Marshall Memo 783

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
April 22, 2019

In This Issue:

1. Robert Slavin on benchmark assessments
2. If adults don't talk with children about race…
3. Beverly Daniel Tatum on racial isolation and schools
4. An analysis of children's books about slavery for grades 1-6
5. A Florida teacher transforms her remedial reading classes
6. Pushing back on myths about creative classroom projects
7. Managing attention versus managing time
8. David Brooks on the reasons for our society's malaise
9. Short item: Washington, Shakespeare, Marilyn Monroe, Lincoln, Napoleon, and Gandhi with modern haircuts

Quotes of the Week

"If you're trying to be more productive, don't analyze how you spend your time. Pay attention to what consumes your attention."

Adam Grant (see item #7)

"The more I practice, the luckier I get."

Gary Player, quoted in "Tiger Woods and the Game of Life" by Thomas Friedman in *The New York Times*, April 17, 2019, https://nyti.ms/2PmZKdK

"Adults can never know young people's questions, curiosities, fears, or anxieties about race in America without asking them."

Margaret Hagerman (see item #2)

"Just get honest with yourself and acknowledge that you're upset. It's the stuff we're not aware of in ourselves that has the power to control us. Then consider what you are upset about."

Bishop Michael Curry in "Life's Work," an interview with Ania Wieckowski in *Harvard Business Review*, May-June 2019 (Vol. 97, #3, p. 172), available for purchase at https://bit.ly/2Iz4pbZ

"Benchmark assessments fall into the enormous category of educational solutions that are simple, compelling, and wrong. Yes, teachers need to know what students are learning and what is needed to improve it, but they have available many more tools that are far more sensitive, useful, timely, and tied to actions teachers can take."

Robert Slavin (see item #1)

1. Robert Slavin on Benchmark Assessments

In this online article, Robert Slavin (Johns Hopkins University) pushes back on the old saying, "If you want to fatten the pig, it doesn't help to weigh it more often" (this is often used to argue for doing less testing in schools). Actually, says Slavin, timely assessment of student learning can help diagnose and fix instructional problems before it's too late (in the same way that weighing the pig gives the farmer or veterinarian actionable data on the animal's diet and health). That's the theory behind benchmark assessments (a.k.a. interim, periodic, quarterly, common-formative): 3-6 times a year, they give teachers and school leaders information on students' progress vis-à-vis state standards and allow for timely assistance and tweaks in instruction to improve students' performance on state tests.

The bad news, says Slavin, is that research on benchmark assessments shows that they make no difference in students' performance on standardized tests. Zero. And benchmark tests take a lot of instructional time and gobble up district funds. Why is the payoff from these assessments looking so disappointing? Slavin suggests three reasons:

• Teachers and schools might not be making effective use of the data. Suppose a benchmark test showed that fourth graders were doing poorly on fractions. Simply teaching more fractions wouldn't be helpful, since some fourth graders are doing fine, some need a little help, and some are floundering because they lack important prerequisite skills. Differentiating for these three groups is difficult, and teachers might not be doing it.

• If turnaround time for scoring and displaying data from benchmark assessments is slow, teachers have moved on by the time they get it.

• Teachers and school leaders might already know what the benchmark data are telling them about students' progress. "Teachers already give a lot of brief, targeted curriculum-linked assessments," says Slavin, "and they always have." They walk around their classrooms looking over students' shoulders and get real-time information on who needs help on what, so periodic tests aren't adding value.

"Benchmark assessments fall into the enormous category of educational solutions that are simple, compelling, and wrong," says Slavin. "Yes, teachers need to know what students are learning and what is needed to improve it, but they have available many more tools that are far more sensitive, useful, timely, and tied to actions teachers can take."

[Here are some other possible reasons these tests are unhelpful (even counterproductive) in many schools:

- Benchmark tests are poorly constructed, focusing on test prep and low-value skills.
- Tests aren't given frequently enough to provide timely assistance to students.

- Tests are given too frequently and over-testing undermines student motivation.
- Students don't take benchmark tests seriously, making the data worthless.
- Benchmark data are displayed in ways that are confusing and unhelpful to teachers.
- Same-grade/same-subject teacher teams don't have time to meet and discuss data.
- If teams do meet, the "culture of nice" prevents them from having frank discussions.
- Teachers fear the data will be used as a "gotcha" to negatively evaluate them.
- There isn't meaningful follow-up with students after each test.

But some schools (documented by Paul Bambrick-Santoyo in his book, *Driven by Data 2.0*, Jossey-Bass, 2019) have avoided these problems and made good use of benchmark data, supplementing on-the-spot classroom assessments to continuously improve teaching and learning. The Memo archive has scores of articles on effective use of benchmark assessments – search under Assessments: Interim… and Assessment: Using data for continuous improvement.   K.M.]

"Benchmark Assessments: Weighing the Pig More Often?" by Robert Slavin, April 11, 2019, https://bit.ly/2DsUyQL; Slavin can be reached at rslavin@jhu.edu.

Back to page one

2. If Adults Don't Talk with Children About Race…

In this article in *Phi Delta Kappan*, Margaret Hagerman (Mississippi State University) says many white parents and educators avoid talking about race and racism with elementary-school children because they believe it's too early to engage with controversial and disturbing topics. The problem with this approach, says Hagerman, is that decades of research have shown that young children notice racial differences early on, talk to their peers about race, and pick up explicit and implicit societal rules. Some findings:

- By three months old, children can categorize people by race.
- By three years old, children can express explicit forms of racial bias.
- By five, children of color are conscious of existing racist stereotypes about their group and are negatively affected by them.
- By eight, white children learn that it's socially unacceptable to express racial bias, but implicit bias continues.

African-American and Latinx parents talk much more directly to their children about race, making a point of preparing them to navigate what they regard as a racist social structure.

"Children are constantly developing ideas about race by interpreting information about the world around them from a range of sources," says Hagerman. "Kids are aware of racial patterns when they see who lives in their neighborhood, or who goes to their school, or who their parents are friends with, or who is asking for money when they visit a city center. Kids develop ideas about race through the media they consume, the books they read, the debates they have on social media, the volunteering and traveling they do, the summer camps they attend, and the news that is streamed into their house every day… And these kids are making decisions every single day about how they will act in the world."

In her own research, Hagerman has found that children "were neither too young nor too innocent to pay attention to the world around them… All of these kids knew something about the larger debates of our time, and many were excited to talk to an adult who would listen to their opinions." There was lots of confusion and misinformation: Was Rihanna white or black? Did black people have extra muscles in their legs that made them better at basketball? How to report a racist bully without him finding out?

Hagerman's interviews with white students revealed a wide range of views. One eleven-year-old said, "Racism was a problem when all those slaves were around and that like bus thing and the water fountain. I mean, everything was crazy back in the olden days… But now, I mean, since Martin Luther King and like Eleanor Roosevelt, and how she went on the bus… after the 1920s and all that, things changed." But other students were aware of racism, had noticed black customers being hassled in stores, and spoke out against racial profiling of Mexican-Americans in Arizona.

Students of color were clear that America was not "post-racial," expressed anger, anxiety, and distress about the current political and racial climate, and had harsh words on President Trump's role ("He puts inappropriate things on Twitter," said a ten-year-old boy). Some described being taunted by students at school ("Build a wall!") and were anxious about family members being deported.

Students told Hagerman that they wished family members and teachers had more conversations with them about these issues. She agrees, concluding that it's important for adults to "provide young people with not only the necessary tools to help them understand race and racism but also the opportunity to be heard… Adults can never know young people's questions, curiosities, fears, or anxieties about race in America without asking them."

"Conversations with Kids About Race" by Margaret Hagerman in *Phi Delta Kappan*, April 2019 (Vol. 100, #7, p. 17-21), https://bit.ly/2GBZQvh; Hagerman can be reached at mah1125@msstate.edu.

Back to page one

3. Beverly Daniel Tatum on Racial Isolation and Schools

(Originally titled "Widening the Lens: A Conversation with Beverly Daniel Tatum")

In this article in *Educational Leadership*, editor Anthony Rebora interviews psychologist/educator/author Beverly Daniel Tatum (Spelman College). Some highlights:

• Tatum laments the continued segregation of U.S. schools: more than six decades after the *Brown* decision, nearly 75 percent of African-American students attend majority-minority schools, and 38 percent go to schools where 10 percent or fewer students are white (the statistics are similar for Latinx students). Students of color are more likely to attend schools where 60 percent or more of students live in poverty, and those schools have higher staff turnover, less-experienced teachers, and inferior facilities and resources. "There are a lot of factors at play," says Tatum, "but if you're a student in an under-resourced, segregated school, you might certainly feel devalued."

• Tatum is also concerned about racial isolation in the broader society: 75 percent of white adults, she says, have "entirely white social networks, without any interaction with people of color." Growing up in these families, white youth form their beliefs about people of color and the nation's power structure largely from the media. Notwithstanding positive films like *Black Panther*, there are many stereotypes and negative images. "It's tough to become a change agent in that context," she says; college and the military are often the last chance young people have to get a more balanced view of racial history and dynamics.

• Tatum stresses the importance of students of color seeing accomplished people who look like them in school and positive content and images in the curriculum. "Unfortunately," she says, "my experience is that, when it comes to teaching about racial issues, a lot of teachers are afraid of doing the wrong thing, so they choose not to do anything. But silence is not a helpful choice."

• Tatum stresses the importance of high-quality PD on these issues, educator reading and discussion groups, and honest reflection on what's working instructionally and what needs improvement ("Hey, this question came up in class – this is how I handled it, but I'm not sure that was the best way. What would you have done?"). She recommends three books: her own *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* (second edition 2017), *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo (2018), and *Bandwidth Recovery* by Cia Verschelden (2017).

"Widening the Lens: A Conversation with Beverly Daniel Tatum" by Anthony Rebora in *Educational Leadership*, April 2019 (Vol. 76, #7, p. 30-33), https://bit.ly/2D6y73H

Back to page one

4. An Analysis of Children's Books About Slavery for Grades 1-6

In this *Teachers College Record* article, Timothy Patterson (Temple University) and Jay Shuttleworth (Long Island University/Brooklyn) report that elementary teachers often have to teach history without a textbook and use historical fiction and non-fiction books to cover important topics. The perils of this approach became apparent in early 2016 when Scholastic published *A Birthday Cake for George Washington*, geared to students in grades 1-3. Critics said the book, while historically accurate, gave a rosy picture of the lives of people enslaved by Washington, sanitizing the institution of slavery and omitting important context and details. "This controversy highlighted the difficult pedagogical choices elementary teachers must make when selecting materials to support their students' learning," say Patterson and Shuttleworth: "given the variety of historical books written for their students, which stories will be emphasized and ultimately legitimated and which will be silenced through absence?"

To fill this void, the researchers analyzed 21 children's books about slavery, looking at their storylines, how slaves and African-American culture were depicted, the master-slave relationship, and the portrayal of violence and forced labor. Books fell on a continuum with three definable points, as evidenced by their narrative and illustrations:

• Selective tradition books – Slavery is not presented as evil, African Americans are depicted as smiling and celebrating, masters and slaves are shown working happily together, the violence of slavery is not shown, the system is portrayed in a positive light or as a

necessary evil, and enslaved people are described in stereotypical ways and don't have agency or powerful roles. Some examples:

- *The House That George Built* by Suzanne Slade and Rebecca Bond (2015)
- *A Fine Dessert: Four Centuries, Four Families, One Delicious Treat* by Emily Jenkins and Sophie Blackall (2015)
- *A Birthday Cake for George Washington* by Ramin Ganeshram and Vanesa Brantley-Newton (2016)

• Social conscience books – Slavery is depicted as joyless and marked by suffering and lack of dignity, and these books show empathy and sympathy for the plight of African Americans. Although slavery's evils are acknowledged, they may be diminished or unexplored in favor of other story lines such as escape narratives. The books may or may not be factually accurate, say Patterson and Shuttleworth, but present slavery as a "normal, if regrettable, part of life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries." Some examples:

- *If You Traveled on the Underground Railroad* by Ellen Levine and Larry Johnson (1992)
- *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* by Deborah Hopkinson and James Ransome (1993)
- *If You Lived When There Was Slavery in America* by Anne Kamma and Pamela Johnson (2004)
- *The Patchwork Path: A Quilt Map to Freedom* by Bettye Stroud and Erin Suanne Bennett (2005)
- *Henry's Freedom Box: A True Story from the Underground Railroad* by Ellen Levine and Kadir Nelson (2007)
- *Ellen Craft's Escape from Slavery* by Cathy Moore and Mark Braught (2011)
- *Underground: Finding the Light to Freedom* by Shane Evans (2011)
- *Tea Cakes for Tosh* by Kelly Starling Lyons and E.B. Lewis (2012)
- *Hope's Gift* by Kelly Starling Lyons and Don Tate (2012)
- *Juneteenth for Mazie* by Floyd Cooper (2015)

• Culturally conscious books – In these, the evils of slavery are omnipresent, and enslaved peoples' humanity and/or culture is emphasized. The books accurately describe racism, oppression, discrimination, violence, survival, and the brave aspirations under slavery, as well as painting a broader picture of the nature of the institution. Some examples:

- *The Invisible Princess* by Faith Ringgold (1999)
- *In the Hollow of Your Hand* by Alice McGill and Michael Cummings (2000)
- *Circle Unbroken* by Margot Theis Raven and E.B. Lewis (2004)
- *American Slave, American Hero: York of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* by Laurence Pringle, Cornelius Van Wright, and Ying-Hwa Hu (2005)
- *I Want to Be Free* by Joseph Slate and E.B. Lewis (2009)
- *Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans* by Kadir Nelson (2011)
- *When the Slave Esperanca Wrote a Letter* by Sonia Rosa and Luciana Justiniani Hees (2012)
- *Brick by Brick* by Charles Smith and Floyd Cooper (2013)

Choosing classroom books is not simple, conclude Patterson and Shuttleworth, and teachers and curriculum leaders need to look carefully at every book. For example, depictions of slaves smiling as they work can be misleading, or they can be accompanied by narratives that show how appearing to be happy workers was an important survival strategy for African Americans.

"The (Mis)representation of Enslavement in Historical Literature for Elementary Students" by Timothy Patterson and Jay Shuttleworth in *Teachers College Record*, April 2019 (Vol. 121, #4, p. 1-40), https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1204366; the authors can be reached at timothy.patterson@temple.edu and jay.shuttleworth@liu.edu.

Back to page one

5. A Florida Teacher Transforms Her Remedial Reading Classes

In this article in *English Journal*, high-school teacher Amanda Lacy says she was not thrilled when she was assigned to teach Intensive Reading to juniors and seniors who had failed the state test as tenth graders. She knew that all the students in these classes typically qualify for free and reduced-price meals and many have "internalized a narrative in which they are not only encumbered by real and imagined slights and negative expectations based on their appearance and culture, but they are additionally stigmatized as deficient readers and scholars within the context of the school."

However, Lacy ended up "loving the challenge and loving the students." That's because over six years, she transformed "decontextualized remediation lessons to thought-provoking, socially situated opportunities for learning." She dumped the commercial program purchased by the district (it featured reading selections like *Harry Potter vs. Twilight, NASCAR,* and *Tattoos* – material that had students "feeling alternately misunderstood, bored, and patronized by this supposed high-interest material"). With her administrators' permission, Lacy used news articles, blogs, social media, magazines, and literature. She also renamed the course *Critical Thinking and Reading for College Readiness*.

Before she began, Lacy conducted an interest inventory of her students, including these questions (she also asked them to write down the lyrics of their favorite song):

- What is something you want me to know about you?
- List five things you are good at.
- What do you wonder about?
- What do you believe? What do you question?
- What are your struggles? What are your fears?
- What topics and things do you want to read about?
- Complete this sentence: After graduation I hope to…
- If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

Lacy copied some student responses on large sheets of construction paper and displayed them around the classroom. She also shared an inventory of the interests expressed in all her classes, including polar opposites like *I love to read about sports, poverty, and my history, I'll read about anything but sports and politics,* and *I'm tired of reading about Black people*.

Lacy told students, "You won't always be interested in what you read, but by the end of the year, each of your interests will be represented in our readings." Here's the weekly schedule she implemented:

• *Monday* – Using the school's computer lab, students chose and printed a *New York Times* or *Washington Post* article, and for homework completed a written response including important facts, opinions, the main idea, and why the article was important.

• *Tuesday* – Lacy introduced a topic (for example, the Ebola virus, Coachella) and gave students print, visual, and audio texts. Students sat in groups of 3-4, discussed the texts, made one observation (text-to-text, text-to-self, or text-to-world) and in exit slips, asked two questions. These provided prompts and questions for subsequent discussion and writing.

• *Wednesday* – Students responded to the topic, often in letters – for example, to the local newspaper on its coverage of a fight at the school, and to Colin Kaepernick about his activities. "In each of these cases," says Lacy, "genuine interest compelled students to consider, articulate, draft, and refine their opinions about our weekly topic."

• *Thursday* – Students took an ACT or SAT practice test, with results returned the next day. While students were resistant, Lacy saw benefits and used the data to adjust the testing format – for example, reading passages aloud or having students take the tests in groups.

• *Friday* – The class alternated between student- and teacher-selected poetry, with analysis and close reading activities.

Lacy also provided regular "A Few Minutes of Me" opportunities in which students could read a reading passage of personal interest or significance, give a presentation in an area of expertise, or share an object representing their identity. Some examples: original poetry, family heirlooms, Bible passages, and a demonstration of how to create the perfect brow arch. These presentations regularly elicited wide-eyed silence, laughter, and tears.

"I've witnessed spontaneous joy, passionate engagement, and unprecedented gains on standardized tests as a result of this socially relevant reading program," Lacy concludes. "Implementing a framework of weekly topics touching on students' interests and current events while using multiple text sources has shown me that the possibilities of what students and teachers can create together are limitless."

"Starting with Students: A Framework for High-School Reading" by Amanda Lacy in *English Journal*, March 2019 (Vol. 108, #4, p. 17-20), available to NCTE members (and for purchase) at https://bit.ly/2vglw9E; Lacy can be reached at amandamlacy@gmail.com.

Back to page one

6. Pushing Back on Myths About Creative Classroom Projects

In this online article, John Spencer (George Fox University) says that when he asks his students about their most memorable K-12 learning experiences, they invariably mention a creative project. "These were the moments when learning stuck and often it was when they fell in love with the subject," says Spencer. So why don't more teachers orchestrate this kind of learning? Spencer believes they're held back by seven myths:

• *Myth #1: Structure will squash creativity*. Actually, structure is a vital facilitator of projects and other creative work; without it, students may not get started, or may do wander aimlessly. But it's important that the structure "inspire creativity and respect student agency," says Spencer.

• Myth *#2: Creative projects are possible only in certain subject areas*. Math seemed out of bounds when Spencer taught in a self-contained class, but then he discovered all kinds of possibilities: board games tied to probability, tiny houses using proportional reasoning, volume, and surface area, and a Scratch game reinforcing the X-Y axes and logic. He broadens the definition further: "It can mean exploring ideas and navigating information until you become an expert curator. It can mean designing systems that empower the creative work of others. It can mean creating change in the world by speaking truth and leading movements and interacting with people."

• *Myth #3: Creative projects are best for advanced students*. This is expressed in teacher comments like, "He's just not ready for this," "She should really focus on skill practice first," or "My kids aren't far enough along for that." Spencer believes all students can benefit from creative projects, and can be successful if there's enough scaffolding and support. One caveat: if students are working in groups, teachers need to build in structures so that one student doesn't do all the creative work while others tag along.

• *Myth #4: There isn't time for creative work*. It feels that way to many teachers, which is why projects are often left till the end or not done at all. The trick, says Spencer, is integrating projects into curriculum units, so students are learning higher-level concepts and doing hands-on work *while* practicing skills.

• *Myth #5: I'm not a creative teacher*. Everyone has creative facets, says Spencer, and within a teacher team, there are likely to be some of these:

- Artist – creativity through original thinking and making;
- Point guard – creativity through strategic action and empathy;
- Hacker – creativity through divergent thinking and breaking systems;
- Astronaut – creativity through curiosity and exploration;
- Geek – creativity through experimentation and analysis;
- Architect – creativity through designing and building systems;
- Engineer – creativity through problem-solving and fixing.

"When teachers team together to design and implement creative projects," says Spencer, "they are able to tap into one another's strengths in a way that wouldn't be possible on their own."

• *Myth #6: Creative projects have to use technology*. Not necessarily, says Spencer; the technology might be nothing more than cardboard and duct tape, sticky notes, or an in-person service project.

• *Myth #7: Assessment is difficult with creative projects*. It's true that grading students on projects can backfire, fostering anxiety and stifling creativity. But not assessing can signal that creative work isn't valued by the teacher or the school. Spencer suggests:

- Break down assessment into specific, measurable areas such as research and development, idea creation, problem-solving, and risk-taking.

- Assess components formatively, giving students opportunities to improve performance.
- Get students involved in self-assessment and assessing their peers' work.
- Focus on growth and celebration.

"Seven Myths Keeping Teachers from Implementing Creative Projects" by John Spencer, April 4, 2019, http://www.spencerauthor.com/creative-myths/; Spencer can be reached at jspencer@georgefox.edu.

Back to page one

7. Managing Attention versus Managing Time

In this *New York Times* article, organizational psychologist Adam Grant (Wharton School) says he's frequently asked about personal productivity – *How can I get more done?* The biggest productivity challenge is doing things we don't want to do but feel obligated to do, and the conventional wisdom is that we need to set goals and hold ourselves accountable. Grant confesses that he doesn't feel very productive himself; he's constantly falling short of his daily goals.

Recently he came upon a different way of thinking about all this: "If you're trying to be more productive, don't analyze how you spend your time. Pay attention to what consumes your attention… [Focus] on getting things done for the right reasons, in the right places, and at the right moments… Prioritize the people and projects that matter, and it won't matter how long anything takes."

The key here is doing things that are important and personally motivating. "Productivity isn't a virtue," says Grant. "It's a means to an end. It's only virtuous if the end is worthy. If productivity is your goal, you have to rely on willpower to push yourself to get a task done. If you pay attention to why you're excited about the project and who will benefit from it, you'll be naturally pulled into it by intrinsic motivation."

But there will still be tasks that are routine or even odious, and Grant suggests being strategic about what time of day we do them to maximize attention. If you're a morning person, he suggests, do analytical work first thing, routine work in the lunchtime trough, and creative, non-linear work in the late afternoon or evening. If you're a night person, flip that sequence. For less motivating, gotta-get-it-done tasks, the key is blocking out distractions; for fun, creative work, external stimuli may help get the juices flowing.

Social media is a prime distractor, and Grant has adopted a personal rule to keep it under control: during work time, he logs in only to share content; he saves scrolling for times when it's impossible to get anything done, like waiting for a flight to take off or cooling down after exercise.

"Forget Time Management. Think Attention Management" by Adam Grant in *The New York Times*, April 1, 2019, https://nyti.ms/2Uwg10V

Back to page one

8. David Brooks on the Reasons for Our Society's Malaise

In this *New York Times* column, David Brooks says that U.S. culture is going through a "spiritual and emotional crisis" driven by five false beliefs:

• *Career success is fulfilling*. Young people are told that college admission, achievement, and downstream status are what matter: *If you make it, life will be good*. "Everybody who has actually tasted success can tell you that's not true," says Brooks. "If you build your life around it, your ambitions will always race out in front of what you've achieved, leaving you anxious and dissatisfied."

• *I can make myself happy*. This suggests we are self-sufficient and happiness is an individual accomplishment. "But people looking back on their lives from their deathbeds tell us that happiness is found amid thick and loving relationships," says Brooks. "It is found in the giving and receiving of care."

• *Life is an individual journey*. The Dr. Seuss book *Oh, the Places You'll Go* conveys this message. "In reality, people who live best tie themselves down," says Brooks. "By planting themselves in one neighborhood, one organization, or one mission, they earn trust. They have the freedom to make a lasting difference."

• *You have to find your own truth*. "The problem is that unless your name is Aristotle, you probably can't do it," says Brooks. "The reality is that values are created and passed down by strong, self-confident communities and institutions. People absorb their values by submitting to communities and institutions and taking part in conversations that take place within them."

• *Rich and successful people are worth more than poorer and less-successful people*. This meritocratic notion tells young people they are what they accomplish and they can earn dignity by attaching themselves to prestigious brands. "The anthropology of the meritocracy," says Brooks, "is that you are not a soul to be saved but a set of skills to be maximized. No wonder it's so hard to be a young adult today. No wonder our society is fragmenting. We've taken the lies of hyper-individualism and we've made them the unspoken assumptions that govern how we live."

"Five Lies Our Culture Tells Us" by David Brooks in *The New York Times*, April 16, 2019, https://nyti.ms/2ZsgeWE

Back to page one

9. Short Item:

Washington, Shakespeare, Marilyn Monroe, Lincoln, Napoleon, and Gandhi with modern haircuts – Check out this one: https://bit.ly/2Dl13VK

"Let Your Hair Down" by BJ Pang Chieh Ho, April 18, 2019

Back to page one

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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 48 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 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 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
District Management Journal
Ed. Magazine
Education Digest
Education Next
Education Update
Education Week
Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis
Educational Horizons
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
English Journal
Essential Teacher
Exceptional Children
Go Teach
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
Literacy Today (formerly Reading Today)
Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School
Middle School Journal
Peabody Journal of Education
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal
Principal Leadership
Reading Research Quarterly
Responsive Classroom Newsletter
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
School Administrator
School Library Journal
Social Education
Social Studies and the Young Learner
Teachers College Record
Teaching Children Mathematics
Teaching Exceptional Children
The Atlantic
The Chronicle of Higher Education
The Education Gadfly
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 Magazine