

# Marshall Memo 129

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education  
March 27, 2006

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## Quotes of the Week

“I’m kind of disappointed, but I guess I did OK.”

Gaurav Rajav, 15, on being able to recite only 8,784 digits of  $\pi$  instead of 10,790 digits, his goal (*Roanoke Times*, Mar. 15, 2006, spotted in *Education Gadfly*, Mar. 23)

“The only thing that likes change is a wet baby.”

John Hamill of the Tulsa, Oklahoma schools (see item #7)

“A successful apology can turn enmity into personal and organizational triumph – while an apology that is too little, too late, or too transparently tactical can bring on individual or institutional ruin.”

Barbara Kellerman (see item #1)

“Just because students can answer a teacher’s questions does not mean they carry the understandings the teacher assumes.”

Juliann Kaftan, Gayle Buck, and Alysa Haack (see item #2)

“I feel like a left-handed person in a right-handed world.”

A young California teacher uncomfortable with using Open Court (see item #8)

“The poor child who once could count on the bullying to stop once the school bell had rung now discovers it can go on endlessly through the miracle of the chat room, and worse than before, since it’s much easier to wound without the sight of wounded eyes. Looking someone straight in the eye is an age-old incentive to do the right thing, but there’s precious little of it in the computer age.”

Anna Quindlen in her *Newsweek* column (Mar. 20, 2006, p. 80)

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## 1. Guidelines on Apologizing

In this article in the April issue of the *Harvard Business Review*, Harvard professor Barbara Kellerman argues that when a leader feels called upon to make a public apology for a mistake or misdeed, there's a lot to consider. "Refusal to apologize can be smart," she writes, "or it can be suicidal. Conversely, readiness to apologize can be seen as a sign of strong character or as a sign of weakness. A successful apology can turn enmity into personal and organizational triumph – while an apology that is too little, too late, or too transparently tactical can bring on individual or institutional ruin... Leaders who apologize publicly are especially vulnerable. They are highly visible. They are expected to appear strong and competent. And whenever they make public statements of any kind, their individual and institutional reputations are at stake. Clearly, then, leaders should not apologize often or lightly. For a leader to express contrition, there needs to be a good, strong reason."

Recently, there has been a major increase in public apologies among corporate leaders, politicians, university presidents, and even doctors (who were previously skittish about expressing regret for fear of malpractice lawsuits, but now realize that *not* apologizing might be more likely to provoke legal action). We've seen highly publicized apologies from German Chancellor Willy Brandt for Nazi atrocities against Poland; Robert McNamara for his poor judgment during the Vietnam War; Trent Lott for saying that things would have been better if Strom Thurmond had been elected president in 1948; Bill Clinton for doing nothing to avert the genocide in Rwanda – and later for his relationship with Monica Lewinsky; Cardinal Bernard Law for sexual abuse by Catholic priests in the Boston archdiocese; Oprah Winfrey for defending James Frey's "memoir;" and Harvard President Larry Summers for suggesting that "intrinsic aptitude" might explain the low number of women in science and engineering.

Under what circumstances should a leader endure the discomfort and take the risk of making a public apology? If it's the right thing to do, says Kellerman, which is when one or more of these criteria apply:

- *Individual purpose* – The leader made a mistake or committed a wrongdoing. The leader publicly apologizes to encourage followers to forgive and forget.

- *Institutional purpose* – One or more people in the group for which the leader is responsible made a mistake or committed a wrongdoing. The leader publicly apologizes to restore the group's internal cohesion and external reputation.

- *Intergroup purpose* – One or more people in the group for which the leader is responsible made a mistake or committed a wrongdoing that inflicted harm on one or more people on the outside. The leader publicly apologizes to repair relations with injured parties.

- *Moral purpose* – The leader experiences genuine remorse for a mistake made or a wrongdoing committed, either individually or institutionally. The leader publicly apologizes to ask forgiveness and seek redemption.

Sometimes it's *not* appropriate for the leader to make an apology. Kellerman offers these guidelines for deciding then it's a good idea to hold off on publicly saying you're sorry:

- When doing so is unlikely to serve an important purpose;
- When the offense is not of serious consequence;
- When it's inappropriate that the leader assume responsibility for the offense;
- When someone else can get the job done;
- When the cost of saying something is likely higher than the cost of remaining silent.

If most of these apply, it's wise not to apologize. "An apology that is misguided or ill conceived can actually do more harm than good," says Kellerman.

What makes for a *good* apology? To be effective, Kellerman argues, public apologies should be:

- Genuine – an honest appeal for forgiveness;
- Timely;
- Acknowledge the mistake or wrongdoing;
- Accept full responsibility;
- Express regret;
- Promise that the offense will not happen again.

An apology that meets these standards, says Kellerman, virtually guaranteed not to backfire.

The classic example of the "perfect" apology was the response by James Burke, CEO of Johnson and Johnson in 1982, when seven people died because an unknown killer had slipped cyanide into bottles of Tylenol. Burke immediately took full responsibility, expressed concern for the safety of the public ("Our first responsibility is to our customers," he said on *60 Minutes*), stopped production and advertising, recalled all Tylenol products (at a cost of \$100 million), told people to return bottles they had bought and get a voucher, and ordered his people to work tirelessly to ensure that such a disaster could never happen again (this is when tamper-proof seals were introduced). In the end, Tylenol bounced back and Johnson and Johnson's image actually improved.

So why do leaders sometimes stonewall and refuse to apologize? Kellerman says it's usually because of their personal discomfort with eating crow, fear that admitting a mistake will damage or destroy their reputation or hurt the organization, and fear of lawsuits. There's also a strong tendency in times of crisis or scandal to go into denial and convince oneself and others that nothing is wrong. This is almost always self-defeating. In fact, denial and stonewalling usually make the problem worse and harm the leader and the organization even more seriously.

"When Should a Leader Apologize and When Not?" by Barbara Kellerman in *Harvard Business Review*, April 2006 (Vol. 84, #4, p. 72-81), no e-link available

## 2. A Teacher Tries Formative Assessments with Her Sixth Graders

In this *Middle School Journal* article, three Nebraska educators, Juliann Kaftan, Gayle Buck, and Alysa Haack, look closely at formative assessment, by which they mean the minute-by-minute “dipsticking” that some teachers do to check on student understanding and see if it’s necessary to re-teach or modify teaching. The authors note that many teachers don’t check adequately for understanding; they assign, assess, and move on, using daily worksheets and quizzes as summative assessments (for grades) rather than as a way of informing instruction.

“Recognizing and responding to learning is not as easy as it sounds,” acknowledge the authors. “Just because students can answer a teacher’s questions does not mean they carry the understandings the teacher assumes.” They contend that minute-by-minute formative assessment is the only way to be sure students really understand – and to take students deeper into the subject matter.

The authors studied Haack’s sixth-grade classroom to explore the role of formative assessment. By interviewing students as they filled out science worksheets, the researchers found that some of them could answer worksheet questions perfectly and yet had little or no understanding of the content. Based on these findings, Haack designed another way to check on students’ understanding – and help them develop it. She wrote “Big Ideas” worksheets that listed the main concepts she was trying to teach with a word bank of key vocabulary after each one and then space for students to write their ideas. Students kept adding to and modifying their sheets during each unit, getting feedback from the teacher, who could see if students were grasping the big ideas. Here’s how part of one sheet looked (there were more lines under each word bank):

### **MAGNETISM**

#### ***Nature of Magnetism***

Word bank: magnetism, magnetic poles, magnetic field, magnetic field lines, atom, element, nucleus, protons, electrons, magnetic domain, ferromagnetic material, permanent magnet

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#### ***Magnetic Earth***

Word bank: compass, magnetic declination, Van Allen Belts, solar wind, magnetosphere, aurora

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As Haack taught new material, students jotted their working notions on each big idea on the worksheet and the teacher frequently looked at students' ideas and gave them probes like "Describe what you mean by..." or "Explain how this could happen." She found this was far more efficient than assigning end-of-chapter tests; this way, she could take students from where they were, zero in on particular misconceptions, and see what she needed to re-teach to the whole class. The worksheets became a written record of students' learning and the teacher's probing – and also served as excellent review sheets for district tests.

Getting students to use these formative worksheets took some time. Kids were used to getting grades for everything they turned in, and they had to be taught that it was okay to make mistakes on the Big Ideas worksheets – there were no penalties. But would students invest time and effort on something that didn't "count"? Haack found that once students began getting individual feedback and realized that the worksheets were part of an authentic dialogue with their teacher, they committed themselves to the process.

Here's a summary of the differences in the old process that Haack used and the new one she developed:

<u>Old Process</u>	<u>New Process</u>
Students fill in blanks.	Students write/draw conceptions on big ideas.
Teacher uses check-marks.	Teacher responds with probing comments.
Teacher grades and hands back.	Student revises, expands on previous conceptions.
Students file sheet away.	Teacher responds with probing comments.
The process ends. New topic.	The process continues with new topics.

Classrooms that use formative assessments are oriented toward mastery of content versus outperforming their peers, conclude Kaftan, Buck, and Haack. "Students motivated by mastery goals are interested in learning content, noting improvement, and acting on that information to learn more," they write. "Formative assessment helps students interpret feedback as a means of learning rather than as punishment or reward... Formative assessment serves the dual purpose of giving the teacher information on the effectiveness of the lesson and giving students information on the current state of their learning... Students come to understand that their learning is a priority, because the teacher is listening and responding to their needs."

"Using Formative Assessments to Individualize Instruction and Promote Learning" by Juliann Kaftan, Gayle Buck, and Alys Haack in *Middle School Journal*, March 2006 (Vol. 37, #4, p. 44-49), no e-link available

### **3. Should Students Be Assigned Roles in Literature Circles?**

In this *Middle School Journal* article, two Canadian educators (a professor and a middle-school teacher) express their enthusiasm for literature circles (small groups of students having structured discussions of the same book):

- Literature circles deepen comprehension by getting students talking about what they've read with their peers.
- Circles help students use new information introduced in books to extend their initial understanding.
- Circles tap into adolescents' social nature and thereby increase their motivation to read and develop strategies. In the authors' words: "Chuckling with peers over a character's foibles, reliving favorite events through spontaneous group retellings, or debating the plausibility of characters' actions heighten students' interest in the books they read."

However, the authors were skeptical about the way many teachers assign students specific roles within literature circles, for example: discussion director (to decide on possible questions or topics for discussion); connector (to relate what was read to other readings or his/her own experiences and knowledge); and summarizer (to tie together the key points of the reading). Wouldn't assigning roles get in the way of "thoughtful, from-the-heart conversation"? Wouldn't students have richer and more vibrant discussions if they spontaneously took on roles?

To find the answer, the authors designed an action research project in a culturally diverse, predominantly low-SES 8<sup>th</sup>-grade classroom in Toronto. Students chose from a number of young-adult novels and formed six literature circles, mixed by gender and reading level. During literacy time, half of the literature circles met while the remaining students wrote in reading response journals; then they switched. In their journals, students used the retelling/relating/reflecting structure: they described what happened in the passage they were reading, told about personal connections, and then asked questions and reflected on answers. After group discussions, students wrote further reactions and insights in their journals.

The authors chose two of the literature circles for close inspection, tape-recorded their discussions, photocopied those students' response journals, and interviewed each student at the end of the unit. One of the groups had real difficulty getting a discussion off the ground without assigned roles. The other group thrived on not having their group's interaction structured by the teacher and spontaneously took on the following roles:

- Questioners – these students raised points from the book and from their response journal reflections;
- Emotional responders – they made strong personal connections based on their own experiences;
- Information providers – they acted as "experts" on areas in which they had prior knowledge and experience;
- Relationship builders – they kept the discussion moving and worked to involve everyone.

The authors concluded that sometimes roles are necessary and sometimes they aren't, depending on the size of the group, the relative social popularity and confidence of group members, the range of reading levels, and the type of book being discussed. Their recommendation is for teachers to play it by ear – and also to spend time with each group

modeling and teaching group skills and encouraging students to become proficient in different roles. They also suggest a new idea: that teachers assign different background information-gathering tasks to students so each comes to literature circle meetings prepared to share information that no one else has and can play an important part enriching the discussion.

One other issue that the study came upon was the distress that students often expressed when peers read ahead of the assigned passage before a circle meeting. Two possible solutions: have the group firmly decide on the pages to be read and put peer pressure on all students to stick to those pages; or have the whole group read the novel all the way through before beginning discussions chunk by chunk.

“Another Look at Roles in Literature Circles” by Shelley Peterson and Michelle Belizaire in *Middle School Journal*, March 2006 (Vol. 37, #4, p. 37-43), no e-link available

#### **4. Theme and Book Ideas for Literature Circles**

In this article in the March issue of *Middle School Journal*, two Kansas educators make an impassioned pitch for using relevant, high-quality young-adult literature to help middle-level students build skills and a love of reading. “If young people are not given something worth reading,” say the authors, “something to which they can connect, and if this literature is not organized around a curriculum designed to assist students to access prior knowledge, young adolescents may simply continue to be disenchanted with their reading – and not only in the English classroom, but in other courses as well.” They suggest several themes, with books suitable for each:

- Nonconformity – This unit might be introduced by “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost, “This is Your Life” by Switchfoot, and an excerpt from Martin Luther King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” Literature circles might then be formed around each of these books:

- *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
- *Nothing But the Truth* by Avi
- *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier.

- Identity – This unit could focus on the question of how identity is formed, answering common adolescent questions like, “Who am I?” and “Does anyone really care about me?”

Literature circles could use books like:

- *The Music of the Dolphins* by Hess
- *The Pigman* by Zindel
- *Speak* by Anderson (this book and the next four are more challenging)
- *A Separate Peace* by Knowles
- *Dreamland* by Dessen
- *Monster* by Myers
- *You Don’t Know Me* by Klass.

• Teen pressures – Literature circles dealing with the stresses common to young adolescents could be kicked off by poems and short stories like “T.L.A.” by McFann and “On the Bridge” by Strasser and using books like:

- *Motown & Didi* by Myers
- *Double Dutch* by Draper
- *Razzle* by Wittlinger
- *Star Girl* by Spinelli
- *Breaking the Fall* by Dadnum (this book and the next four are more challenging)
- *We All Fall Down* by Cormier
- *Keeping You a Secret* by Peters
- *Give a Boy a Gun* by Strasser
- *Don't Be S.A.D.* by Newman (nonfiction)

• Possible/Impossible – This unit could be introduced by poetry selections from Sonya Sones, Mel Glenn, and Sara Holbrook and selections from the following short story collections: *The Color of Absence* by Howe, *Small Avalanches and Other Stories* by Oates, *No Easy Answers* by Gallo, *Out of Bounds* by Naidoo, and *How Angel Peterson Got His Name: And Other Outrageous Tales of Extreme Sports* by Paulsen, and *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science* by Fleischman. Books for literature circles include:

- *Bud, Not Buddy* by Curtis
- *Out of the Dust* by Hesse
- *Blizzard's Wake* by Naylor
- *Jackie's Wild Seattle* by Hobbs
- *Son of the Mob* by Korman
- *Grasslands* by Seely
- *Armageddon Summer* by Yolen and Coville (this book and the next four are harder)
- *I Am the Cheese* by Cormier
- *Shattering Glass* by Giles
- *Taking Liberty: The Story of Oney Judge* by Rinaldi
- *The Year of the Hangman* by Blackwood

“Thematic Solutions Using Young Adult Literature to Increase Reading Comprehension” by Jill Adams and John Bushman in *Middle School Journal*, March 2006 (Vol. 37, #4, p. 25-29), no e-link available

## **5. When It Comes to Literacy, There Are No Shortcuts**

This America's Choice advertisement (one of a series) in the current *Education Week* slams the simplistic notion that phonics is the “secret decoder ring” that will give all students access to high literacy achievement. Decoding is “a necessary, but not sufficient, skill,” says the ad. “Some students struggle with comprehension; some have specific disabilities; and others face the special challenges associated with second language acquisition. All must learn not only to read fluently, but also to analyze and interpret text and to produce good writing on

their own. Some of these skills work in every arena, but some must be learned differently for different subject areas and for different genres. What it takes to write a good memo or read an electronic manual is quite different from what it takes to read a poem or write a short memoir.”

Vocabulary is one of the most critical components of advanced literacy, says the ad. “Students with smaller vocabularies than required by their grade level texts read more slowly. As they read more slowly, they read less and their rate of vocabulary acquisition slows down even further, until they spiral down to the point at which they comprehend almost nothing of what they are asked to read in school. These students need texts with a vocabulary pitched at their level, and content that is right for their age. They need to read a lot and they need to talk about what they are reading.”

Writing is another crucial building block, says the ad, and it’s tightly linked to reading. “To become better writers, students need to write a lot and have their writing carefully critiqued. They need to study the way great writers pursue their craft, something that is often best done by studying several works of a particular author and looking at the ways style develops over time. They need to read deeply in the genres in which they are learning to write. It is important, too, for students to learn to do many different kinds of writing. Whatever they are learning to write, they need help to get started, support to persevere, and the ability to assess their own writing in order to improve. They need help, too, with language use and conventions, especially spelling and punctuation.”

“There is no magic decoder or silver bullet,” concludes the ad. “Teachers need a whole battery of strategies and the experience and training to know which ones are likely to work best in which circumstances.”

“Great Myths in Education #6: All You Need is a Secret Decoder Ring”, an America’s Choice advertisement in *Education Week*, March 23, 2006 (Vol. 25, #28, p. 4), no e-link available

## **6. Tactics for Helping Students Read Difficult Textbooks**

In this article in *Language Learner* (the re-named magazine of the National Association for Bilingual Education), University of Wyoming professor Timothy Rush suggests a five-step process to help students in grades 4 and above make meaning of chapters in a turgidly-written textbooks that are above the reading level of many students:

- Step 1: Make a first pass through the chapter, reading the title and all the headings and subheadings to get a quick idea of the big picture, the key ideas, concepts, and relationships.
- Step 2: Read the chapter introduction and summary, getting a brief capsule of what the author is trying to say and adding a little more detail to the first pass.
- Step 3: Make a third pass through the chapter, this time focusing on pictures, charts, figures, tables, maps, and diagrams, being sure to read the captions. This adds more detailed information.
- Step 4: Go through the whole chapter reading the first and last sentence of each paragraph. This adds supporting detail to the basic information learned in the first three passes.

- Step 5: Read the entire chapter from beginning to end. With all the pre-reading, comprehension will be much better than it would be if a student read it cold.

Rush says this approach is backed by solid research and works for all students – but it’s especially helpful for students who are reading below grade level and students whose English proficiency is limited.

“Five Steps for Effective Reading” by Timothy Rush in *Language Learner*, January/February 2006 (Vol. 1, #3, p. 10-11), no e-link available

## **7. Later start times for high-schools**

A new study in Minneapolis has confirmed the wisdom of pushing high-school start times forward in that city: the new hours have resulted in improved student attendance, less sleeping in class, and less student-reported depression. Another study at Northwestern found that early starting times contribute to sleep deprivation and hurt performance. The emerging consensus is that adolescents are hormonally programmed to go to bed later and are sleep-deprived if their high schools start early. “Anything that pushes [the start time] in the right direction is a good thing and helps kids,” said Mary Carskadon, a Brown University professor of psychiatry and human behavior. These and other research findings have led a number of districts to move up their high-school opening times:

- South Burlington Schools, Vermont – from 7:40 to 8:35
- West Des Moines Community Schools – from 7:45 to 8:20
- Milwaukee Public Schools – from 7:25 to 8:35
- Tulsa, Oklahoma – from 8:00 to 8:45
- Arlington Public Schools, Virginia – from 7:30 to 8:19
- Minneapolis Public Schools – from 7:15 to 8:40

The changes have been welcomed in some quarters. “You don’t have to convince parents that their kids are tired,” said a mom in South Burlington, Vermont. But there has been some push-back. Athletic coaches complained about later dismissals, as have after-school directors, bus schedulers, and teachers who prefer the earlier hours. . “The only thing that likes change is a wet baby,” said John Hamill of the Tulsa, Oklahoma schools.

But rethinking start times has spurred some districts to make more efficient use of buses (West Des Moines saved \$700,000 this year). Some districts have flipped start times with elementary schools, since younger students have less trouble going to bed early and rising earlier, and this has solved the problem of parents dropping younger children at school well before the opening bell on their way to work. And in one district’s first year with later high-school hours, the football team and both the boys’ and girls’ basketball teams won their first championships in memory. Maybe more sleep is good for athletic performance too!

“Later High-School Start Times a Reaction to Research” by Jessica Tonn in *Education Week*, March 22, 2006 (Vol. 25, #28, p. 5, 17), no e-link available

## 8. Two Teachers Rebel Against Open Court

This lengthy *Harvard Educational Review* article tells the story of two young California teachers who were critical of the Open Court literacy program mandated by their districts. Both teachers tried to implement the program while still fitting in what they considered higher-level, more creative literacy activities. But both were repeatedly criticized by administrators and the “Open Court police” from district offices, who insisted on “fidelity” to the highly scripted program.

Both teachers were praised as top-notch by their mentors and saw significant gains in student achievement, one boosting her scores above district and state averages. But after two years, the teacher who had the biggest achievement gains was let go by her district and left the profession. The other, whose principal gave him a glowing evaluation and called him “my rookie of the year,” left to take a job in a nearby district that was using a balanced literacy program.

The departure of both of these talented and effective teachers was the direct result of a clash between the districts’ policies and the two teachers’ desire to hold students to higher expectations and allow them more creativity in their choice of writing topics and reading matter. “I feel like a left-handed person in a right-handed world,” said one of the teachers as she struggled to teach her split-grade classroom the Open Court program. The other teacher insisted that teaching Open Court involved almost no preparation on his part, which could be seen as positive, but he felt his students were learning nothing from it. “You should design the program around your students, not the students around a program,” he said.

“(In)fidelity: What the Resistance of New Teachers Reveals About Professional Principles and Prescriptive Educational Policies” by Betty Achinstein and Rodney Ogawa in *Harvard Educational Review*, Spring 2006 (Vol. 76, #1, p. 30-63), no e-link available

## 9. What to Look for in New Teachers

A six-year study of 10,000 New York City rookie teachers found that variations in student achievement were much wider *within* each of three categories of teachers than *between* categories:

- Traditionally certified
- Alternative certified
- Uncertified

The second two categories were largely Teach for America and NYC Teaching Fellows, who earned certification on the job. “If you look at Teach for America and traditionally certified folks,” said Harvard professor Thomas Kane, one of the study’s authors, “they’d seem dramatically different on many observable characteristics. What’s striking is that... the [effectiveness] differences are small, and the big story is that the distribution of differences looks so similar.”

One conclusion Kane draws from the study is that traditional university pre-employment certification is not the best thing to look at when hiring teachers. Nor are academic credentials (a big selection criterion in Teach for America and New York City

Teaching Fellows), which the study found were not highly correlated with student achievement. Kane believes that districts should set up rigorous hiring process based on known characteristics of good teaching, watch each teacher's learning curve for two years, and then decide who should stay in the classroom. "If you are going to try to get selective, get selective at the end of two years, when you've got a lot more information to be selective on, as opposed to before hiring," he said. At the end of two years of probationary teaching, Kane suggests using a combination of students' test-score growth, peer and principal evaluations, and parent ratings to decide on future tenure.

"Path to Classroom Not Linked to Teachers' Success" by Bess Keller in *Education Week*, March 23, 2006 (Vol. 25, #28, p. 10), no e-link available

## 10. Short Items:

*a. A new "clicker"* – I'm not endorsing this product, but for those interested in interactive formative assessment "clickers," which make it possible for teachers to monitor the level of student understanding on a minute-by-minute basis, here's the latest in a number of products: <http://www.renlearn.com/responder/edweek>.

Advertisement in *Education Week*, March 22, 2006, p. 14

*b. Online poetry resources* – During April (National Poetry Month), a wealth of resources will be available <http://www.poets.org/page.php/prmID/318>. Geared to middle schools, the site has forums where teachers can share ideas with colleagues; pedagogical and critical essays about poetry; extensive links to relevant websites; curriculum units and lesson plans; biographies of hundreds of poets; and nearly 2,000 poems.

Spotted in *PEN Weekly NewsBlast*, March 23, 2006

*c. After-school math kits* – The Southwest Educational Development Lab (SEDL) has designed a series of math kits for use in after-school programs. Toolkits include videos of lesson plans and math games in action. Check them out at: <http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/math/index.html>

Spotted in *PEN Weekly NewsBlast*, March 23, 2006

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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.marshall8@verizon.net](mailto: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 36 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 scores of 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 (with occasional breaks; there were 50 issues in 2004-05).

## ***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:

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- Focus topics
- Headlines for all issues
- What readers say
- About Kim Marshall (including links to articles)
- A free sample issue

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- 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 SmartBrief  
Atlantic Monthly  
Boston Globe  
CommonWealth Magazine  
District Administration  
Ed. Magazine  
EDge  
Education Digest  
Education Gadfly  
Education Next  
Education Update  
Education Week  
Educational Leadership  
Educational Researcher  
Edutopia  
Elementary School Journal  
Harvard Business Review  
Harvard Education Letter  
Harvard Educational Review  
JESPAR  
Jimmy Kilpatrick  
Journal of Staff Development  
Language Learner  
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  
Teacher Magazine  
Teachers College Record  
Theory Into Practice