Jewish concern," says Berryman. It's "a symptom of bigger failings in society, including political partisanship and broken communities." Educators need to bring "a diverse and nonpartisan range of experiences, ideas, and perspectives" to their classrooms.

• *Seek out high-quality curriculum materials*. Berryman urges teachers to be selective with the very uneven material available on the Internet. This subject can't be taught the same everywhere, he says, and educators need to use thoughtful programs like Facing History and Ourselves, 3GNY (which creates a "living link" by working with the grandchildren of survivors), tap into local resources (including the dwindling number of Holocaust survivors), and take into account local realities, including state standards that don't require that it be taught.

• *Use effective books and films*. Berryman believes those most commonly used – including *Schindler's List, The Boy in the Striped Pajamas,* and *Number the Stars* – "all blend fact and fiction in a way that sets out to tug the heartstrings without dispelling myths. This doesn't help students understand what happened, let alone how or why; in fact, they often come away more confused about the Holocaust." Berryman recommends *The Assignment*, a young adult novel by Liza Wiemer, a factual account that gets students thinking about allyship and being an upstander.

• *Spotlight Jewish resistance*. This would include the uprisings in the Warsaw Ghetto and in Treblinka and Sobibor.

• *Avoid inappropriate classroom simulations*. One teacher had third graders reenact digging mass graves. "The Holocaust is too historically complex and too emotionally challenging to teach in an experientially-based activity," says Berryman.

"How We Get Holocaust Education Wrong" by Luke Berryman in *Education Week*, February 9, 2022 (Vol. 41, #21, p. 20); here is The Ninth Candle's website.

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3. Orchestrating Equitable – Not Equal – Participation in Class Discussions

(Originally titled "Balancing Participation")

"Equity doesn't always mean all students should get equal speaking time," says Philadelphia high-school teacher Matthew Kay in this *Educational Leadership* article. In a discussion about immigration enforcement, should students who have no direct experience with this get as much air time as those who do? Definitely not, says Kay. "Certain voices,

representing certain lived experiences, need to be actively 'centered' in certain class conversations," he argues.

This doesn't mean other students don't participate; it means that some students' lived experience "makes their story, their perspective, and yes, their *opinion*, matter more to the discourse than those of their classmates without the relevant background. Classmates can pontificate and theorize, but when a student comes to a conversation with deeper, experience-based knowledge, their voice is most important."

Kay suggests several ways teachers can ensure that the right voices are heard at the right time:

• Encourage all students to be succinct and not ramble at the expense of other classmates' air time.

• Promote and model humility, being honest about what we don't know. Kay suggests teaching sentence starters like, "I know that since I grew up ----, I might not know much about this…"

• Pull certain students aside before a lesson in which their viewpoint will be particularly important and prompt them to chime in at strategic points, perhaps leading a discussion.

• Give these students additional focus *after* they speak. Kay calls it "sitting with" their comments – pausing, validating, jotting a note on the board, asking follow-up questions, encouraging other students to react.

He stresses that this is not the same as the awkward practice of asking students of color to speak for their group. Rather, "it means that every student's contribution gets every bit of the encouragement, for each particular conversation, that it deserves."

"Balancing Participation" by Matthew Kay in *Educational Leadership*, February 2022 (Vol. 79, #5, pp. 82-83); Kay can be reached at mrkay@notlight.com.

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4. Downsides with Popsicle-Stick Cold Calling

(Originally titled "Why Classroom Equity Strategies Aren't Always Equal")

In this *Educational Leadership* article, Martha Curren-Preis and Nicole Garcia (University of Michigan) and Meghan Shaughnessy (Boston University/Wheelock College) say that classroom discussions, when handled well, can make students feel competent and move the whole class's learning forward. The tricky part for teachers is deciding who to call on and what kinds of questions to ask; teachers' choices can send unintended messages about which answer is "right," who is smartest, and who the teacher likes.

Many teachers are using popsicle sticks to randomize who's called on, ensure equitable participation, and manage any biases they may have about students' abilities. This and other cold-calling strategies are a valuable part of an instructional repertoire, say Curren-Preis, Garcia, and Shaughnessy, but they can have unintended consequences. That can be true in all-class discussions, sentence-stem activities when students are working in pairs, and small groups in which students are assigned specific roles. Ironically, equity strategies can hamper teacher-student interactions and even increase inequity.

The authors describe the following classroom interaction. The teacher pulled one student's popsicle stick and asked what she thought was the "big idea" of the story they'd just read. The girl gave her opinion and the teacher pulled another popsicle stick and asked a boy to give evidence for his classmate's answer. He said he had a different opinion on the story's big idea, but the teacher said his job was to provide evidence and gently chided him for not being ready with a correct answer when he was called on.

This wasn't the best way to handle the situation, say the authors: "By tightly following the protocol of equity sticks in terms of who talked, when, and about what, the teacher did not allow the discussion to build naturally and fluidly. The structure and flow were dictated by the system, rather than by the content or quality of the ideas shared. Students may have walked away with the idea that the content of their talk and the ways they listened and responded to one another's ideas mattered much less than whether they followed the rules and procedures for *when* to talk." In addition, the boy may have gotten the message that his original ideas were not valued, which would be especially unfortunate if he was a member of a marginalized group.

The key to implementing equity strategies, say Curren-Preis, Garcia, and Shaughnessy, is knowing when, why, and with whom to apply them, and doing so flexibly and in ways that are responsive to students and the instructional context. In the vignette above, a better teaching move, after the first student's answer, would have been to put down the popsicle sticks, have all students write their reactions to her idea, or turn and talk, and for the teacher to notice and affirm divergent answers and get students sharing and discussing them. Alternatively, the teacher could have asked the boy to share his different "big idea" about the story, have him make connections to the girl's idea, and started an all-class discussion about the differences – using evidence from the story.

"Why Classroom Equity Strategies Aren't Always Equal" by Martha Curren-Preis, Nicole Garcia, and Meghan Shaughnessy in *Educational Leadership*, February 2022 (Vol. 79, #5, pp. 55-59); the authors can be reached at marthacp@umich.edu, nmgarcia@umich.edu, and mshaugh@bu.edu.

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5. Increasing Access to Advanced High-School Courses

(Originally titled "Opening the Door to Advanced Classes")

In this *Educational Leadership* article, Nancy Watkins (California State University/ Fullerton) says that with the honors, AP, IB, and other advanced courses students often take to move on to higher education, not all doors are open. "Some are locked," she says. "some are stuck. Some are reserved for certain people. Some doors are hidden, and some are guarded." A disproportionate number of low-income students and students of color don't take these courses, and schools need to examine incentives and barriers that limit opportunities.

Watkins describes the persistent efforts of a former colleague who persuaded her high school to offer new courses and open college-track offerings to English learners who had previously been assigned to lower tracks. Over several years, more and more students enrolled

in these building block courses, and in 2018, 94 percent passed the AP Spanish Language exam; the following year 96 percent passed. In 2019-20, native Spanish speakers were able to directly enroll in heterogeneous advanced Spanish classes.

Drawing on this experience, Watkins has the following recommendations for opening doors for marginalized students:

• *Reduce barriers for innovation and transformation by evaluating the policies and attitudes that inhibit change*. "Often decisions are made by site or district administrators about who gets what, when, and how," says Watkins, "and these choices exclude the voices of people on the margins." Schools might create forums to listen to stakeholders who have ideas on addressing inequities in course enrollment.

• *Provide resources and teacher training for advanced curriculum offerings*. Often this involves creating new courses that bridge knowledge and skill gaps.

• *Support students with tutors and fee waivers in preparation for college exams.* Information and encouragement are vital in both areas.

• *Evaluate student language proficiency classifications related to language fluency and tracked courses to avoid arbitrary course enrollment.* The segregation of English learners in low-level courses may be the result of early assessments that don't reflect students' current language proficiency.

• *Intentionally develop the master schedule to reflect opportunities for all students.* Schedules reflect priorities and values, says Watkins: "Beyond putting the puzzle pieces together, incorporate analysis and reflection on the equity gaps evident in the master schedule."

• *Remove prerequisites for enrolling in honors and advanced courses.* Barring students from enrolling based on previous coursework or grades prevents them from considering courses, in consultation with their counselors, teachers, and families, that will interest and challenge them.

• *Help families understand the importance of advanced courses to college and career readiness.* Information sessions need to be offered in multiple languages.

"Opening the Door to Advanced Courses" by Nancy Watkins in *Educational Leadership*, February 2022 (Vol. 79, #5, pp. 60-65); Watkins can be reached at nwatkins@fullerton.edu.

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6. Books for Black History Month – and the Rest of the Year

In this *Edutopia* article, literacy consultant/author Stacey Shubitz recommends seven books about African-Americans who shaped history, and suggests how each book can be used as a mentor text. Click the article link below for cover images and brief descriptions.

- *28 Days: Moments in Black History That Changed the World* by Charles Smith, illustrated by Shane Evans
- *A Day for Rememberin': Inspired by the True Events of the First Memorial Day* by Leah Henderson, illustrated by Floyd Cooper

- *Northbound: A Train Ride Out of Segregation* by Michael Bandy and Eric Stein, illustrated by James Ransome
- *Seeds of Freedom: The Peaceful Integration of Huntsville, Alabama* by Hester Bass, illustrated by E.B. Lewis
- *Opal Lee and What It Means to Be Free: The True Story of the Grandmother of Juneteenth* by Alice Faye Duncan, illustrated by Keturah Bobo
- *A Ride to Remember: A Civil Rights Story* by Sharon Langley and Amy Nathan, illustrated by Floyd Cooper
- *The Teachers March! How Selma's Teachers Changed History* by Sandra Neil Wallace, illustrated by Charly Palmer

"7 Books About Black History to Use as Mentor Texts" by Stacey Shubitz in *Edutopia*, February 4, 2022

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7. Recommended Children's Series and Text Sets

In this feature in *Language Arts*, Aeriale Johnson recommends text sets and series that "nurture joyful readers" as well as building identity, skills, intellect, and critical thinking:

- The Juana and Lucas Series by Juana Medina: *Juana and Lucas, Juana and Lucas: Big Problemas, Juana and Lucas: Muchos Changes*, age 5-8
- The Front Desk Series by Kelly Yang: *Front Desk, Three Keys, Room to Dream*, ages 8-12
- The Narwhal and Jelly series by Ben Clanton: *Narwhal: Unicorn of the Sea! Super Narwhal and Jelly Jolt, Narwhal Peanut Butter and Jelly, Narwhal's Otter Friend, Happy Narwhalidays, Narwhal's School of Awesomeness*, age 5-8
- The New Kid series by Jerry Craft: *New Kid, Class Act*, age 8-12
- The 10 Reasons to Love… series by Hanako Clulow: *10 Reasons to Love a Whale, 10 Reasons to Love a Bear, 10 Reasons to Love a Penguin, 10 Reasons to Love a Lion, 10 Reasons to Love a Turtle, 10 Reasons to Love an Elephant*, age 5-8
- The Superpower Field Guide series by Rachel Poliquin, illustrated by Nicholas John Frith: *Beavers, Moles, Ostriches, Eels*, age 8-12
- Minh Lê text set: *Drawn Together, Green Lantern: Legacy, Let Me Finish, Lift, The Perfect Seat*
- Stacy McAnulty text set: *Mars, Earth, Ocean, Sun, Moon*
- Books in Verse text set (various authors): *Becoming Ali, Words with Wings, Land of the Cranes*

"'Endless Fun': How an Instructional Framework, Series, and Text Sets Nurture Joyful Readers" by Aeriale Johnson in *Language Arts*, January 2022 (Vol. 99, #3, pp. 213-217)

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8. Manga Books Featuring People with Disabilities

In this *School Library Journal* feature, Brigid Alverson recommends six manga books about people with a range of disabilities:

- *I Hear the Sunspot* by Yuki Fumino, hearing impairment, grade 8 and up
- *Komi Can't Communicate* by Tomohito Oda, anxiety about speaking, grade 8 and up
- *Real* by Takehiko Inoue, a wheelchair basketball player, grade 11 and up
- *Shino Can't Say Her Name* by Shuzo Oshimi, anxiety and stuttering, grade 9 and up
- *A Sign of Affection* by Sun Morishita, hearing impairment, grade 11 and up
- *A Silent Voice* by Yoshitoki Oima, bullying and depression, grade 8 and up

"Six Manga Books About People with Disabilities" by Brigid Alverson in *School Library Journal*, February 2022 (Vol. 68, #2, pp. 32-34)

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9. Short Items:

a. A Handbook for High-Dosage Tutoring – This free handbook from Chiefs for Change is a detailed eight-step guide for organizing and managing effective tutoring for students with unfinished learning.

"District Guidebook for Launching Tutoring Programs in Partnership with Community Organizations" by Chiefs for Change, November 2021

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b. Where Were Americans Born? – This series of infographics shows the proportion of people in the U.S. born in their current state, elsewhere in the U.S., and in another country. The charts show nationwide data, state by state, and foreign countries of origin.

"Where Are Americans Born? An Analysis of U.S. Census Data from 1850-2020" by James Welcome, February 3, 2022

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If you have feedback or suggestions,
please e-mail kim.marshall48@gmail.com

About the Marshall Memo

Mission and focus:

This weekly memo is designed to keep principals, teachers, superintendents, and other educators very well-informed on current research and effective practices in K-12 education. Kim Marshall, drawing on 52 years' experience as a teacher, principal, central office administrator, writer, and consultant, lightens the load of busy educators by serving as their "designated reader."

To produce the Marshall Memo, Kim subscribes to 60 carefully-chosen publications (see list to the right), sifts through more than 150 articles each week, and selects 8-10 that have the greatest potential to improve teaching, leadership, and learning. He then writes a brief summary of each article, pulls out several striking quotes, provides e-links to full articles when available, and e-mails the Memo to subscribers every Monday evening (with occasional breaks; there are 50 issues a year). Every week there's a podcast and HTML version as well.

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Core list of publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

All Things PLC
American Educational Research Journal
American Educator
American Journal of Education
American School Board Journal
AMLE Magazine
ASCA School Counselor
ASCD Express
Cult of Pedagogy
District Management Journal
Ed. Magazine
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Week
Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis
Educational Horizons
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
English Journal
Exceptional Children
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Educational Review
Independent School
Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy
Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk (JESPAR)
Kappa Delta Pi Record
Knowledge Quest
Language Arts
Learning for Justice (formerly Teaching Tolerance)
Literacy Today (formerly Reading Today)
Mathematics Teacher: Learning & Teaching PK-12
Middle School Journal
Peabody Journal of Education
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal
Principal Leadership
Psychology Today
Reading Research Quarterly
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
School Administrator
School Library Journal
Social Education
Social Studies and the Young Learner
Teachers College Record
Teaching Exceptional Children
The Atlantic
The Chronicle of Higher Education
The Journal of the Learning Sciences
The Language Educator
The Learning Professional (formerly Journal of Staff Development)
The New York Times
The New Yorker
The Reading Teacher
Theory Into Practice
Time
Urban Education