Marshall Memo 426

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
March 5, 2012

In This Issue:

Quotes of the Week

"Some people talk in their sleep. Lecturers talk while *other* people sleep."
Albert Camus (quoted in item #1)

"The person who learns most in any classroom is the teacher."
Eric Mazur (*ibid*.)

"The publication of the teacher data reports is a defining moment. A line has been drawn between those who say, 'Even bad data is better than no data' and those who say, 'Have you no shame?'"
Michael Winerip in "A Way to Rate Teachers, with Flaws" in *The New York Times*, Feb. 29, 2012, http://nyti.ms/wZWNoT

"While there's a time and place for collaborative leadership, trying to lead by consensus while the ship is sinking is not good leadership."
Les Stein (see item #2)

"The only thing I want from you is the opportunity to teach."
A teacher to the principal of a turnaround school (*ibid*.)

"Digital content is public and permanent."
Richard Guerry in "Building a Digital Consciousness" in *NJEA Review*, Nov. 2011 (Vol. 85, #3, p. 14-16) http://bit.ly/Atynce, spotted in *Education Digest*, March 2012

1. Is Lecturing a Dying Instructional Method?

In this thoughtful *Harvard Magazine* article, Craig Lambert describes how Harvard professor Eric Mazur, who had been teaching a popular introductory physics for seven years, found out that his success as a teacher was "a complete illusion, a house of cards." In 1990, he gave his 150 students a simple test to check their understanding of one of the most basic concepts in physics – force – and only a third of them passed. "After a semester of physics," he says, "they still held the same misconceptions as they had at the beginning of the term." They could recite Newton's Third Law and apply it to numerical problems, but when asked about the forces at work when a heavy truck collides with a light car, they mistakenly said that the truck exerts a larger force.

Mazur flailed around for an explanation: "Maybe I have dumb students in my class. There's something wrong with the test – it's a trick test!" But in the end he had to face up to the fact that although he had been delivering polished lectures and doing artful demonstrations and getting excellent course evaluations every year, his students weren't learning the most important things he was supposedly teaching.

Mazur went over the conceptual test with his students, trying twice to explain the basic physics principles. No success. Students remained obstinately confused. "Then I did something I had never done in my teaching career," he recalls. "I said, 'Why don't you discuss it with each other?' It was complete chaos, but within three minutes, they had figured it out. That was very surprising to me – I had just spent *10 minutes* trying to explain this. But the class said, 'OK, we've got it, let's move on.'"

The magic he had witnessed was *peer instruction* – those who understood the principles did an excellent job explaining it to their clueless peers. Why were some students so much better at explaining than him? "You're a student," he says, "and you've only recently learned this, so you still know where you got hung up, because it's not that long ago that *you* were hung up on that very same thing. Whereas Professor Mazur got hung up on this point when he was 17, and he no longer remembers how difficult it was back then. He has lost the ability to understand what a beginning learner faces."

The key to learning, concluded Mazur, is being an active explainer rather than passive sponge. "The person who learns most in any classroom is the teacher. From cognitive science, we hear that learning is a process of moving information from short-term to long-term memory; assessment research has proven that active learning does that best." The key is taking

new information and applying it to real situations, connecting it with personal experiences, projects, and goals, taking personal ownership of it.

As Mazur began to rethink his lecture-centered approach, he realized that instruction is a two-step process: first, new information is transferred from teacher to learner; second, the learner makes sense of and assimilates the information. "In the standard approach," he says, "the emphasis in class is on the first, and the second is left to the student on his or her own, outside the classroom. If you think of this rationally, you have to flip that, and put the first one outside the classroom, and the second inside. So I began to ask my students to read my lecture notes before class, and then tell me what questions they have, and when we meet, we discuss those questions."

Mazur projects these questions onto the screen and students respond with clickers. If 30-70 percent of students don't answer correctly, he has them find a person sitting nearby who got a different answer and argue about it. After 2-3 minutes, Mazur re-polls the question, and almost invariably, the number of correct answers improves dramatically. Students are solving problems they don't fully understand, which is just what Mazur wants. "Let's turn our students into *real* problem solvers," he says. "In a real-world problem, you know where you want to get, but you don't know how to get there… Most tests and exams at Harvard are not like that; they are questions where you need to determine what the *answer* is… It's the opposite of a real-life problem, because you know the prescription, but you don't know the answer."

Mazur's students sometimes complain that his tests ask them to solve problems they've never encountered before. He tells them, "If you *had* done a problem of this kind, then by definition, this would not be a problem" – which definitely takes students outside their comfort zone. "It's not easy," he says. "You get a lot of student resistance. You should see some of the vitriolic e-mails I get. The generic compliant is that they have to do all the learning themselves. Rather than lecturing, I'm making them prepare themselves for class – and in class, rather than telling them things, I'm asking them questions. They'd much rather sit there and listen and take notes. Some say, 'I didn't pay $47,000 to learn it all from the textbook. I think you should go over the material from the book, point by point, in class.' Not realizing that they learn precious little by that, and they should actually be offended if I did that, because it's an insult to their intelligence – then, I'm essentially reading the book to them."

Mazur says the architecture of college lecture halls also works against peer learning. He believes elementary classrooms, with four students sitting at desks facing each other, are far better set up – as long as the teacher assigns a well-thought-out group activity. "That's how we learn," he says. "For some reason we unlearn how to learn as we progress from elementary school through middle school and high school."

Mazur is not a fan of student course evaluations; he considers them popularity contests and thinks they should be abolished. "There is zero correlation between course evaluations and the amount learned," he says. "Award-winning teachers with the highest evaluations can produce the same results as teachers who are getting fired." What matters is how much students are learning, and that's not picked up in student surveys.

Mazur has become something of a Johnny Appleseed for interactive instruction, giving almost 100 talks around the world each year and influencing untold numbers of instructors to change their approach. When he speaks about pedagogy, he asks listeners to think about something they're really good at and reflect on *how* they attained a high level of proficiency. About 60 percent of people say it was because they practiced a lot. Strikingly, nobody mentions lectures. Mazur likes to quote Camus – "Some people talk in their sleep. Lecturers talk while *other* people sleep." – and he's on a campaign to get teachers to stop lecturing. "The danger with lucid lectures – of which we have so many on this campus, with so many brilliant people – is that they create the illusion of teaching for teachers, and the illusion of learning for learners. Sitting passively and taking notes is just not a way of learning. Yet lectures are 99 percent of how we teach!"

Education is more than just the transfer of information, he concludes. If that were all there is to it, web-based instruction could do the job – sites like Khan Academy. "They have 65 million users," says Mazur; "it's a force to be reckoned with. But ultimately, learning is a *social* experience. Harvard is Harvard not because of the buildings, not because of the professors, but because of the students interacting with one another."

Terry Aladjem of Harvard's Bok Center concurs: "The live classroom is still the best medium for a student to truly be known as an intellectual being and to engage with other such beings. You learn from your peers in all walks of life. Students have always hidden in their rooms; social media can keep them in their rooms longer." The way to coax them out of their rooms and into each other's minds is to make classroom learning a social experience.

Over the last 20 years, Mazur has gathered extensive data on this "flipped", interactive approach. Among the findings:

- Students' conceptual understanding of physics is three times better;
- Students' long-term retention of factual knowledge has improved significantly. "In a traditional physics course," says Mazur, "two months after taking the final exam, people are back to where they were before taking the course. It's shocking."
- The achievement gap between male and female students closes.
- Students in interactive courses are much less likely to transfer out of science, technology, engineering, and math concentrations.

"Twilight of the Lecture" by Craig Lambert in *Harvard Magazine*, March/April 2012 (Vol. 114, #4, p. 23-27), http://harvardmagazine.com/2012/03/twilight-of-the-lecture; Mazur's book on this subject is *Peer Instruction*, which is summarized in Marshall Memo 241.

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2. Two Phases in Turning Around a Failing School

In this *Kappan* article, Meredith College (NC) professor and three-time turnaround leader Les Stein says, "most failing schools are the product of poor leadership and improper management – nothing more, nothing less." He believes that highly qualified and motivated teams of educators can turn around a failing school in 3-5 years – if they are led by top-notch

principals, are focused on student achievement, are willing to work hard, and refuse to accept failure as an option.

Stein, a former Marine Corps colonel, describes the "complete and utter breakdown in instructional and organizational leadership" in the three failing charter schools he's worked with. This included:

- No clear direction from school leaders;
- Demoralized teachers and staff forming cliques that discouraged good performance;
- Students apathetic toward learning and sinking to teachers' low expectations;
- Gossip as the primary form of communication;
- Parents complaining and no one offering to help;
- Little focus on teaching and learning.

Some teachers, hungry for strong and creative leadership, pulled Stein aside and said, "The only thing I want from you is the opportunity to teach."

"While there's a time and place for collaborative leadership," Stein continues, "trying to lead by consensus while the ship is sinking is not good leadership… When a school is in trouble, teachers are perfectly content to let the principal take full responsibility for almost every operational and instructional aspect of the school… Teachers want a leader who is not afraid to make the difficult decisions and, if necessary, terminate the employment of nonperformers."

Likening school turnarounds to a hospital emergency room, Stein says there are two stages: stopping the bleeding and rehabilitation that prepares for full recovery.

• *Stage 1: Immediate actions to bring the situation under control* – In struggling schools, there are five steps:

- *Take charge immediately*. The leader needs to assert authority and let everyone know his or her non-negotiable expectations for discipline and instruction. "Collaborative leadership comes later," say Stein, "when you have the luxury of time."
- *Create a sense of urgency*. Every minute counts, absenteeism needs to be addressed immediately, and mediocrity won't be tolerated. Lessons need to be planned, along with follow-up corrective action. Everyone should be able to answer the question, *Why am I here, and how will I make these students successful?*
- *Lead by walking around*. The principal needs to visit every classroom every day, reassuring staff that the principal is highly involved and getting a bird's-eye view of instruction. "The staff must view the principal as a confident, self-assured leader who supports them," says Stein. "Additionally, unannounced visits make teachers far more likely to use instructional time wisely."
- *Remove low performers*. "My experiences show that poor performing teachers have low expectations of their students, are uncomfortable teaching students who are below grade level, have preconceived prejudices about students' ability levels, and don't have the necessary energy to lead their students," says Stein. "Poor performers also feed the rumor mill, have an agenda that's not aligned with the school's mission and vision, and

aren't open to change. A school leader should waste no time in removing low performers."

- *Communicate clearly and often*. Weekly staff meetings and separate meetings with team leaders are essential to counteract the culture of gossip, rumors, and fear, says Stein. "A good leader will send encouraging, positive e-mails or memos to staff every school day," he says. Staff meetings must openly discuss the reasons the school is in trouble, the plan to change things for the better, and small successes when they occur.

• *Stage 2: Preparing for full recovery* – "Getting to the rehabilitation stage doesn't mean the school is out of the woods," says Stein. There are several steps:

- *Create a strategic plan*. A plan may have existed, but it was probably created in isolation and didn't have buy-in from the staff. Now, planning should be collaborative to keep the leader grounded in reality and send the message that everyone is responsible for the school's future.
- *Learn how to use data for decision making*. This means picking a good interim assessment program, making sure teachers get student learning data promptly, and training them how to use student learning results to continuously improve instruction.
- *Accelerate professional development in priority areas*. "Teachers are the best source of information on how to prioritize training that will help improve instruction," says Stein. Instructional teams should identify their training priorities and get support.
- *Focus on core competencies*. As soon as the bleeding has been stopped, he says, administrators and teachers "must quickly raise the achievement bar for reading, math, and science."

"The Art of Saving a Failing School" by Les Stein in *Phi Delta Kappan*, February 2012 (Vol. 93, #5, p. 51-55), http://www.kappanmagazine.org; Stein can be reached at lmarine@bellsouth.net.

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3. What Neuroscience and Psychology Say About "Brain-Based Learning"

(Originally titled "What Neuroscience Says About Personalized Learning")

In this helpful *Educational Leadership* article, Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa (a professor at Universidad San Francisco de Quito in Ecuador) sorts the insights of "mind, brain, and education science" into four categories according to how much solid evidence there is from neuroscience, psychology, and education:

• *Well-established* – (a) Plasticity, or the ability of the brain to make new connections in response to damage or learning experiences; (b) the uniqueness of each brain; and (c) that all new learning passes through the filter of past experience. "Grasping these concepts helps teachers understand why authentic learning experiences that are relevant to a learner's own life help facilitate learning," says Tokuhama-Espinosa.

• *Probably true* – (a) Sleep is important to memory consolidation and attention, but the amount of sleep needed varies from person to person; (b) people judge each other's faces and tones of voice almost immediately and without conscious thought (for example, students can

discern a teacher's low self-efficacy or a teacher's negative opinion of their ability); watching themselves on videotape is the best way for teachers to get a handle on how they are coming across to students; and (c) the human brain notices and responds to novelty in the environment – unexpected movements, sounds, or variations in expected patterns; teachers can take advantage of this by introducing variety in methods and materials.

• *Intelligent speculation* – Insights in this category seem obvious at first, but lack supporting evidence: (a) Enriched environments are good for learning – but an environment is enriched only in comparison to others, and each child comes from a different home environment; (b) boys' and girls' brains are different – actually male/female brains are more than 99 percent alike, with only four physiological differences, none of which has been linked to behavioral differences; "Neuroscience indicates there is greater variation among female brains (or among male brains) than there is between male and female brains," says Tokuhama-Espinosa; "therefore, teachers are better off differentiating instruction according to the particular strengths and needs of the entire class population than differentiating by gender."

• *Neuromyths* – These are dangerous overgeneralizations based on little or no research: (a) That we use only 10 percent of our brain; (b) that there are critical periods of life when certain subjects must be taught and learned – both are baloney, says Tokuhama-Espinosa; and (c) that there are differences between the "right brain" and the "left brain"; "People have only one brain," she says, "which works in a highly complex way that can't be simplified into statements on 'localizationism'."

"I believe teachers and doctors should share the same first rule," concludes Tokuhama-Espinosa: "Do no harm."

"What Neuroscience Says About Personalized Learning" by Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa in *Educational Leadership*, February 2012 (Vol. 69, #5), http://www.ascd.org (online only)

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4. Personalization 3.0 – Using Technology with a Human Connection

In this *Education Week* article, California foundation executive Susan Sandler worries that these days, "personalization" in schools is mostly about data and customization, competency-based strategies, online learning, and credit recovery. "[T]there is more to high-quality learning than creating the equivalent of a perfect iPod playlist," she says. Sandler proposes blending the best of what she calls Personalization 2.0 with Personalization 1.0 (each student being personally known at school and having strong relationships with the adults and students around them) into Personalization 3.0 – using technology to enhance the relationships between students and adults in school, not replace them. "We can have the best of both worlds," she says. "We just need to choose to do so."

The need for a hybrid approach became clear to Sandler as she interviewed at-risk San Francisco middle-school students who had successfully turned themselves around. "In each case, without exception, the significant upward turn in the students' school performance could be traced to an adult in the school who had gone out of his or her way to interact with students in a sustained, authentic and personal way," says Sandler. "This human-to-human interaction –

being pulled aside for private conversations or student-specific encouragement – steadily convinced each student that school wasn't a faceless bureaucracy, but a place where at least one person cared about them and was working to help them. Each student responded by making dramatic positive changes…"

What would Personalization 3.0 look like in a school? Sandler imagines these possibilities:

• Data about students would be used to deepen their in-person relationships – "teachers would start conversations with students several steps ahead, having already gathered basic information about them."

• Learning would be structured to enable students to pursue individual learning journeys while maintaining a "home base" community of peers and at least one caring adult who knows them well. "Structures inside and outside of school would attend to the relational flow of each student's day and week," says Sandler.

• Students would have more opportunities to belong to communities, in person and through social networking tools.

• Software would be developed to capture information from student-teacher relationships, and teachers would be trained to use it well.

• Standards and curriculum materials would be focused "so that teachers don't rush across a wide expanse of shallow content to the exclusion of deeper learning and authentic connection with students," says Sandler.

If this is done right, schools can use scarce resources more efficiently and effectively, she says: "Educators are our most valuable and expensive resource; when they offload tasks that technology can handle, they can focus on the high-touch work where they make the greatest impact."

"People vs. 'Personalization': Retaining the Human Element in the High-Tech Era of Education" by Susan Sandler in *Education Week*, Feb. 29, 2012 (Vol. 31, #22, p. 20, 22), http://www.edweek.org.

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5. Helping People Get Better at Walking in Others' Shoes

In this *Teachers College Record* article, Harvard researchers Hunter Gehlbach, Maureen Brinkworth, and Ming-Te Wang start off with a quote from an Elvis Presley song – "If I could be you, if you could be me… Walk a mile in my shoes/Just walk a mile in my shoes…" Now *that's* something we don't see too often in academic journals! "As Elvis observed," say the authors, "people often wish to get inside the heads of others as a means to better understand their point of view. Perhaps even more frequently, individuals wish that others could better see and understand the world from their perspective. Yet, people are often frustrated that others never seem to even attempt 'walking a mile in their shoes.'"

For school administrators, teachers, counselors, and students, social perspective taking (jargon for walking in another's shoes) is a vital skill for living and working in a global society in which we rub shoulders with people quite different from ourselves. Gehlbach, Brinkworth,

and Wang define social perspective taking as the *motivation* and *ability* to discern the thoughts, feelings, and motivations of others – being willing to try and having the skills to succeed. Researchers have found strong correlations between social perspective taking and a number of important school outcomes: better communication skills, less stereotyping of others, better negotiation and problem-solving skills, being less aggressive when provoked, great social self-efficacy, healthier attachments to others, increased altruistic behavior, and higher grades.

Researchers are just beginning to explore how to motivate people to get better at social perspective taking, and, once they're motivated, how to train them in the specific skills involved. Gehlbach, Brinkworth, and Wang acknowledge that it's difficult to change people's personalities, but their study explored conditions under which people might be motivated to engage in and get better at social perspective taking. "In other words," they say, "whereas getting a highly egocentric adolescent or a 'my-way-or-the-highway' school administrator to change his or her personality seems destined for failure, assigning him or her roles to engage in social perspective taking in certain situations may well change his or her approach in different interactions."

In their study, the authors found there were multiple pathways to get people to engage in social perspective taking. Seven factors were at the top of the list:

- A high-stakes situation – For example, helping protect oneself or others;
- Pro-social goals – There's a relationship reason to help another person;
- Desire to know more – Wanting to better understand the situation and/or reduce one's own uncertainty;
- Relationship goals – Wanting to initiate, maintain, or repair a relationship;
- Social influence – Wanting to get another person to cooperate or comply;
- Intrinsic interest – Being curious and/or needing to understand others;
- Desire for self-knowledge – Wanting to understand more about oneself or how one's actions are interpreted by others.

There were three factors that could foster or inhibit social perspective taking, depending on the situation:

- Emotional regulation – Wanting to regulate one's own emotions or the motivations of others;
- Identity – Wanting to fulfill a temporary role (e.g., advising a friend) or a more permanent identity (e.g., caring parent);
- Familiarity – Knowing another person well (familiarity can breed contempt).

And there were three factors that inhibited motivation to engage in social perspective taking:

- Lack of energy;
- Hubris – Being convinced that one's point of view is correct;
- Cognitive load – Too much on one's mind to engage in social perspective taking.

How does this apply to the real world of schools? Imagine a teacher who doesn't think it's her job to try to discern the thoughts and feelings of her students. *That's the school counselor's job*, she says. Gehlbach, Brinkworth, and Wang believe there are ways to motivate this teacher

to engage in social perspective taking: for starters, the principal might encourage her to see this as a way to improve her students' learning.

Or imagine students who have fixed views on a subject being asked to argue that point of view and then being asked to work with a team arguing the opposite view.

The authors' biggest take-away from the study is that there are multiple pathways to getting adults and students to engage in social perspective taking, and the best strategy is to use more than one in hopes of hitting the sweet spot with a number of different people.

"The Social Perspective Taking Process: What Motivates Individuals to Take Another's Perspective?" by Hunter Gehlbach, Maureen Brinkworth, and Ming-Te Wang in *Teachers College Record*, January 2012 (Vol. 114, # 1, p. 1-29),

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6. Inclusion in a Boston Elementary School

In this *Harvard Education Letter* interview by Patti Hartigan, former Boston principal Bill Henderson talks about his school's groundbreaking work integrating students with disabilities, starting with kindergarten and working up through the grades. During his 20 years leading this very popular school, only 1-2 percent of students needed outside placements. Henderson points to three keys to making inclusion work:

• *Instruction* – He distinguishes between "an inclusion experience" (e.g., students with disabilities joining other students for a weekly swim class) and "inclusive education", where all students are together most of the day. "It has to do with frequency," he says, "and the main issue is quality. All students learn together and at high academic standards, and they participate meaningfully in a range of activities, including recess and afterschool activities as well as academics." Teachers use universal design as they plan units, building in specialized instruction, accommodations, and modifications to get the general curriculum across to all students. Technology and the arts are a big part of the curriculum.

• *Culture* – "You are looking at every student as an individual," says Henderson. "You focus on their strengths and figure out how they can contribute. You welcome every child with a lot of enthusiasm and make them feel comfortable taking risks, which is hard for kids who struggle. You have to challenge them to achieve at the highest levels. Not working hard is not acceptable." Discipline consequences are given to all students. A peer tutoring program has almost all students giving up one recess period a week to help each other out in a variety of contexts.

• *Collaboration* – This includes teachers working in teams, working with universities and outside supporters, and parents reading to their children, visiting the school, and serving on leadership councils. "You really have to hustle," says Henderson. "People have to sublimate their personalities and focus on what is best for the kids." Most of the teacher training at the school took place on the fly. "You have your commitment and your general background and skills, but once you're in a situation, you have to figure out how to make it work with the specific kids."

"Collaborating to Make Schools More Inclusive", an interview with Bill Henderson by Patti Hartigan in *Harvard Education Letter*, March/April 2012 (Vol. 28, #2, p. 4-6), http://www.edletter.org; Henderson's book is *The Blind Advantage: How Going Blind Made Me a Stronger Principal and How Including Children with Disabilities Made Our School Better for Everyone* (Harvard Education Press, 2011)

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7. More on Releasing Teacher Test-Score Data

In this *Education Gadfly* article, Kathleen Porter-Magee has this to say about the release of teachers' value-added data in New York City: "Before we go further down the teacher evaluation path, now is a good time for education reformers to pause and ask themselves whether this kind of top-down effort is really what will lead our schools to excellence. The question is not *whether* student achievement data should be used as one of several measures of teacher effectiveness, but rather *how* those data should be used and who is ultimately in the driver's seat."

Porter-Magee's argument is that (a) no profession has a perfect measure of effectiveness, (b) teachers should definitely be accountable for the progress students make under their watch, but (c) principals should be the ones making decisions about teachers' effectiveness, not a statistic calculated outside the school.

"By creating a system that, by labeling teachers for them, essentially tells principals which teachers should be kept and which should go, we are absolving principals of responsibility for evaluating their own teachers," says Porter-Magee. "And we're allowing them to escape responsibility for the role they play in ensuring school-level student achievement and growth.

"The accountability formula should be pretty simple: hold principals accountable for the results of their schools. Give them the tools (including access to teacher-level achievement data), resources, and autonomy they need to make staffing decisions and to set the school culture. In other words, we need to stop trying to… principal-proof our schools."

"You Can't Principal-Proof a School" by Kathleen Porter-Magee in *The Education Gadfly*, Mar. 1, 2012 (Vol. 12, #9), http://bit.ly/xPRRED

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8. Robert Marzano Suggests Three Commitments to Students

In this *District Administration* article, Alan Dessoff reports on the three critical commitments that author/researcher Robert Marzano believes administrators must make:

• *Developing a system of individual student feedback* – This means identifying specific learning and behavioral goals for individual students, developing a common scale or rubric for each goal, and assessing each student's progress toward each goal at least every two weeks. Ideally students know their goals and continuously monitor their own progress.

• *Ensuring effective teaching in every classroom* – This means evaluating teachers and principals based on "how they make changes in classroom practices directly related to student

achievement," says Marzano. Ideally teachers focus on two or three strategies or skills they want to improve each year and administrators give them thoughtful feedback on how they are doing. This is different from the checklist approach to classroom supervision, which Marzano says is "a game."

• *Building students' background knowledge* – What students know about the world varies widely depending on family background, travel, and other experiences, says Marzano. To level the playing field, he believes schools should identify 30 math, language arts, science, and social studies words or terms for each grade K-8 and systematically teach them.

"Robert J. Marzano Says It Starts with Students and Teachers in Classrooms" by Alan Dessoff in *District Administration*, March 2012 (Vol. 48, #3, p. 78-84), http://www.DistrictAdministration.com.

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9. How to Get Commands Obeyed in the Classroom

In this *NYC Educator* article, "Miss Eyre" describes how she, a "young, petite, and female" teacher, learned to give commands to significantly larger high-school students (she credits Jim Fay's book, *Teaching with Love and Logic*). "One of the most powerful constructions of phrase I have as a management tool is 'I need you to…please.' … Notice that it's not a request – it's a very clear, polite command. Lisa Delpit and others have written about how young people from cultures in which it is more common to command children hear questions about behavior as actual questions to which a negative response is acceptable." For example, when asked, "Could you please put that phone away?" a student might very well respond, "No."

"'I need you to put that phone away, please,' however, sends several important messages," Eyre believes:

- It's clearly a command.
- The first three words convey that it's given for a reason.
- The reason is that the phone is interfering with the mission of the class.
- The "please" tells the student that you haven't forgotten your manners and are treating him or her with respect.
- It sounds like a reasonable request.
- But it doesn't leave a lot of room for argument or complaint.

"They may make a face," says Eyre, or mumble 'Damn, miss, you beastin'' under their breath while they do it, but they'll do it. And the other 29 kids in the room will notice."

The final step is to say, "Thank you." "It's my version of 'case closed,'" says Eyre. "We're finished dealing with this issue and I trust that it won't come up again. Moving on."

"I Need You to Put That Phone Away Now, Please" by Miss Eyre in *NYC Educator*, March 1, 2012, http://nyceducator.com/2012/03/i-need-you-to-put-that-phone-away-now.html

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10. Websites:

a. Videos of students talking about motivation – This *Kappan* article by Ben Levin recommends the work of Cathleen Cushman, author of *Fires in the Mind: What Kids Can Tell Us About Motivation and Mastery* (Jossey-Bass, 2010), and this website, in which students talk about the things that absorb them: http://firesinthemind.org.

"Failing Students Is a (Financial) Loser" by Ben Levin in *Phi Delta Kappan*, February 2012 (Vol. 93, #5, p. 72-73)

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b. STEM resources – In this *Education Update* feature, Willona Sloan recommends websites that support science, technology, engineering, and math education:

- American Association for the Advancement of Science: http://sciencenetlinks.com
- Discovery Education: http://www.discoveryeducation.com/teachers
- Federal Resources for Educational Excellence: http://free.ed.gov
- HippoCampus: http://www.hippocampus.org
- Intel's Design and Discovery Curriculum: http://educate.intel.com/en/designdiscovery
- nanoHUB.org: http://nanohub.org
- PBS Teachers STEM Resource Center: http://www.pbs.org/teachers/stem
- NASA's Planet Quest Exoplanet Exploration: http://planetquest.jpl.nasa.gov

"Teaching and Learning Resources for STEM Education" by Willona Sloan in *Education Update*, February 2012 (Vol. 54, #2, p. 2-3)

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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

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 41 years' experience as a teacher, principal, central office administrator, and writer, lightens the load of busy educators by serving as their "designated reader."

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

Subscriptions:

Individual subscriptions are $50 for the school year. Rates decline steeply for multiple readers within the same organization. See the website for these rates and information on paying by check or credit card.

Website:

If you go to http://www.marshallmemo.com you will find detailed information on:

- How to subscribe or renew
- A detailed rationale for the Marshall Memo
- Publications (with a count of articles from each)
- Article selection criteria
- Topics (with a count of articles from each)
- Headlines for all issues
- What readers say
- About Kim Marshall (including links to articles)
- A free sample issue

Marshall Memo subscribers have access to the Members' Area of the website, which has:

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

Publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educator
American Journal of Education
American School Board Journal
ASCD, CEC SmartBriefs, Daily EdNews
Better Evidence-Based Education
Ed. Magazine
EDge
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher (TESOL)
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
JESPAR
Journal of Staff Development
Kappa Delta Pi Record
Language Learner (NABE)
Middle Ground
Middle School Journal
New York Times
Newsweek
PEN Weekly NewsBlast
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal
Principal Leadership
Principal's Research Review
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
Teachers College Record
Teaching Children Mathematics
The Atlantic Monthly
The Chronicle of Higher Education
The Language Educator
The New Yorker
The Reading Teacher
The School Administrator
Theory Into Practice