

# Marshall Memo 523

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

February 10, 2014

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## Quotes of the Week

“I suppose it has. I just get on with it. I use whatever muscles I have to do what I have to do.”

Oscar-nominated director Steve McQueen when asked whether being dyslexic has affected his work (in “10 Questions” by Belinda Luscombe, *Time*, Feb. 3, 2014, p. 60)

“In a world of online distractions, the person who can maintain a long obedience toward a single goal, and who can filter out what is irrelevant to that goal, will obviously have enormous worth.”

David Brooks (see item #1)

“High school looks like the beginning of adulthood and feels like it, but it isn’t adulthood. It’s some kind of dress rehearsal. It’s the first experience of a grown-up emotional and physical life, where you feel the rush of your powers and your vulnerability. Every reversal is gigantic. It’s a perfect storm of potency and ignorance, power and inexperience... Everyone comes out of high school needing vindication or revenge or compensation. It’s all about somebody else getting the pretty girl or the cute guy or the higher grade or the position on the sports team... In a way, you could define adulthood as a passage into a time when you realize high school no longer matters.”

Maureen Dowd in “High School Maniacal” in *The New York Times*, Feb. 5, 2014, (p. A23), <http://nyti.ms/LRgs2R>

“Just telling bystanders to ‘stand up’ to bullying makes little sense, no more sense than just telling a student to be a good reader or become a safe driver without first providing instruction, guidance, coaching, and support.”

Jim Dillon (see item #6)

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## 1. David Brooks on the Human Skills Most Needed in the Computer Age

In this important *New York Times* column, David Brooks lists several mental skills that will be *less* valued as computers become increasingly powerful and prevalent in the workplace:

- Having a great memory;
- Being an A student by gathering lots of information and regurgitating it back on tests;
- Doing any mental activity that involves following a set of rules.

But which human skills will be more important? Here are some specific abilities he believes will be of great value in the age of brilliant machines:

- Having what Brooks calls “a voracious explanatory drive, an almost obsessive need to follow their curiosity... diving into and trying to make sense of these bottomless information oceans.”
- Being quick to recognize an interesting event and get the word out to others, perhaps on Twitter;
- Being able to grasp the essence of one thing, then the essence of something quite different, and put them together to create something entirely new.
- Being able to visualize data and present it in vivid graphic form;
- Having an extended time horizon and strategic discipline – an overall sense of direction and a conceptual frame. “In a world of online distractions, the person who can maintain a long obedience toward a single goal, and who can filter out what is irrelevant to that goal, will obviously have enormous worth,” he says.
- Possessing a Goldilocks level of team leadership – not too controlling and not too loose. “One of the oddities of collaboration is that tightly knit teams are not the most creative,” says Brooks. “Loosely bonded teams are, teams without a few domineering presences, teams that allow people to think alone before they share results with the group. So a manager who can organize a decentralized network around a clear question, without letting it dissipate or clump, will have enormous value.”

“The role of the human is not to be dispassionate, depersonalized, or neutral,” concludes Brooks. “It is precisely the emotive traits that are rewarded: the voracious lust for understanding, the enthusiasm for work, the ability to grasp the gist, the empathetic sensitivity to what will attract attention and linger in the mind. Unable to compete when it comes to calculation, the best workers will come with heart in hand.”

“What Machines Can’t Do” by David Brooks in *The New York Times*, Feb. 4, 2014 (p. A19), [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/04/opinion/brooks-what-machines-cant-do.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/04/opinion/brooks-what-machines-cant-do.html?_r=0)

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## 2. Downsides of the “Tiger” Culture

In this thoughtful *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, Stephen Asma (Columbia College/Chicago) comments on *The Triple Package: How Three Unlikely Traits Explain the Rise and Fall of Cultural Groups in America* by Amy Chua and Jed Rubenfeld (an article based on their book was summarized in Memo 521). “These days, only the simplest minds would argue that cultural superiority is innate, racial, or genetic,” says Asma, “but the idea that specific social habits and psychological tendencies create ascendancy is, at the least, compelling and worthy of investigation. It is no trivial matter, for example, that fire-starting (culturally transmitted and sustained) helped some early human populations outcompete other groups... A cultural skill like fire-starting opens the door to better nutrition, defense, and warmth, to safer childhoods, and to technological development... What was true then is true now. Specific cultural traditions (transmitted horizontally across group members and vertically down through generations) may predispose groups to success and failure.”

Asma lives in two of the cultures discussed in *The Triple Package* – according to whose theory, one is gaining ground (his wife was raised in mainland China) while the other is slipping (he’s a Dutch-American). Their biracial son has experienced a lot of “tiger mother” childrearing, so Asma is well acquainted with that approach. It stems, he believes, from a fundamental attitude toward childhood among the Chinese. “For them, childhood is the training ground for adulthood,” he says. “Being born into a tiger family is like being drafted into the military. Boot camp starts as soon as you can walk. If the child doesn’t like this life of endless academic drilling and discipline, well, so what? Childhood is not for the child... When you are a child, you are not living for yourself, you are training for your future self.”

Why do Chinese-American children tend to be successful in the most demanding academic fields – science, math, engineering? Asma believes it’s because of a longstanding Confucian belief that intense effort builds character and skill and opens every door, so why not take on the toughest challenges? Confucius made a point of rejecting another Chinese tradition – mysticism and meditation. “I once spent a whole day and night in meditation,” said the sage. “I wish instead that I had spent this time in study.”

A second reason for the focus on the STEM curriculum is that these subjects are politically neutral, whereas the humanities can get you in trouble in ideologically and politically volatile times. “Math, engineering, and science are always useful,” says Asma. “Marxists, capitalists, theocrats, democracy proponents, even dictators all need bridges, buildings, and information highways.”

Chinese people sometimes proudly refer to themselves as the “Jews of Asia,” and indeed, there are many similarities: strong family bonds, emphasis on schooling, the ability to flourish wherever they land, and financial know-how. But there’s an important difference, says Asma: humor. There isn’t a Chinese version of the Marx brothers or the Three Stooges. “Chinese culture is serious,” he says. “It rarely cracks a smile. It rarely makes fun of itself. It doesn’t know how to relax and enjoy life. It is strong and determined but highly inflexible.” Chinese humor is mostly semantic wordplay. Jewish humor, by contrast, “calls us to remember the absurdity of life – it gives a breather between the strife and struggle for excellence, and

reminds us to enjoy. It forms a cultural counterweight to balance the intensity of constant work... Playfulness and humor act like siestas that are intrinsically rewarding but also refresh us for further labors.”

“Give me the siesta life any day,” says Asma, “and not because I’m lazy but because life is more than work. I am more than my job. We are all more than our jobs. Worker productivity is not the best measure of human success, and the goal of education is not to create the highest-wage managers... It’s a short step, even for a whole culture, to move from highly disciplined to neurotically masochistic. If happiness is always deferred, then life becomes asceticism.”

Another downside of the Chinese “tiger program” is parents unwittingly giving their children the feeling that they’re never good enough. “It’s the opposite problem of American parenting,” says Asma, “which over-coddles and affirms everything our kids do. American kids make up for their lack of skills with boundless self-esteem. That makes them fragile when failures eventually come along. Chinese kids are tough, and modest about their own copious skills, but they also never feel entirely accepted, acknowledged, or esteemed.” This may be one reason Christianity is expanding so rapidly in China, he suggests – the message is that you are somebody, that Jesus loves you no matter what.

What about African Americans, who are not on the Triple Package list of rising cultures? Asma agrees with Chua and Rubinfeld’s hypothesis that institutional racism and the victim narrative implicit in the Civil Rights Movement have often prevented American blacks from seeing themselves as superior, despite heroic survival and tremendous cultural contributions.

Asma concludes with a cautionary note on over-generalizing about culture. There isn’t a “ladder of higher and lower cultures,” he says, “but a mosaic of adaptive and maladaptive traits. Like my own son, who’s a mix of genetic and cultural lineages, we all might be able to forge a new educational culture from the best fire-starters around the world.”

“The Trouble with Tiger Culture” by Stephen Asma in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb. 7, 2014 (Vol. LX, #21, p. B10-B13),

<https://chronicle.com/article/The-Trouble-With-Tiger-Culture/144267/>

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### **3. The Ambivalence of Modern Parents**

In this *New York Times* review of Jennifer Senior’s new book, *All Joy and No Fun: The Paradox of Modern Parenthood*, Andrew Solomon shares some evocative nuggets:

“Raising children is terribly hard work,” says Solomon, “often thankless and mind-numbing, and yet the most rapturous experience available to adults. Senior begins with the supposition that parents are both happier and more miserable than nonparents, that child rearing dictates a wider emotional range than people have generally known before it. She tackles the problem of ambivalence, demonstrating that most parenting stresses its participants to their limits, no matter how much they love their children... Children upstage all the other components of their parents’ lives, and good parenting involves both helicoptering and disengagement.”

“Parents struggle with their children’s teenage years both because of their changed relationship with their children and because of their changed relationship to themselves,” says Solomon. “It is not easy to have much of your purpose shattered by your child’s independence. This loss can throw parents back on their own inner selves, and self-examination can be painful.”

Reading the book made Solomon reflect on his own parenting. “I have never quite sorted out the conundrum of how I could be distracted into thinking about something as tiresome as e-mail when I was with my beloved kids,” he says. “If I lost all my e-mails, I’d manage, and if I lost my children, I’d never recover; yet still I sometimes find it hard to stay in the moment with them. Senior demonstrates that there is no contradiction in this seeming paradox; she understands that tolerating our children is the cornerstone of loving them.”

“Kids may complicate our lives,” says Senior, “but they also make them simpler. Children’s needs are so overwhelming, and their dependence on us so absolute, that it’s impossible to misread our moral obligation to them... We bind ourselves to those who need us most, and through caring for them, grow to love them, grow to delight in them, grow to marvel at who they are.”

Senior draws a distinction between our “experiencing self” – living in the present moment – and our “remembering self” – putting together our life narrative. “Our experiencing selves... prefer doing the dishes – or napping, or shopping, or answering e-mails – to spending time with our kids... But our remembering selves [say] that no one – and nothing – provides us with so much joy as our children. It may not be the happiness we live day to day, but it’s the happiness we think about, the happiness we summon and remember, and stuff that makes up our life-tales.”

“Under Pressure” by Andrew Solomon – a review of *All Joy and No Fun: The Paradox of Modern Parenthood* by Jennifer Senior (HarperCollins, 2013) in *The New York Times*, Feb. 2, 2014, <http://nyti.ms/1n2XBx9>

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#### **4. Getting Principal Evaluation Right**

In this article in *Principal Magazine*, Joseph Murphy and Ellen Goldring (Vanderbilt University) and Andrew Porter (University of Pennsylvania) take a critical look at the way principals have been evaluated and suggest guiding principles and core content to improve the process:

- *Three historical problems* – Principal evaluation has not been based on research on effective leadership or school improvement, say Murphy, Goldring, and Porter. It’s often perfunctory, relies on sparse evidence-gathering (including *ad hoc* feedback from community members), and lacks vitality and purpose. And data from principal evaluation is rarely used to guide key decisions, including promotion and school improvement.

- *Guiding principles* – The authors suggest the following foundational, process, and outcome principles:

- Foundational principles – Principal evaluation should highlight learning-centered leadership and be grounded in the national ISLLC standards for school leaders.
  - Process principles – Principal evaluation should be evidence-based; use agreed-upon benchmarks; be valid and reliable; be comprehensive but not overly complex; be transparent; be formative (providing ongoing feedback to the principal) and summative; foster a culture of collaboration between principal and supervisor; include multiple measures, including student achievement; tap the views of multiple constituents; have well-defined timelines; be site-specific, that is, connected to the needs of a specific school; and be flexible enough to allow for adjustments.
  - Outcome principles – The principal evaluation process should promote school improvement, enhancing student academic and social learning; motivate principals to improve; promote targeted professional growth opportunities; and result in meaningful consequences.
- *Content* – “We do not need to conduct a new search for the content of principal evaluation,” say Murphy, Goldring, and Porter. Research has established the key factors that principal evaluation should measure:
    - Curriculum rigor, relevance, and alignment;
    - Effective teaching and evaluation of teachers;
    - Effective school culture for students, staff, and parents;
    - Vision, mission, and expectations, and coordination of all activities.
  - *Common pitfalls* – As the authors have helped develop principal-evaluation systems around the country, they have noticed the following problems:
    - Unclear rubrics – “Many that we see are little more than rigorous checklists,” they say. “We have seen none that concretely link evidence and judgments, nor any that provide objective cut points to score evidence.”
    - Overreliance on observations – “There is no meaningful way to use a few discrete observations of a principal to make valid and reliable judgments,” say the authors. “Focus groups with teachers would be more valuable.” Also focus groups with students and/or parents.
    - Misuse of achievement data – The authors say that principals and their supervisors should set academic growth goals with a common-sense combination of state test scores, district tests, end-of-unit exams, AP scores, college placement data, and other data points. “There is no magic source of achievement data,” they say. The three key questions are: (a) What is the level of student achievement? (b) What is the gain in achievement? and (c) Is there an equitable distribution?

“Principal Evaluation Takes Center Stage” by Joseph Murphy, Ellen Goldring, and Andrew Porter in *Principal Magazine*, January/February 2014 (Vol. 93, #3, p. 20-24), [www.naesp.org](http://www.naesp.org)  
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## 5. A Historical Perspective on Teacher Evaluation

In this *Teachers College Record* article, Thomas Good (University of Arizona) reviews recent research on effective teaching practices and finds that it largely duplicates the findings of similar research in the 1980s. This is good news in that it shows there is a consistent knowledge base about what works in the classroom – identifiable teaching practices that are associated with good student achievement (they include classroom management, teacher expectations, clarity, and effective use of time).

But the bad news is that the research hasn't made further gains or convinced the American public, most of whom believe teaching is easy and is the most important factor in student achievement (not true, says Good – there are lots of other factors). In addition, the knowledge base hasn't been effectively taught to new generations of teachers. He is also concerned that there hasn't been enough attention to student attainment in areas not covered by standardized tests – creativity, adaptability, pro-social dispositions, and problem finding.

Good goes on to comment on current efforts to improve teacher evaluation. Research on effective classroom practices has great potential for improving student learning by giving teachers feedback, says Good, *if*:

- Observers are well trained;
- They make enough classroom observations to get a representative sense of daily reality;
- The body of knowledge about good teaching is not used as a checklist of isolated behaviors but is “placed in a system of instruction that emphasizes the integration of variables.”
- Observers can interpret and synthesize the data they collect.
- Observers “provide feedback in ways that are both informative and encourage teachers to consider using the information.”

Good is critical of the way some states and districts are approaching teacher evaluation. The use of test scores is obviously problematic because of the volatility of data from year to year, he says. But even observational data are unreliable if instructional variables are used in isolation. “For example,” he says, “many observational systems call for the demonstration of high expectations. However... expectations can be too high or too low, and the issue is for teachers to demonstrate appropriate expectations. How then does a classroom observer know and code if expectations are appropriate for individual students and for the class as a whole?” For example, alerting an individual student (“Johnny, pay attention to how I write this equation”) could be coded positively by an observer, when in fact the teacher was demonstrating low expectations for this inattentive student.

Another example: two important aspects of classroom management are alerting and accountability – for example, “Work for 15 minutes and then we’ll check your seatwork” and then checking the work in 15 minutes. If a teacher does the first without the second, students will conclude that they don’t need to pay attention to the teacher’s instructions. Alerting without accountability is bad classroom management, as is accountability without alerting. But Good has seen observational checklists that include one without the other, which means they

can't provide teachers with meaningful information on how to improve classroom management.

“Unfortunately,” says Good, “at present, the use of observational systems associated with Race to the Top accountability appears in most instances to be an accounting of teaching performance only in terms of the presence or absence of individual variables. This usage is not an accurate reflection of the knowledge base, in my opinion, and in many cases will result in inappropriate conclusions about teacher performance and student learning.”

Good gives a brief endorsement to the idea of student survey data as helpful feedback to teachers. He cites the five Tripod survey items included in the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) study that were most closely associated with teachers' positive impact on student achievement:

- Students in this class treat the teacher with respect. (All questions were rated by students on a 5-point agree/disagree scale)
- My classmates behave the way my teacher wants them to behave.
- Our class stays busy and doesn't waste time.
- In this class, we learn a lot every day.
- In this class, we learn to correct our mistakes.

The MET study presented student feedback as if it were a new idea, but Good mentions a 1975 study he and two colleagues conducted on student perceptions of their teachers.

“What Do We Know About How Teachers Influence Student Performance on Standardized Tests And Why Do We Know So Little About Other Student Outcomes?” by Thomas Good in *Teachers College Record*, January 2014 (Vol. 116, #1, p. 1-41), <http://bit.ly/1bGudHS>

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## **6. Influencing Bystanders to Stand Up to Bullying**

In this helpful article in *Principal Magazine*, Jim Dillon (Measurement Incorporated) says that trying to tighten control of student behavior is not an effective way to stop bullying. “The people who have the most influence in determining the amount and degree of bullying in a school are not the adults, but the students,” he says. The trick is to shift from a controlling to an influencing mindset – changing students' reactions to bullying through modeling, listening, and winning trust.

From the student's point of view, bullying has a clear social purpose – impressing an audience of bystanders and raising one's social status. “Stopping bullying requires changing the audience response to it,” says Dillon. “Educators... need to focus less on the rule-breakers, and more on the majority of students who don't break the rules: the bystanders or the audience for acts of bullying.”

A key step is for adults to avoid the *fundamental attribution error* – the tendency to attribute students' behavior to the way they *are* rather than the situation they're in. Bystanders who don't intervene aren't heartless and apathetic; they are subject to a common set of social pressures and haven't learned how to deal with them. “Just telling bystanders to ‘stand up’ to bullying makes little sense,” says Dillon, “no more sense than just telling a student to be a good

reader or become a safe driver without first providing instruction, guidance, coaching, and support.” Based on his research, he offers this summary of the *nots* – rationalizations that bystanders use for holding back:

- Not really bullying – students sometimes call it “drama;”
- Not wrong – he’s just teasing and joking around;
- Not harmful – nobody’s getting hurt; she can handle it;
- Not against the rules – the bullying is subtle, technically below the radar;
- Not like me, not my “tribe” – the victim is perceived as very different;
- Not worthy of help – the victim deserves it; teachers don’t like this person;
- Not sure what the crowd thinks – “It is very hard, even frightening, for students to act differently from what they perceive the majority of their peers think,” says Dillon.
- Not sure what to do – how can I stop this – especially difficult when the perpetrator is popular and socially connected;
- Not my job – it’s up to teachers or older students;
- Not my decision – others’ inaction is a sign that what is happening is not a problem;
- Not worth the risk – I might become a victim too;
- Not sure if adults will handle the situation well – telling might make things worse;
- Not sure of back-up – I might get in trouble too.

All of these *nots* are *knots* that need to be untied, says Dillon, and that process can begin when students are shown how much influence they can have in making their school a better place.

Here are some key points that need to be part of a schoolwide campaign:

- The vast majority of students don’t bully and don’t approve of bullying.
- People want to do good and be helpful.
- Student make mistakes and our school will not be trouble-free. “Problems are part of life and learning,” says Dillon. “Viewing them as such will make discussing them a lot less emotional. Students will be more open to sharing them.”
- Students are subject to social pressures and need to think for themselves and problem-solve. “Students shouldn’t feel guilty if they don’t act courageously in the face of bullying,” says Dillon. “Educators should share their own stories of their doubt, uncertainty, and even indifference in the face of need.”
- Being compassionate toward bullies doesn’t mean the behavior is being condoned. “Students who make mistakes need compassion and will accept guidance and direction when given respect and care,” says Dillon. “Students who bully aren’t bad kids or inherent troublemakers – some just need to learn how not to bully others.”

“Untying the ‘Nots’ of Bullying Prevention” by Jim Dillon in *Principal Magazine*, January/February 2014 (Vol. 93, #3, p. 36-39), [www.naesp.org](http://www.naesp.org)

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## 7. Slow Down, Accomplish More!

In this article in *Edutopia*, Elena Aguilar (a leadership coach in Oakland, California) suggests ways that educators can slow down, reflect more about their work, and strengthen human connections:

- *Identify a few essential goals.* “The primary obstacle to school improvement that I see is the problem of ‘doing too much,’” says Aguilar. “Districts have strategic plans with 27 initiatives, schools have four annual goals, teachers have six professional practice goals, and so on.” She suggests making your own prioritized wish list and crossing out the last item on the list.

- *Trim your commitments.* It’s not essential to attend every sporting event and every school board meeting, she says. “Reduce what you do and the information that comes in... Don’t fill every moment.”

- *Take the time to structure meetings up front.* “When people haven’t been given a chance to physically, mentally, and emotionally arrive at the meeting... then they can’t be fully present and able to participate effectively,” says Aguilar. She suggests taking 10-15 minutes to preview the agenda, clarify what is to be accomplished, and briefly connect with one another.

- *Take the time to end meetings properly.* “Closing routines provide a critical moment for participants to make sense of what’s happened and determine the most effective next steps,” she says. “This takes some time and can’t be rushed.”

- *Put the agenda on a diet.* “It took me many years to learn that I needed to ruthlessly cut and prune my agendas,” says Aguilar. This reduces stress and increases productivity and satisfaction.

- *Pick a good moment and regularly ask a colleague a thoughtful question.* For example, “What’s something you’re feeling really good about this year?” “What’s been your greatest accomplishment as a teacher?” “Tell me about a student you felt you made a difference with.”

- *Ask a student or parent a thoughtful question.* For example, “Tell me what you feel really good about.” “What’s something you’d like me to know about you?” “How can I understand you better?”

- *Eat lunch.* Aguilar suggests munching without multitasking one day a week. Better yet, eat with a colleague, focusing on positive conversation.

- *If you’re sick, stay home.* “You can’t reflect and make intentional decisions if you’re sick,” she says. “Sleep, rest, drink fluids, you know the routine.”

- *Practice self-care.* “I know that if I don’t take care of myself, I’m useless in this struggle to transform our schools,” says Aguilar. Caring for ourselves is not self-indulgence; it’s self-preservation so we can do our best work for students.

“Teachers: 10 Tips for Slowing Down” by Elena Aguilar in *Edutopia*, Jan. 21, 2014, <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/ten-ways-to-slow-down-teachers-elena-aguilar>

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## 8. Deciding Which Vocabulary Words to Teach and How to Teach Them

In this article in *The Reading Teacher*, Michael Graves (University of Minnesota/Minneapolis) and seven colleagues ask how educators should decide which vocabulary words to teach from a text. Making good decisions is even more important given the Common Core's emphasis on vocabulary.

Based on a three-year research project, the authors created the SWIT process – Selecting Words for Instruction from Texts. It involves choosing and teaching four types of unfamiliar words:

- Essential words – These are important for understanding the text.
- Valuable words – These have broad, enduring utility for students' reading and writing – for example, for sixth graders, *discord* and *inevitable*.
- Accessible words – These are more common, higher frequency words that are not likely to be understood by students with limited vocabulary knowledge – for example, *consider* and *recent*.
- Imported words – These aren't in the actual text but will enhance a reader's understanding, appreciation, or learning – for example *prejudice*, *gullible*, *democracy*, *environmentalism*.

How many words should students learn? The authors recommend teaching 20 words a week and trying to teach 500-600 by the end of each school year. Here are their suggestions:

For a narrative text: (*Island of the Blue Dolphins* for 4<sup>th</sup> graders):

- Identify potentially Unfamiliar words. Then create a chart with all those words in the left-hand column (in the example given, there are 22: *advice*, *ancestors*, *befall*, *calm*, *crawfish*, *faint*, *fiber*, *fortune*, *headland*, *kelp*, *leagues*, *lessened*, *omen*, *pause*, *pitch*, *planks*, *pursued*, *sandspit*, *seeping*, *serpent*, *skirted*, and *spouting*)
- Label six more columns, three for type of word (Essential, Valuable, and Accessible) and three for type of instruction (Powerful Instruction, Brief Explanation, and Infer Meaning), and leave room at the bottom for Imported Words.
- Make a check-mark for each Unfamiliar word in the appropriate column: Essential, Valuable, or Accessible – for example, *advice* and *ancestors* are Essential, *befall* and *calm* are Valuable, *pause* and *spouting* are Accessible.
- Decide if there are Imported words that need to be added – in this text, *determination* was deemed an important addition to the lesson.
- Determine the optimal type of instruction for each word – for example, the teacher decides *omen* is best taught by Powerful Instruction, *calm* through a Brief Explanation, and *faint* through Infer Meaning.
- Implement vocabulary instruction. For example, for Powerful Instruction of the word *determination*, the teacher gives a clear definition, discusses the context sentences, asks questions that require deep thinking, and provides a vocabulary reference sheet.

The procedure for an informational text is similar.

The authors acknowledge that the SWIT process is time-consuming, but they argue that

it's time well spent and after it's been done once, the chart and teaching strategies are money in the bank for future years and other teachers.

“Words, Words Everywhere, But Which Ones Do We Teach?” by Michael Graves, James Baumann, Camille Blachowicz, Patrick Manyak, Ann Bates, Char Cieply, Jeni Davis, and Heather Von Gunten in *The Reading Teacher*, February 2014 (Vol. 67, #5, p. 333-346), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/trtr.1228/abstract>; Graves can be reached at [mgraves@umn.edu](mailto:mgraves@umn.edu).

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## 9. Which College Will Be Best?

In this article in the Education Life section of *The Sunday New York Times*, Samantha Stainburn has three suggestions for choosing a college:

- *Look to the future.* “College is just a tool to help you achieve your life goals,” says David Montesano of College Match. If making money is a major long-term goal, students can get information on graduate earnings at [www.Payscale.com](http://www.Payscale.com). Interestingly, Hispanic, African-American, and low-income students get more of a pay boost from attending elite colleges than other students. If graduate school is the next step, investigate how colleges compare producing master’s and doctoral students. For example, Reed College does better percentage-wise than Harvard.

- *Steer clear of colleges in crisis.* Perusing online student newspapers can provide clues that there are problems – hazing, sexual assaults, too much reliance on adjunct faculty, eroding services, large class sizes, etc. Students could explore helpful websites, including [www.unigo.com](http://www.unigo.com), [www.collegeprowler.com](http://www.collegeprowler.com), and [www.Studentsreview.com](http://www.Studentsreview.com), and talk to students and recent alumni.

- *Go where you’ll shine.* “One of the most important things a person can get out of college is confidence based on success,” says consultant Jane Klemmer. Check out the social, political, and academic scene and see if they are a good match for you.

“Final Decisions: The Colleges Made Theirs. Now It’s Your Turn” by Samantha Stainburn in *The New York Times* Education Life section, Feb. 9, 2014, <http://nyti.ms/1obvNKR>

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## 10. Short Items:

*a. Black History Month websites* – These sites provide helpful material for use this month and throughout the year:

- Association for the Study of African-American Life and History: <http://asalh.net/index.html>
- National Education Association: [www.nea.org/tools/lessons/black-history-month.htm](http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/black-history-month.htm)
- National Council of Teachers of English 25<sup>th</sup> annual National African-American Read-In, with suggested books and activities: [www.ncte.org/action/aari/packetinfo](http://www.ncte.org/action/aari/packetinfo)
- Smithsonian Education resources in literature, history, science, and the arts: [www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/resource\\_library/african\\_american\\_resources.html](http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/resource_library/african_american_resources.html)

“Black History Month” in *Principal Leadership*, February 2014 (Vol. 14, #6, p. 7)

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**b. Review newly drafted arts standards** – The National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS) has released for public review a draft of voluntary standards for dance, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts. The standards include philosophical foundations, enduring understandings, essential questions, and anchor performance standards. To participate in the review process, go to <http://nccas.wikispaces.com>.

“Arts Standards Review” in *Principal Leadership*, February 2014 (Vol. 14, #6, p. 6)

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**c. Twitter chats for educators** – *Principal Leadership* suggests the following educator sharing opportunities (Eastern Standard Time):

- Educational technology, Mondays 8-9 pm: #edtechchat
- School leaders, Mondays 8-9 pm: #edleadchat
- Science teachers, Tuesdays 9-10 pm: #scichat
- STEM education chat, Tuesdays 9-10 pm: #STEMchat
- iPads in education troubleshooting and sharing, Wednesdays 1-2 pm: #ipadchat
- Librarians, Wednesdays 8-9:30 pm: #libchat
- Math teachers, Thursdays 7-8 pm: #mathchat
- Gamification, Thursdays 9-10 pm: #levelupED

For an updated chat schedule, see <http://bit.ly/officialchatlist>

“Twitter Chats” in *Principal Leadership*, February 2014 (Vol. 14, #6, p. 7)

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***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](mailto: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 64 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).

## ***Subscriptions:***

Individual subscriptions are \$50 for a year. Rates decline steeply for multiple readers within the same organization. See the website for these rates and how to pay by check, credit card, or purchase order.

## ***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
- Reader opinions (with results of an annual survey)
- About Kim Marshall (including links to articles)
- A free sample issue

Subscribers have access to the Members' Area of the website, which has:

- The current issue (in Word or PDF)
- All back issues (also in Word and PDF)
- A database of all articles to date, searchable by topic, title, author, source, level, etc.
- How to change access e-mail or log-in

## ***Core list of publications covered***

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educational Research Journal  
American Educator  
American Journal of Education  
American School Board Journal  
AMLE Magazine  
ASCA School Counselor  
ASCD SmartBrief/Public Education NewsBlast  
Better Evidence-Based Education  
Center for Performance Assessment Newsletter  
District Administration  
ED Magazine  
Education Digest  
Education Gadfly  
Education Next  
Education Update/Curriculum Update  
Education Week  
Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis  
Educational Horizons  
Educational Leadership  
Educational Researcher  
Elementary School Journal  
Essential Teacher  
Go Teach  
Harvard Business Review  
Harvard Education Letter  
Harvard Educational Review  
Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk (JESPAR)  
Journal of Staff Development  
Kappa Delta Pi Record  
Knowledge Quest  
Middle School Journal  
NASSP Journal  
NJEA Review  
Perspectives  
Phi Delta Kappan  
Principal  
Principal Leadership  
Principal's Research Review  
Reading Research Quarterly  
Reading Today  
Responsive Classroom Newsletter  
Rethinking Schools  
Review of Educational Research  
School Administrator  
School Library Journal  
Teacher  
Teachers College Record  
Teaching Children Mathematics  
Teaching Exceptional Children/Exceptional Children  
The Atlantic  
The Chronicle of Higher Education  
The District Management Journal  
The Language Educator  
The Learning Principal/Learning System/Tools for Schools  
The New York Times  
The New Yorker  
The Reading Teacher  
Theory Into Practice  
Time  
Wharton Leadership Digest