Marshall Memo 428

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
March 19, 2012

In This Issue:

1. Applying "high-reliability organization" theory to a struggling school
2. A middle school raises the bar and gets results
3. Six literacy experiences children should have every day
4. Using vignettes to develop culturally responsive teaching
5. Mathematical reflections of "Please excuse my dear Aunt Sally"
6. "All the research says…" – but does it really?
7. Websites: (a) Book Adventure; (b) Comic Creator; (c) Essay Map; (d) Fun English Games; (e) Reading comprehension

Quotes of the Week

"All too often, teachers mark mistakes on writing assignments and hand them back to students, who then simply throw their papers away."

Nancy Frey, quoted in "Formative Assessment: Using Feedback to Feed Forward" by Liana Heitin in *Teacher PD Sourcebook*, Spring 2012, http://www.teachersourcebook.org

"[S]ince the final quarter of the 20th century, the consequences in all developed nations of a student not succeeding in school have become increasingly grim. The practical import of this shift in the labor market is that failure to succeed in secondary education, which once bore only modest individual and societal costs, now results in unacceptable costs for both individuals and larger societies. Anything less than educational success for virtually all citizens has become so expensive that neither individuals nor societies can afford failure."

Eugene Schaffer, David Reynolds, and Sam Stringfield (see item #1)

"The twin goals of instruction are *comprehension* and *long-term memory*. We want the students to *get* it and to *keep* it."

Fred Jones in the flyer *Say, See, Do Teaching*, condensed from *Tools for Teaching*

"The efficiency of the verbal modality in conveying meaning seduces us into relying on it too heavily during instruction. When we teach by talking, we rapidly load information into the verbal modality – the one in which there is almost no storage. This is a prescription for teacher exasperation and student failure."

Fred Jones (*ibid.*)

"When we accept that learning takes place *one step at a time* and that we learn *by doing*, the nature of teaching snaps into focus. We teach *performance*. Even with conceptual material, if the student cannot 'do' the concept accurately, usually by talking or writing, we cannot say that learning has taken place."

Fred Jones (*ibid.*)

1. Applying "High-Reliability Organization" Theory to a Failing School

In this meaty article in *JESPAR*, Eugene Schaffer (University of Maryland/ Baltimore County), David Reynolds (University of Southampton), and Sam Stringfield (University of Louisville) describe the turnaround of a comprehensive secondary school in southern Wales (UK) – a multi-year process in which they were participant/observers.

The school, located in a public housing project rife with unemployment, poverty, and drug and alcohol abuse, was informed in the summer of 1996 that if students' scores on national GCSE exams didn't improve, it would be closed. "One of the most depressing challenges facing the school," say the authors, "was the choice of many parents not to send their children to the school because they had attended it themselves and believed that the school was neither socially nor academically supportive of young people." Teacher morale was rock-bottom and many staff members felt they were doing all that could be done and the situation was hopeless.

The school's principal decided to invite David Reynolds (one of the authors) to talk to the staff about what has been learned from "high-reliability organizations" – those that must adopt measures to prevent and/or reduce catastrophic failures – for example, air traffic control towers and electric power grids. Teachers listened in stony silence, skeptical that the ideas could apply to a struggling school. For one thing, where did Reynolds suggest they begin? "Looking around the ill-kempt room and out dirty windows to grounds littered with trash and graffiti, Reynolds offered that a good place to start would be with an all-out clean-up campaign," say the authors. After a lively debate, the staff agreed – as a first step to figuring out whether other high-reliability principles might make a difference in their school.

Schaffer, Reynolds, and Stringfield step back to give the broader rationale of this approach. "[S]ince the final quarter of the 20th century," they write, "the consequences in all developed nations of a student not succeeding in school have become increasingly grim. The practical import of this shift in the labor market is that failure to succeed in secondary education, which once bore only modest individual and societal costs, now results in unacceptable costs for both individuals and larger societies. Anything less than educational success for virtually all citizens has become so expensive that neither individuals nor societies can afford failure."

This is what drew the authors to the research on high-reliability organizations – places like nuclear power plants that must work right *the first time, every time*, where one set of errors

can cascade and produce disastrous results for people inside and outside. The authors believe there are twelve principles from the research that are applicable to struggling schools:

- Failure is considered unacceptable by those inside and outside the organization.
- A few clear goals are shared at all levels.
- Data are used to avoid surprises and lapses and prevent them from snowballing.
- The organization builds and constantly uses powerful databases.
- Effective practices are institutionalized as standard operating procedures.
- Everyone is empowered to identify system flaws.
- The organization actively and continuously recruits new staff at all levels.
- There is constant, targeted training and retraining.
- There is rigorous performance evaluation without loss of autonomy and confidence.
- Everyone helps to keep the equipment and the facility in tip-top shape.
- There is a hierarchy, but also collegial decision-making and interdependence.
- Short-term efficiency takes a back seat to very high reliability.

The effect of these characteristics is multiplicative, not additive, say the authors: "The total absence of any one can nullify great efforts to obtain others." And all twelve constantly evolve: "Last year's teacher recruiting effort, however successful, becomes the baseline for measuring this year's effort… In human organizations, reliability is a socially constructed, evolving phenomenon."

Schaffer, Reynolds, and Stringfield describe how the Welsh school applied the twelve principles:

• *Failure is unacceptable* – It was very clear to staff and the community that the school was in crisis – it wasn't serving its students well and would be shut down if major improvement didn't occur. It was do or die.

• *Clear, shared goals* - Shortly after the improvement effort began, the school's long-time principal retired and a young assistant principal took the helm. He decided on three goals:

- Improved appearance – This was essential to change the reputation of the school in the community and attract more students. It was also linked to student attendance and respect for their work. "Addressing the most surface aspects of appearance also held promise for providing a quick win," say the authors.
- Improved attendance – Historically, student attendance was below 80 percent, which created constant problems in classrooms. "Teachers struggled to present lessons that related to all students in a given class period," say Schaffer, Reynolds, and Stringfield. "Some students needed a review because of absence; other students were, in effect, being punished for having been present on previous days." The school set an initial goal of getting attendance over 80 percent.
- Improved achievement – This was clearly the most important of the three, since the school's survival depended on improved GCSE scores. The staff debated whether to set a low bar – anything above a 20 percent passing rate would keep the school alive – or a "Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal" – for example, 90 percent of students scoring at high

levels. In the end, the school didn't set a specific goal, but clearing 20 percent was the unspoken target – even though some teachers thought it was out of reach.

The new principal relentlessly promoted these goals as the school's "Triple A Challenge." On appearance, the school was successful in dramatically cleaning up the campus and followed up with a student uniform dress code. On attendance, the school hired a social worker and instituted improved teacher reporting of attendance, immediate communication with parents (including home visits), and aggressive follow-up when students were absent. On achievement, the school gathered and analyzed performance data, began literacy interventions and mentoring, and focused on teacher effectiveness, including getting teachers observing each others' classes. The principal insisted that high-quality instruction occur from the first hour to the last hour of every semester – a push that was resisted by some teachers at first (when were they supposed to clean up?) but soon became the norm.

• *Data use* – The school began to give diagnostic tests to all incoming 11-year-olds and targeted an additional 50-minute weekly literacy-block program to those who needed it most. Students were given their scores and asked to set goals for success on the GCSEs – and then encouraged to work hard and surpass their goals. "This had the benefit of (at least partially) changing the students' perceptions of teachers from being critics to being coaches for students' long-term success," say the authors. Data on each student's achievement were maintained year to year and during each year, and teachers examined interim assessment results to identify effective and ineffective practices. A Pupil Achievement Team led by an administrator discussed struggling students and decided whether they needed to be in different classes. Teachers and students became "data rich", monitoring attendance and ongoing achievement gains and areas of need and setting and surpassing goals. "I didn't think he/she was capable of that," was a common refrain in staff meetings, which focused mostly on teaching and learning. "Virtuous spirals" were created and students' efforts were respected and encouraged, and lapses were analyzed to prevent students from sliding into failure.

• *Powerful databases* – Information on attendance and academic achievement drove decisions in classrooms, departments, and the overall school.

• *Effective practices* – The school focused on developing "standard operating procedures" that worked well. These became the way *the school* did things, versus the way individuals did things. Administrators visited other schools looking for ideas, especially ways of preventing staff from taking shortcuts on discipline and behavior problems – a chronic problem in the past. The result was that students encountered the same expectations and procedures in all classrooms – it was no longer possible to get away with certain behaviors with certain teachers. Teachers met regularly as teams to plan curriculum, look at student work, and discuss effective practices.

• *Critical scrutiny of practices* – The principal was aware that his emphasis on standard operating procedures ran the risk of ossification and needless and arbitrary rules. His solution was to institutionalize flaw-finding and publicly honor and reward those who pointed out ways that procedures could be improved.

• *Recruitment* – In the 14 years of this improvement effort, the school had three principals. After the departure of the first and second, the district carefully selected replacements who were on board with the improvement philosophy and full of energy and enthusiasm. School leaders constantly sought out new, energetic teachers and empowered department heads to do recruiting and selection.

• *Training and retraining* – The school conducted ongoing training in the high-reliability organization principles, and also devoted time to a program called Investors in People. The principal organized PD on teacher effectiveness and required that teachers follow up on training in their classrooms. He also promoted several new, vibrant staff as department heads.

• *Rigorous performance evaluation* – The school developed a system in which teachers observed each others' classrooms using a lean set of criteria. Teachers took on specific responsibilities as they dropped into other classrooms – for example, monitoring homework or monitoring whether students were bringing necessary material and equipment to class. The principal made unannounced visits to classrooms every day. "Because this happened regularly," say the authors, "teachers no longer felt threatened or worried to change their teaching at the entry of the Head." Supervision was constant, but it didn't impinge on teachers' autonomy and sense of confidence.

• *Upkeep* – At the beginning of the turnaround, the principal asked staff and parents to come in on a weekend and paint the outside of the school, pick up trash, and weed the garden. Afterward, the school had zero tolerance for graffiti and fostered pride in the campus. This helped raise funds to plant trees and beautify the whole facility. Student uniforms were also part of changing the feel of the school to one in which serious learning was taking place.

• *Hierarchy with collegiality* – At first, the high-reliability organizations theme came from the top down, but the principal gradually shifted responsibilities to assistant principals and teachers, including recruitment and selection and ongoing analysis of student learning and effective teaching practices.

• *Support from outside* – The local governmental agency supported the school from the start, and the four original schools in the high-reliability organizations initiative constantly shared ideas and helped each other out – including on the "little things that mattered" in improving schools.

• *Short-term efficiency taking a back seat to very high reliability* – The school kept its focus on the ultimate goal, constantly weeding out ineffective practices and building capacity to meet its big goal.

What were the results of this turnaround effort? Over the initial four-year period, the school's GCSE test scores rose substantially and have continued to rise in the decade since. In 1994-6, before the intervention, 14 percent of the school's students scored at high levels. This rose to 35 percent in 2000 and 47 percent in 2010 – more than two and a half times the national improvement rate. "This means that one of the most disadvantaged districts in the nation had risen from being 7.4 percentage points below the national average to a stature fully 10 percentage points above the national average," say the authors. In 2011, a team of visiting inspectors gave the school the highest rating possible – *Excellent* - for its current performance

and prospects for further improvement. The reason: dramatic improvements in the quality of teaching, counseling, community engagement, school cleanliness, and other desirable outcomes.

In short, the school met the test of long-term impact laid out by Hargreaves and Fink (2006): "The first challenge of change is to ensure that it's desirable and the second challenge is to make it doable; then the biggest challenge of all is to make it durable and sustainable."

"Sustaining Turnaround at the School and District Levels: The High Reliability Schools Project at Sandfields Secondary School" by Eugene Schaffer, David Reynolds, and Sam Stringfield in *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk* (*JESPAR*), January-June 2012 (Vol. 17, #1-2, p. 108-127), http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10824669.2012.637188#preview

Back to page one

2. A Middle School Raises the Bar and Gets Results

In this article in *Principal*, New Jersey middle-school principal Tracey Severns describes how her school board, fed up with the increase in course failures at the secondary level, raised the passing benchmark from 65 to 70 percent. Leading her 1,134-student school's response, Severns decided that the first step was to get rid of some teachers' and students' notion that failure was an acceptable outcome after instruction had taken place. "This belief needed to be replaced by an uncompromising commitment to student success," says Severns.

Step two was forming a Whatever It Takes committee and repeatedly broadcasting the "Failure is not an option" message to parents, students, and staff. Step three was analyzing the reasons for student failure and developing a strategy for each:

• *Attitude problems* (students who were able but unwilling) – Students who didn't finish daily assignments and did poorly on assessments were required to attend mastery skills instead of "fun" classes (home economics, shop, computer graphics) and were pulled out of lunch for mastery skills classes. Students who shaped up were allowed to rejoin their friends and regular classes at the end of each reporting period. For very reluctant learners, Severns convened the parents, a guidance counselor, and the student and developed a contract for success with explicit responsibilities for student, teacher, and family.

• *Achievement problems* (students who were willing but not succeeding academically) – The school expanded the pyramid of support – homework club, daily after-school tutoring by certified teachers, peer tutoring, mentoring, and a program to celebrate improvement. For all students, the school raised the stakes by requiring summer school for students who failed math, science, language arts, or social studies and barring eighth graders who failed a course from taking part in graduation.

• *Attendance problems* (students who were missing too many days) – The school shortened the timelines for administrative action, required parents and students to take part in attendance conferences and write an attendance action plan, and used incentives and consequences around punctuality and attendance. In the most serious cases, the school filed truancy charges and took parents to court.

The school also implemented an electronic grading system that immediately informed parents if their children received a grade below 70 or missed an assignment. Parents were also able to log in and review their children's grades in each teacher's grade book. Students could submit missed homework assignments the next day for partial credit and were given up to three days to retake a failed assessment for a maximum score of 70. Initially, teachers didn't like the last idea, but soon realized the power of multiple opportunities to demonstrate achievement. "They accepted the philosophy that because we want students to learn and the assignments are worthy, then we shouldn't accept zeroes or walk away from students who didn't learn," says Severns.

How did all this work out? Severns proudly shares the improvements in student achievement from 2009-10 to 2010-11:

- The failure rate in the school fell by 81 percent – from 207 to 39 students.
- The number of sixth-grade failures went from 66 to 1.
- The number of seventh-grade failures went from 71 to 22.
- The number of eighth-grade failures went from 70 to 16.
- The number of grades below 70% dropped from 2,132 to 863 – a 60 percent decrease.
- The percent of students on the honor roll and high honor roll increased each quarter at all grade levels.
- The percent of rising sixth graders on the honor roll increased by 49 percent.
- The percent of rising seventh graders on the honor roll increase by 24 percent.

"Eliminating the D" by Tracey Severns in *Principal*, March/April 2012 (Vol. 91, #4, p. 44-45), http://www.naesp.org

Back to page one

3. Six Literacy Experiences Children Should Have Every Day

(Originally titled "Every Child Every Day")

In this important *Educational Leadership* article, Richard Allington (University of Tennessee/Knoxville) and Rachael Gabriel (University of Connecticut/Storrs) present six high-quality experiences they believe all children should have every day if they are to become successful, engaged readers. These experiences are especially important for struggling readers – but tragically, they're least likely to have these experiences.

• *Every child reads something he or she chooses*. "The research base on student-selected reading is robust and conclusive," say Allington and Gabriel. "Students read more, understand more, and are more likely to continue reading when they have the opportunity to choose what they read."

• *Every child reads accurately*. This means reading material at the "just right" level of difficulty. Spending more time reading doesn't help unless students are reading at 98 percent or higher accuracy. "When students read accurately, they solidify their word-recognition, decoding, and word-analysis skills," say Allington and Gabriel. "Perhaps more important, they are likely to understand what they read – and, as a result, to enjoy reading."

• *Every child reads something he or she understands*. Comprehension is the goal of reading instruction, say the authors. "But too often, struggling readers get interventions that focus on basic skills in isolation, rather than on reading connected text for meaning. This common misuse of intervention time often arises from a grave misinterpretation of what we know about reading difficulties." Struggling readers aren't "wired differently", as some brain research implies. Their brains benefit from high-quality reading instruction with engaging and comprehensible content. The bottom line: more authentic reading develops better readers.

• *Every child writes about something personally meaningful*. "The opportunity to compose continuous text about something meaningful is not just something nice to have when there's free time after a test or at the end of the school year," say Allington and Gabriel. "Writing provides a different modality within which to practice the skills and strategies of reading for an authentic purpose."

• *Every child talks with peers about reading and writing*. Research shows that conversations with classmates improve comprehension and engagement with texts – students analyze, comment, and compare, thinking about what they read. "Time for students to talk about their reading and writing is perhaps one of the most underused, yet easy-to-implement, elements of instruction," say the authors.

• *Every child listens to a fluent adult read aloud*. Listening to a competent adult modeling good reading helps students with vocabulary, background knowledge, sense of the story, awareness of genre and text structure, and comprehension – and yet few teachers above first grade regularly read aloud to their students.

"Most of the classroom instruction we have observed lacks these six research-based elements," conclude Allington and Gabriel. Here are their two suggestions:

- Eliminate virtually all worksheets and workbooks and use the money to expand classroom libraries.
- Ban test-prep activities and materials from the school day. There's no evidence that they improve reading or test scores.

"Every Child Every Day" by Richard Allington and Rachael Gabriel in *Educational Leadership*, March 2012 (Vol. 69, #6, p. 10-15), http://www.ascd.org; the authors can be reached at richardallington@aol.com and Rachael.gabriel@uconn.edu.

4. Using Vignettes to Develop Culturally Responsive Teaching

In this article in *Principal*, Queens College/City University of New York professor Jacqueline Darvin suggests using "cultural and political vignettes" to get teachers (especially new teachers) thinking about the unspoken challenges of the profession. Here's an example (from Sonia Nieto's book, *The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities*):

> *A new student from India comes to your school and on her first day in the cafeteria, she begins eating rice with her hands. Several children make fun of her. You are her teacher and happen to be in the lunchroom when this happens. What do you do?*

Asked to react to this scenario, educators divide sharply on whether the teacher should intervene immediately, later, or not at all. The facilitator's goal is to get teachers to explore multiple perspectives and avoid responding in ways that are biased, stereotyped, or narrow. Points like these often come up:

- Failing to intervene might lead to a Columbine scenario.
- Intervening might make the girl feel worse by calling attention to her eating habits.
- Intervening might give the girl the message that her cultural values and customs are "wrong" – that she needs to be "more American."
- One approach might be to talk privately to the girl about "the American way of eating rice" and let her decide what to do.
- Another would be for the teacher to sit beside her and eat French fries "the American way", thus demonstrating to the girl and those teasing her that eating with one's hands is acceptable in certain situations.

There isn't a single right response to this situation, and facilitators should help teachers expand their perspective by asking questions such as, "Do all Indian people eat rice with their hands?" and "Are there other variables in why people eat in a particular way?"

Role-playing is another way to handle vignettes – assigning roles to teachers, giving them a moment to think through what they will do, and having the audience support them as they work through the situation and then discuss how it went, including the importance of nonverbal communication – gestures, posture, and intonation.

Darvin suggests several more cultural and political vignettes for professional development discussions:

• You are upset with a student who does not make eye contact when he talks to you, even after you have asked several times that he do so. Why might this student be behaving in this way? How might this type of misunderstanding be avoided or reconciled?

• It is parent-teacher conference night and the father of a student in your class comes to see you. His son is doing poorly in your class and blames you and the school for his son's problems. What can you say and do to improve this situation? What pitfalls should you avoid?

• You notice that students tend to self-segregate along racial lines in your class discussion groups. Do you address this situation or simply let students continue working this way all year? If you decide to intervene, how would you do it and why?

• You teach sixth grade and know that you have students with same-sex parents. You have heard students making homophobic comments and have even witnessed teasing of male students who display typically feminine characteristics and female students who display typically masculine traits. Should you address this situation in your class?

"Novice Teachers Need Real Professional Development" by Jacqueline Darvin in *Principal*, March/April 2012 (Vol. 91, #4, p. 28-31), http://www.naesp.org

Back to page one

5. Mathematical Reflections on "Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally"

In this article in *Teaching Children Mathematics*, third-grade teacher and Eastern Illinois University professor Kyungsoon Jeon reports that when most teachers are asked about order of operations, they immediately think PEMDAS – "Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally" (Parentheses, Exponents, Multiplication, Division, Addition, Subtraction) – but can't explain *why* order of operations matters. They also tend to make mistakes because they don't know some of the finer points of PEMDAS.

To help with this common problem, Jeon suggests several steps. First, check out basic knowledge of PEMDAS by solving these problems:

7 – 3 + 11

2 – 5 • 4 + 1

2 – 3 • 4 + 5 • 2 – 1 + 5

2 + 16 ÷ 4 • 2 + 8

She finds that many teachers struggle with these but can master them once they've reviewed PEMDAS.

Second, do this operation with a pencil and then with a calculator: 3 x 4 – 8 ÷ 2. Doing each operation in order produces the answer 2, whereas most calculators (which are programmed to use PEMDAS) produce the answer 8. Also, explore the difference parentheses can make: (3 x 4) – (8 ÷ 2) and 3 x (4 – 8) ÷ 2 and think about why getting two different answers to the same problem clarifies for students the need to have rules for order of operations.

Finally, Jeon suggests trying to describe a real-life situation that could be represented by 5 + 8 x 6. Many teachers can solve the expression correctly, but can't come up with a correct real-life scenario. An example of a misconceived answer: "Ms. Harper's classroom has five boys and eight girls, and they each get a total of six cookies for participating in the fundraiser for Hurricane Katrina victims. How many cookies would be given out?" This is a good word problem for (5 + 8) x 6.

Here's a correct word problem for 7 – 3 + 11: "Hannah went to pick apples at an orchard. She picked 7 apples and gave three apples to her younger sister, Erin. Then their mom gave Hannah 11 apples. How many apples does Hannah have now?"

These problems help clarify one of the misconceptions with PEMDAS: that addition must be done before subtraction. Jeon (citing Golembo, 2000) says a more helpful way of thinking of the mnemonic is:

P Parenthesis

E Exponents

MD Multiplication or Division (whichever is first from left to right)

AS Addition or Subtraction (whichever is first from left to right)

"The universally agreed-upon system helps students see that the order of multiplication and division is interchangeable, as is that for addition and subtraction, as long as they perform the operations from left to right," says Jeon.

"Reflecting on PEMDAS" by Kyungsoon Jeon in *Teaching Children Mathematics*, February 2012 (Vol. 18, #6, p. 370-377), http://www.nctm.org; the author can be reached at kjeon@eiu.edu.

Back to page one

6. "All the Research Says…" – but Does It Really?

In this helpful *American School Board Journal* column, author/consultant Douglas Reeves has advice on being a critical consumer of educational research:

• *Independence* – There should be five levels, says Reeves: (a) Ideally, the conclusions should come from several different researchers who are genuinely independent from one another, even competing; (b) conclusions are more compelling when they come from different samples and not "samples of convenience" – schools, students, and teachers who happened to be available; (c) it's ideal if different researchers used different methods – quantitative, qualitative, meta-analyses; (d) conclusions are more robust if they come from different venues – east coast/west coast, urban/suburban/rural, etc.; (e) Data should come from different student populations – high and low poverty, ELLs, etc. – so the conclusions stem from teaching and leadership, not demographics.

• *Precise terminology* – A number of labels – "professional learning communities", "differentiated instruction", "response to intervention" – are used loosely among educators and researchers. "When evaluating competing research claims," says Reeves, "leaders and policymakers must distinguish such labels from actual implementation."

• *Candor* – "Beware of the researcher who is always right," says Reeves. "Every credible researcher – bar none – will have no difficulty in finding examples of misguided hypotheses and misdirected conclusions. The best researchers will have published those failures and acknowledged them in front of peers and the public."

• *Replication* – "Research is littered with personal narratives of the heroic teacher or principal who succeeded against the odds," says Reeves. But it's convincing only if the approach has been used successfully in different places and different conditions.

"Research Shows" by Douglas Reeves in *American School Board Journal*, April 2012 (Vol. 199, #4, p. 36-37), http://www.asbj.com; Reeves is at dreeves@leadandlearn.com.

Back to page one

7. Websites:

a. Book Adventure – http://www.bookadventure.com is an online reading program with interactive features and games. Students can create booklists, choose books, and take quizzes on books they've read. There are also contests and prizes.

"Websites to Know" in *Teacher PD Sourcebook*, Spring 2012, p. 12

Back to page one

b. Comic Creator – http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/comic allows students to compose their own comic strips with characters, props, backgrounds, and dialogue. http://www.toondoo.com is another comic creation website.

"Websites to Know" in *Teacher PD Sourcebook*, Spring 2012, p. 12

Back to page one

c. Essay Map – http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/essaymap is an interactive graphic organizer that gives students several ways to outline and structure their writing – introduction, main idea, supporting details, and conclusion.

"Websites to Know" in *Teacher PD Sourcebook*, Spring 2012, p. 12

Back to page one

d. Fun English Games – http://www.funenglishgames.com includes word scrambles, caption-writing, reviews of movie trailers, and tongue-twister games on parts of speech and vocabulary.

"Websites to Know" in *Teacher PD Sourcebook*, Spring 2012, p. 12

Back to page one

e. Reading comprehension – http://www.rhlschool.com/reading.htm is geared to helping upper elementary and middle-school students break down reading passages and focus on vocabulary, context, and main idea.

"Websites to Know" in *Teacher PD Sourcebook*, Spring 2012, p. 12

Back to page one

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:

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- 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
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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