

Marshall Memo 198

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

August 27, 2007

In This Issue:

1. More on effective urban schools from Karin Chenoweth
2. Building a customer-service orientation in schools
3. The best way to teach thinking
4. Can schools tap into the potential of Facebook, MySpace, wikis, etc.?
5. Information on obsessive-compulsive disorder
6. Scoring your school's technology program
7. Short items: (a) New listings in the *What Works Clearinghouse*; (b) Enhancing after-school programs

Quotes of the Week

Teacher to pupil: "What are you doing?"

Pupil to teacher: "I'm thinking."

Teacher to pupil: "Well, stop it and get on with your work."

Barber, 1997 (see item #3)

"You do not become a remarkable teacher working alone... Acknowledge imperfection and look for those colleagues who complement your efforts and initiatives."

Mike White and Amy Crouse in "Five Tips for Teaching in a Standards-Based World"
The Leadership and Learning Center newsletter, August 14, 2007

"In some schools, the assumption is that some kids will get it and some won't... Teachers teach lessons, and if some kids don't fully grasp the concept, knowledge, or skill, that is considered normal and does not require a change on the part of the teacher."

Karin Chenoweth (see item #1)

"Once the assumption throughout the school is that every child can and will master the core of the curriculum, it then requires teachers to identify the kids who didn't get it the first time and figure out how to reach them, either by teaching in a new way, using new materials, or providing a different perspective. That is a powerful force toward school improvement."

Karin Chenoweth (*ibid.*)

"Organized in neat departmental silos and divisions and bombarded by work demands, public school employees often transfer calls – and responsibilities – as quickly as possible. The lack of ownership often leaves parents feeling like tennis balls getting bounced from one department or school to another."

Nora Carr (see item #2)

1. More on Effective Urban Schools from Karin Chenoweth

In this brief interview in *American School Board Journal*, Karin Chenoweth, author of *It's Being Done: Academic Success in Unexpected Schools*, adds some additional pearls to previous Marshall Memo summaries of her work (in issues 22, 183, and 192):

- Effective urban schools are involved in what one principal calls “the relentless pursuit of good instruction.” This doesn’t mean “the relentless pursuit of test preparation,” says Chenoweth. “Although all these schools spend some time making sure their kids won’t be surprised by the format of the state tests and the material tested, for the most part they are teaching their children ‘not for the test,’ as one teacher told me, ‘but to be productive members of society.’”

- “Instead of bemoaning the factors they can’t control – chaotic home lives, inadequate parental support for academics, low birth weight, incarcerated parents – the educators in these schools focus very closely on the factors they can control: quality instruction, how time is organized, school atmosphere, high-quality materials.”

- “These schools are akin to the Wright Brothers who were told that drag and gravity were insuperable obstacles to manned flight. Orville and Wilbur demonstrated that with sufficient lift and thrust it was possible to overcome drag and gravity. These schools demonstrate that with sufficiently thoughtful instruction, careful organization, and the same kind of pig-headed optimism displayed by the Wright Brothers, the forces of poverty and discrimination can be overcome enough that children can learn to meaningful levels.”

- “In some schools, the assumption is that some kids will get it and some won’t, no matter what the ‘it’ is at the moment: fractions, research, paper writing, science, whatever. Teachers teach lessons, and if some kids don’t fully grasp the concept, knowledge, or skill, that is considered normal and does not require a change on the part of the teacher. Once the assumption throughout the school is that every child can and will master the core of the curriculum, it then requires teachers to identify the kids who didn’t get it the first time and figure out how to reach them, either by teaching in a new way, using new materials, or providing a different perspective. That is a powerful force toward school improvement.”

“Five Questions for Karin Chenoweth, Author of *It's Being Done*” by Sarah Karlin in *American School Board Journal*, September 2007 (Vol. 194, #9, p. 12), no e-link available

2. Building a Customer-Service Orientation in Schools

In this *American School Board Journal* article, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools communications officer Nora Carr leads off with a true story about a woman's visit to a well-regarded, high-achieving public magnet school to see if it was right for her daughter:

- When the woman walked into the main office, two school employees were talking to each other; neither looked at her and they continued chatting.
- A few minutes passed; the employees answered phone calls; the mother sighed audibly.
- Finally a secretary asked if she needed assistance.
- "I'd like to find out more about the school and the curriculum," said the visitor. "I'm looking at schools for my daughter."
- "Well, the best thing to do would be to go online and review our website," said the secretary. "It has everything you need to know about our school."
- "I'm only in town today, and I'd really like to learn more about the magnet program," said the mom.
- "Well, I don't know much about it, you'll have to call back when the principal is available," said the secretary. "Right now, she's in a meeting."

The moment of truth had passed, says Carr, and the school had lost a customer – "a customer who, research tells us, will share her lousy service experience with at least 16 other individuals." One mishandled moment spreads from person to person in a community, reinforcing negative stereotypes about arrogant, bureaucratic public schools. "Just as in business," writes Carr, "how parents, volunteers, and business partners are treated often makes more of an impression than the actual product of academic instruction – even if that product is of exceptionally high quality."

Why are many schools so customer-unfriendly? Carr thinks it may be an attitude problem. "For educators who have devoted their lives to teaching and learning," she says, "customer service can seem too insignificant, too business-like, or too menial to focus on – especially with all the pressures of high-stakes testing... Organized in neat departmental silos and divisions and bombarded by work demands, public school employees often transfer calls – and responsibilities – as quickly as possible. The lack of ownership often leaves parents feeling like tennis balls getting bounced from one department or school to another... Getting serious about customer service represents a major commitment. Often, radical culture change is required."

What is to be done? Carr has several suggestions:

- Put more emphasis on the "soft" skills of building positive school cultures: open communication, teamwork, collaboration, trust, a sense of celebration, and a service-orientation toward colleagues, students, parents, and other constituents.
- Emulate family-friendly schools and departments, which Carr says "roll out the red carpet, welcoming parents and visitors from the tip of the driveway as they enter the parking lot to the final handshake and smile as they leave."
- Consider adopting a first-call or first-contact resolution policy, which is the philosophy of Ritz-Carlton hotels. The idea is that "whomever the customer contacts with a

need or concern owns that customer until the issue is resolved satisfactorily – regardless of whether the concern falls within the employee’s typical job duties or responsibilities.”

- Include customer-service in staff evaluation tools. What gets measured gets done, says Carr; “motivational speeches, memos, directives, and posters encouraging good customer service are meaningless if not backed up by measures with real impact on employees’ performance evaluations and paychecks.”

- Train school employees, many of whom have no background in customer service and communications. “Customer service is about more than a warm smile and eye contact,” says Ed Gagnon, president of Customer Service Solutions, a Charlotte, NC consulting company. “It’s about being competitive. Staff members need to realize how the negative opinions of their customers impact organizational performance.”

- Deploy a few “secret shoppers” to telephone and visit schools and district offices and gather anecdotes on the quality of customer service. Real stories and quotes can help cut through the denial and mobilize administrators to change.

- Use online customer satisfaction surveys, public opinion polls, and “How are we doing?” feedback cards in school offices.

“The Customer Service Approach” by Nora Carr in *American School Board Journal*, September 2007 (Vol. 194, #9, p. 62-63), <http://www.asbj.com/MainMenuCategory/Archive/2007/September/TheCustomerServiceApproach.aspx>; Carr can be reached at ncarr@carolina.rr.com.

3. The Best Way to Teach Thinking

“What is good thinking and how is it developed?” asks Israeli education professor Yoram Harpaz in this thoughtful and well-written article on teaching thinking in *Teachers College Record*. “The recognition that people do not think as well as they could is a basic starting point for the field of teaching thinking,” he says. Over the years, three approaches have been developed to improve thinking: the skills approach, the dispositions approach, and the knowledge approach. Harpaz analyzes each and makes the case for the one he believes is the most effective.

- *The skills approach* – This approach challenges traditional education, which focuses on the transmission of a body of knowledge, arguing that that knowledge is expanding and changing so rapidly that generic thinking skills will be essential in the years ahead. The skills approach aims to impart a toolbox of thinking skills that can be used quickly and precisely in any setting. Advocates and programs include: De Bono (CoRT), Ennis (Taxonomy of critical thinking), Beyer (Direct teaching of thinking), Perkins (Thinking frames), Perkins & Swartz (Graphic organizers), Sternberg (Intelligence implied), Treffinger, Isaksen & Dorval (Creative problem solving), Johnson & Blair (Informal logic), Chaffee (Thinking critically), Whimbey & Lochhead (Problem solving), and Fuerstein (Instrumental enrichment).

- *The dispositions approach* – This approach agrees that it’s hopeless to try to cram an ever-expanding and ever-changing body of knowledge into students’ heads, but disagrees that learning a set of generic thinking skills is the answer. According to the dispositions approach,

the foundational element of good thinking is *thinking dispositions* and *a disposition to think* – for example, open-mindedness, empathy, persistence, managing impulsivity, and responsibility. Advocates of this approach say that dispositions are “energy suppliers” that link skills and actions and are best cultivated through example and discussion of values in real-life situations. The following joke parodies a conventional school in contrast to a thinking-dispositions school: Teacher to pupil: “What are you doing?” Pupil to teacher: “I’m thinking.” Teacher to pupil: “Well, stop it and get on with your work.” (Barber, 1997) Advocates and programs embodying the dispositions approach include: Lipman (Philosophy for children, Perkins (Dispositions theory of thinking), Tishman (Thinking dispositions), Costa (Habits of mind), Bron (Theory of rationality), Langer (Mindfulness), Barrel (Thoughtfulness), Facione (Critical thinking and dispositions), Passmore (Critical thinking as a character trait), Siegel (The spirit of the critical thinker), Sternberg (Successful intelligence), Goleman (Emotional intelligence), and Lipman (Philosophy for children).

- *The understanding approach* – This approach rejects the dichotomy between teaching knowledge and teaching thinking, between teaching *what* to think and teaching *how* to think. “The quality of our thinking,” says Harpaz, “depends on our knowing the topic or, more precisely, on our understanding of it.” The understanding approach stresses the importance of going beyond rote memorization of inert knowledge and striving for deep understanding of what is being learned. Deep understanding can’t be transmitted directly from the teacher to the student; it has to be constructed in the student’s mind through an active process of unpacking the big ideas and enduring understandings of a topic and exploring and applying them. Advocates and programs include: Perkins (Understanding performances), Gardner (Understanding in the disciplines), Wiske (Teaching for understanding), Wiggins and McTighe (Understanding by design), Paul (Critical thinking in the strong sense), McPeck (The reflective critical thinker), Brown (Community of learners), Smith (Understanding as good thinking), Brooks & Brooks (Constructivist instruction), Lipman (Philosophy for children), and Harpaz (Community of thinking).

Harpaz sums up the basic differences between the three approaches: “The skills approach is directed by a utopian image of the good thinker as an efficient thinker... The dispositions approach is directed by a utopian image of the good thinker as a wise thinker... The understanding approach is directed by a utopian image of the good thinker as a learned thinker.” How is faulty or bad thinking regarded by each approach? The skills approach sees it as lacking in skill or applying thinking skills incorrectly. The dispositions approach sees it as based on weaknesses or character flaws. The understanding approach sees it as based on misunderstandings. The best metaphor for the skills approach is a *toolbox*; the metaphor for the dispositions approach is *deep currents*, “invisible and with a definite direction, sweeping our intellectual behaviors”; the metaphor for the understanding approach is a *closely-woven net* – “good thinking is the ability to play with ideas and manipulate them in the net in which they are bound.” If *efficient* thinking is the goal of the skills approach, *wise* thinking is the goal of the dispositions approach and *learned* thinking is the goal of the understanding approach.

It's impossible to pursue all three approaches, says Harpaz. "Practically (and logically), combining the three is not possible," he writes, "because a teacher cannot teach simultaneously according to the three patterns of teaching thinking." So which is best? The understanding approach, he believes, is the place to begin – but the skills and dispositions approaches can find a place under its umbrella. "The understanding approach," he concludes, "must impart and cultivate both of these in the framework of its own aims and means. Skills must be imparted in an authentic context in which learners/researchers experience them as essential for developing their understanding; dispositions must be cultivated through embodying them in ongoing behavior, dealing with them in adequate opportunities, and experiencing intellectual activity that invites them."

"Approaches to Teaching Thinking: Toward a Conceptual Mapping of the Field" by Yoram Harpaz in *Teachers College Record*, August 2007 (Vol. 109, #8, p. 1845-1874), no free e-link

4. Can Schools Tap Into the Potential of Facebook, MySpace, Wikis, etc.?

In this *American School Board Journal* article, editor Glenn Cook reviews a new study that reports that students who have Internet access are spending nine hours a week online (in addition to ten hours watching TV), with 96 percent using social networking tools such as chatting, text messaging, wikis, MySpace, and Facebook and more than half using social networking tools to communicate about school and homework. The study gently chides teachers and principals for not tapping into this important part of their students' lives. When kids walk in the front door of the school, says study author Ann Flynn, "they're being asked to power down. School doesn't look at all like the reality in which they live, and while it is easy for people to ban, block, or filter all these new technologies, what they are doing is not embracing the tools of this generation." Here are the study's recommendations:

- Explore social networking sites to see first-hand the kind of communication and collaboration tools kids are using.
- Consider using social networking for staff communications and professional development. Structured online professional communities can work for adults.
- Find ways to harness the educational value of social networking for academic benefit. Chat rooms, instant messaging, blogs, and wikis can be used for homework help, test review, and projects that require collaboration.
- Ensure equitable access. This means getting all students online and making sure they have instant access to social networking tools.
- Pay attention to the nonconformists. Surveys show that students who are the most skilled with social networking are often the least enamored of traditional teaching methods. "Schools can benefit by working with, rather than against, these students," says Cook.
- Reexamine social networking policies. Safeguards against bullying and predators are essential, but these should not prevent educators from using Web 2.0 to improve teaching and learning.

- Encourage social networking companies to increase the educational value of their products. “This is not about trying to put MySpace into school, not at all,” says Ann Flynn. “It’s about taking the elements of what has made MySpace so compelling and creating content that allows you to connect with students you would not normally connect with on a day-to-day basis. There are opportunities here.”

“Study: Social Networking Can Work for K-12 Educators” by Glenn Cook in *American School Board Journal*, September 2007 (Vol. 194, #9, p. 6-7),

<http://www.asbj.com/MainMenuCategory/Archive/2007/September/September2007Upfront.aspx>.

The study, “Creating and Connecting: Research and Guidelines on Online Social and Educational Networking” by Grunwald Associates and the National School Boards Association (August 2007), is available at

http://www.nsba.org/site/doc_sbn_issue.asp?TRACKID=&VID=55&CID=682&DID=41350.

5. Information on Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

In this article in *Principal Leadership*, Kansas-based school psychologist Leslie Paige provides a thorough briefing on obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD):

- OCD, she writes, “involves a cycle of obsessions and compulsions that cause extreme distress, dysfunction, and fear. OCD is different from meticulousness or worrying. Obsessions are involuntary, recurring, and unwanted thoughts that cause feelings of anxiety or dread. They are irrational and interfere with normal thinking. Compulsive behaviors are repeated to try to control the obsessive thoughts.”

- Compulsions include excessive washing and cleaning, redoing (e.g., opening and closing, erasing and rewriting), hoarding useless objects, continuous and excessive praying, and matching movements or objects so they are symmetrical or ordered in a certain way. Obsessions include contamination, harm to self or others, sexual thoughts, death, doubting, sin or guilt, and belief that things need to be done in a certain way or number of times to avoid harm.

- “People who have OCD are not delusional,” says Paige. “They usually recognize that these thoughts and behaviors are unreasonable but feel unable to control them.” Some students can delay the behaviors while they are in the classroom, but may need a private place to perform rituals later in the school day.

- About 2-3% of high-school students have OCD, with similar numbers among boys and girls. Its exact causes are unknown, but it seems to be related to a biochemical imbalance that causes the brain to send false danger messages.

- OCD can emerge as early as preschool (boys often show symptoms earlier than girls) and often peaks at puberty and again in early adulthood. OCD symptoms may emerge gradually (for example, lining up stuffed animals in a certain way or wearing a lucky shirt to a ball game) and parents may unintentionally compensate for the behaviors, thinking they are normal, and not seek treatment until symptoms become severe and disruptive. OCD symptoms tend to become more severe as children grow older. Children and adolescents may hide OCD symptoms for fear that people will think they are crazy or weird.

- OCD is related to tic disorders (like Tourette’s syndrome) and can exacerbate other disorders like ADHD, depression, and panic disorder.

- If it’s not treated, OCD can become chronic and result in serious dysfunction, especially in adolescence, where it can produce “depression and agitation, poor attention and concentration, feelings of shame, slow performance, and other problems associated with poor academic functioning and difficulties with relationships.” Students with OCD may be bullied or victimized.

- OCD is highly manageable and in 10-50% of cases it is curable. The most common treatments are medication (to decrease anxiety and reduce the intensity of symptoms) and cognitive behavioral therapy (to help children understand the disorder and their obsessive thoughts, develop coping strategies, and reduce the need to perform compulsive behaviors).

- School personnel should be alert to tell-tale symptoms, since early identification and treatment are important to managing and recovering from OCD before symptoms become distressing and severe.

- Teachers should be briefed on the ways in which OCD affects learning and how they should respond to a student who is showing signs of distress related to the disorder. “Telling adolescents who have OCD to stop worrying or that nothing bad will happen is not sufficient,” says Paige, “and punishing or embarrassing them is ineffective and may worsen the symptoms.”

- “Well-structured classroom environments with clear expectations, smooth transitions, and a calm climate are helpful for all students, but especially for students who have OCD,” continues Paige. “The school should ensure that there is at least one staff member (e.g., a school psychologist or counselor) to whom a student can turn when struggling with symptoms.”

- It’s important for schools to partner with parents and community providers to help OCD students cope and get better.

“Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder” by Leslie Paige in *Principal Leadership*, September 2007 (Vol. 8, #1, p. 21-15), no e-link available, but the article provides these resource links:

- National Institutes of Mental Health: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/HealthInformation/ocdmenu.cfm>.
- Teens Health: http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/mental_health/ocd.html.
- OCD Foundation: <http://www.ocdfoundation.org>.

6. Scoring Your School’s Technology Program

In this *American School Board Journal* article, university administrator and school-board member Lawrence Tomei invites educators to assess their technology program using this inventory from his 2002 book, *The Technology Façade: Overcoming Barriers to Effective Instructional Technology* (Allyn & Bacon):

1. Who dispenses technology-related instruction in your school? (choose one)
 - Computer teacher only (1 point)
 - A few teachers use technology but not regularly (3 points)

- A few teachers use technology routinely (5 points)
- Technology is routinely used by many classroom teachers (7 points)

Points: ____

2. Are the computer facilities in your school: (choose one)

- Locked during recess, lunch, study halls, before and after school? (0 points)
- Available before and/or after school (3 points)
- Available when no classes are scheduled (5 points)
- Open during recess, study halls, lunch, and before and after school (7 points)

Points: ____

3. Computers are located in our: (score all that apply)

- Library (1 point)
- Classrooms (3 points)
- Computer lab (3 points)

Points: ____

4. Classroom teachers use technology for: (use this scale to score each activity:

0 = Never, 1 = Seldom, 3 = Occasionally, 5 = Routinely):

- Grading
- Lesson preparation
- Out-of-class assignments
- Professional development

Points: ____

5. What is the quality of computer teachers' lesson planning? (choose one)

- Computer instruction is not based on lesson plans. (0 points)
- There are general instructional goals, but no specific learning objectives. (1 point)
- Lesson plans have generic technology competencies and learning objectives. (3 points)
- Detailed lesson plans have specific technology competencies expected. (7 points)

Points: ____

6. Does your software reflect current curriculum content in classrooms? (choose one)

- Software selection seldom reflects classroom content. (1 point)
- Software is up-to-date but is not readily available to teachers and students. (3 points)
- Software selection was based on teacher input. (5 points)
- Software is current, geared to classroom content, and routinely used by teachers and students. (7 points)

Points: ____

7. How well trained are teachers in technology? (score all that apply)

- Initial training happened more than six months ago. (0 points)
- Initial training happened within the last six months. (1 point)
- Inservice training happens at least twice a year. (3 points)
- At least two teachers in the school are encouraged to enroll in formal instructional technology programs. (3 points)
- Teachers can schedule training with the technology coordinator as needed. (5 points)

Points: ____

8. What role do teachers play in the technology committee, other teams? (score all that apply)
- Teachers are not full voting members. (0 points)
 - Teachers are on the hardware/software acquisition teams. (3 points)
 - Teachers are on the technology budget team. (3 points)
 - Teachers are on the instructional technology curriculum team. (5 points)
 - Teachers are on the strategic technology planning team. (5 points)

Points: ____

9. What role do parents, community leaders, alumni, and students play in the technology committee and other teams? (score all that apply)
- They are not full voting members. (0 points)
 - They are on the hardware/software acquisition teams. (3 points)
 - They are on the technology budget team. (3 points)
 - They are on the instructional technology curriculum team. (5 points)
 - They are on the strategic technology planning team. (5 points)

Points: ____

10. Which technology professionals does your school employ? (score all that apply)
- None are employed. (0 points)
 - Computer teachers (3 points for part-time, 7 points for full-time)
 - Technology coordinator (5 points for full-time)
 - Computer technician (1 point for part-time, 3 points for full-time)
 - Network administrator (3 points for full-time)

Points: ____

11. How is technology funded? (select one)
- Funded with year-end unspent funds (1 point)
 - Included in operating budget under a miscellaneous account (3 points)
 - Included in general operating budget (5 points)
 - Is its own specific, recurring line item (7 points)

Points: ____

12. Does your school recognize teachers who develop technology materials? (choose one)
- There are no remuneration or recognition programs. (0 points)
 - Excellence is recognized in newsletters, bulletins, and school board reports. (1 point)
 - A formal awards program recognizes teachers. (5 points)
 - Teachers get time off, money, or other specific remuneration. (7 points)

Points: ____

13. Is there a technology plan in your school? (choose one)
- No plan exists. (0 points)
 - The district has a general plan but there isn't one for our building. (1 point)
 - The school has an informal technology strategy but no formal plan. (3 points)
 - There is a plan but it hasn't been revised in two years. (5 points)
 - Yes, and it is revised at least annually. (7 points)

Points: ____

14. Does the school's plan contain the following? (score all that apply)

- There is no plan. (0 points)
- Vision/mission statement (1 point)
- Demographic review of teachers, students, and community (1 point)
- Procedures for purchasing technology (1 point)
- Periodic, on-call maintenance for classroom computers (1 point)
- A security plan on physical, human, and Internet threats to technology (1 point)
- A viable, active technology committee with diverse membership (2 points)
- Ways of integrating technology into the curriculum (2 points)
- Ways to promote lifelong learning and helping special-needs learners and exceptional learners (2 points)
- A facility, installation, and periodic upgrade plan (2 points)
- A plan for formal and informal continuous evaluation (3 points)

Points: ____

15. How would you rate the computers in your school? (score all that apply)

- Most machines are less than three years old (1 point)
- Most machines are CD-ROM-capable (1 point)
- Most machines are connected to printers (1 point)
- Most machines are connected to the Internet (1 point)

Points: ____

16. What's the status of your school's technology scope and sequence? (choose one)

- None available (0 points)
- Only for students in the graduating class (3 points)
- For selected grades (5 points)
- Comprehensive for all students, by grade and content subject areas (7 points)

Points: ____

17. Which resources do teachers use for technology-based lessons? (score all that apply)

- Handouts, study guides, workbooks, etc. to guide lessons (5 points)
- PowerPoint slides or overhead transparencies, or other visuals (5 points)
- Web home pages for student discovery and cooperative learning (5 points)

Points: ____

18. Do technology lesson plans have appropriate learning objectives? (choose one)

- No learning objectives are identified. (0 points)
- Learning objectives don't have specific criteria for successful student learning (1 point)
- Lesson plans have behavioral objectives specifying what students should do, what instructional tools will be used, and how students will be assessed. (7 points)
- Lesson plans have cognitive objectives specifying student-centered growth, building new meaning, and structured learning. (7 points)
- Lesson plans have humanistic objectives including student-tailored instruction, values training, and learning for its own sake. (7 points)

- Behavioral, cognitive, and humanistic learning objectives are used, with criteria for success. (7 points)

Points: ____

19. What usually happens when teachers plan to use technology for a lesson? (choose one)

- Labs or technology resources are often unavailable. (0 points)
- The technology teacher or coordinator must present the lesson. (1 point)
- Technology must be brought into the classroom. (3 points)
- Labs or technology resources are available for scheduling without delays. (5 points)

Points: ____

20. How do students in grade 6 and above describe the computer classroom/lab? (choose one)

- Play time or game time (0 points)
- Unstructured, not sure of what they are supposed to learn (1 point)
- Activities are applicable to what's being covered in class (5 points)
- Appropriate to current classes and important to future learning and skills (7 points)

Points: ____

Total up your school's score and use the following scale to make an overall assessment:

175-200 points – Outstanding

125-175 points – Satisfactory

100-125 points – Modest

75 – 100 points – Moderate

Less than 75 points – Severe

“The Technology Façade” by Lawrence Tomei in *American School Board Journal*, September 2007 (Vol. 194, #9, p. 44-49), no e-link available

7. Short Items:

a. New listings in the What Works Clearinghouse – This link provides access to the most recent ratings in this federal *Consumer Reports*-like review of effective school programs, including beginning reading, character education, dropout prevention, early childhood education, elementary school math, English language learners, and middle school math. You can also see all *What Works* reports to date.

<http://www.whatworks.ed.gov/Products/BrowseByLatestReports.asp?ReportType=Latest>

Spotted in *Education Gadfly*, August 23, 2007

b. Enhancing after-school programs – This link will give access to a new Public/Private Ventures report, *Quality Time After School: What Instructors Can Do to Enhance Learning*: http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/217_publication.pdf. The report addresses setting reasonable ground rules, providing encouragement and praise, consistently reinforcing expectations, and handling broken ground rules in a firm but not harsh manner.

“Reading and Reports” in *American School Board Journal*, September 2007 (Vol. 194, #9, p. 73)

© Copyright 2007 Kim Marshall

Do you have feedback? Is anything missing?

If you have comments or suggestions, if you saw an article or web item in the last week that you think should have been summarized, or if you would like to suggest additional publications that should be covered by the Marshall Memo, please e-mail: kim.marshall8@verizon.net

About the Marshall Memo

Mission and focus:

This weekly memo is designed to keep principals, teachers, superintendents, and others very well-informed on current research and effective practices in K-12 education. Kim Marshall, drawing on 37 years' experience as a teacher, principal, central office administrator, and writer, lightens the load of busy educators by serving as their "designated reader."

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

Subscriptions:

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 password

Publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educator
American School Board Journal
ASCD, CEC SmartBriefs
Atlantic Monthly
Catalyst Chicago
Chronicle of Higher Education
CommonWealth Magazine
Daily EdNews
Ed. Magazine
EDge
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher (TESOL)
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
JESPAR
Journal of Staff Development
Language Learner (NABE)
Middle Ground
Middle School Journal
NASSP Bulletin
New York Times
New Yorker
Newsweek
PEN Weekly NewsBlast
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal
Principal Leadership
Principal's Research Review
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
Teachers College Record
TESOL Quarterly
Theory Into Practice
Tools for Schools