Marshall Memo 330

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
April 5, 2010

In This Issue:

1. Student engagement is the key
2. An Ohio high school revamps its schedule
3. A Colorado high school tries something completely different
4. Culturally relevant pedagogy: combating the myths
5. Conditions for successful professional learning communities
6. What principals should do when students write about violence
7. Twelve ways to get information to stick in students' brains
8. David Elkind comments on recess coaches

Quotes of the Week

"Principals face endless challenges every day. The overall success of their schools is predicated in large part on the decisions that principals make to address those challenges, which include budgetary issues, facility issues, behavioral issues, and personnel issues. But academic achievement lies at the core of everything that principals do. If unsound academic decisions are made, everything else is for naught."

Baruti Kafele in *Principal Leadership*, March 2010 (Vol. 10, #7, p. 76)

"I think the principal should have a better relationship with students instead of hiding out in her office all day."

A student surveyed by HSSSE (see item #1)

"[I]f the only time that staff members have to plan is after school when they are tired, tired planning occurs."

Scott Stewart (see item #2)

"I believe that many diverse students fail in schools not because their teachers don't know their content, but because their teachers haven't made the connections between the content and their students' existing mental schemes, prior knowledge and cultural perspectives."

Jacqueline Jordan Irvine (see item #4)

"If new information does not connect or relate to existing knowledge, the brain will not accept it."

Bill Page (see item #7)

"We have to adapt to childhood as it is today, not as we knew it or would like it to be."

David Elkind (see item #8)

1. Student Engagement Is the Key

In this *Principal Leadership* article, Indiana University researcher Ethan Yazzie-Mintz zeroes in on the issue of student engagement – in particular, the disparity between students' and grown-ups' perceptions. "Adults in schools often express confidence that they already know what their students think and that they understand their students' experience in school," says Yazzie-Mintz. "As a result, many doubt or demean students' negative comments about their experiences. Students, on the other hand, regularly assert that adults, for the most part, do not understand their experiences or perspectives and, worse, don't care."

In fact, a High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE) in 2009 (available at http://ceep.indiana.edu/hssse) showed that students have the following beliefs about their school and its leadership:

- Adults in the school care more about its public image than about its students.
- Adults don't respect students.
- Adults say one thing and do another, particularly when students are involved.
- Students' thoughts and feelings don't matter.

In the survey, students said they were bored in school because the material wasn't interesting (81%), it wasn't relevant (42%), and they had no interaction with teachers (35%). One fifth of students said they had considered dropping out of school, 50% of them because they didn't like the school, 42% because they didn't see the value of the work they were being asked to do, and 39% because they didn't like their teachers. "Bridging the gulf between students and adults is a great challenge for school leaders," says Yazzie-Mintz, "but it is key to strengthening both student engagement and the connection between students and schools."

Student engagement stems from the school's culture, says Yazzie-Mintz. He suggests five principles for creating a culture of engagement:

• *Know what students think*. This is often different from what adults believe students think. One example is technology, which many adults assume is the way to engage students. In fact, many students think that adults bring in technology to make the school look good to outsiders. "Technology by itself doesn't engage students," says Yazzie-Mintz. In fact, it can have a disengaging effect. "Talking to students, surveying students, and creating focus groups can help schools avoid the mismatch between the perceptions of adults and the perceptions of students."

• *Believe what students say and care about what they think*. Many students who respond to surveys say that adults aren't truly concerned about what students say. "Students

look for clues as to whether the adults are taking them seriously," says Yazzie-Mintz. "Schools that take students seriously will get more serious students and will find themselves moving toward greater engagement."

• *Set a clear purpose and ensure it is enacted by everybody in the school community*. "If the words and mission aren't matched by structures and actions," says Yazzie-Mintz, "the first ones to notice will be the students, who are likely to disengage."

• *Create structures and processes that meet the learning needs of students*. This means involving students in the decision-making process and continually tweaking structures to meet students' needs. An example of this not happening is that lecturing continues to be the most common classroom strategy in high schools despite the fact that 74% of students prefer other methods.

• *Engage all students deeply and equally*. The engagement gap mirrors the achievement gap, says Yazzie-Mintz. "Students reported differential levels of engagement by gender, race and ethnicity, academic track, eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch, and length of time in school," he says, citing HSSSE data. "A common theme is favoritism. Students are more likely to disengage when they perceive unequal treatment or unequal engagement." One student said, "I think the principal should have a better relationship with students instead of hiding out in her office all day."

Lots of work is being done to align content to standards and assessments to subject matter, concludes Yazzie-Mintz. "Ultimately," he concludes, "the connection between students and schools is strengthened by aligning what school leaders say with what they do."

"Leading for Engagement" by Ethan Yazzie-Mintz in *Principal Leadership*, March 2010 (Vol. 10, #7, p. 54-58); the author is at emintz@indiana.edu; here is a brief YouTube clip of Yazzie-Mintz presenting his main idea: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inV530vTObA

Back to page one

2. An Ohio High School Revamps Its Schedule

In this *Principal Leadership* article, Ohio high-school principal Scott Stewart lists the conclusions he and his staff reached after conducting a needs assessment in 1999:

- More time was needed for professional collaboration.
- More time was needed for student intervention.
- More time was needed to address character development and strengthen teacher-student relationships.

But where would the time come from? Stewart comments wryly, "if the only time that staff members have to plan is after school when they are tired, tired planning occurs. Staff members may try sincerely to find extra time to show an interest in their students, but the importance of those efforts is often dismissed when staff members are required to spend time after school. When students struggle and teachers have little time to intervene, valuable learning is sacrificed. When students have hidden talents and their personal interests are unknown to staff members, they are more likely to blend into the background and become isolated, especially

those who are naturally shy. When time is too tightly scheduled, administrators may decide against holding important events because they may disrupt teachers' plans."

Staff members visited a number of other schools and got insights that helped them create a hybrid schedule that has lasted well, even as their school has almost tripled in size. Here are the main features:

• A 90-minute period every Wednesday morning, before students arrive, for professional development, outside speakers, and all-staff, department, and grade-level meetings; "Changing the schedule to give teachers a block of time to collaborate before putting in a full day of teaching has improved their professional growth," says Stewart, "and the effects are felt throughout the school environment."

• An "Eagle Period" right after the Wednesday morning staff time for class meetings, pep rallies, clubs, assemblies, and guest speakers; because Eagle Period is its own block, these activities never interrupt instruction.

• First period every morning is an enhanced homeroom time during which students can prepare for the day, finish homework, and confer with teachers;

• The school decided that neither traditional nor block scheduling met its needs, so it compromised on a combination of 50-minute and 90-minute periods, allowing teachers to plan different types of lessons during each week. After a year with Tuesday/Wednesday 90-minute periods, the school settled on Wednesday/Thursday, with traditional 50-minute classes on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday. PD and support was offered to teachers who were having difficulty making the transition to 90-minute classes.

"Making Time for What Really Matters" by Scott Stewart in *Principal Leadership*, March 2010 (Vol. 10, #7, p. 48-52) http://www.principals.org/Content/158/pl_mar10_stewart.pdf

Back to page one

3. A Colorado High School Tries Something Completely Different

In this intriguing *Principal Leadership* article, principal Alex Carter describes how he and his colleagues tackled what they believed was an increasingly irrelevant curriculum in their rural 174-student high school. Although scores on state tests and college boards were quite good, students saw little connection between the curriculum and their futures, lacked motivation, and didn't display much enthusiasm for learning.

The staff concluded that drastic changes were needed to prepare students for a successful life. In a series of meetings in the fall of 2007, the following goals emerged for students:

- Developing 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, agility and adaptability, initiative, curiosity and imagination, and accessing and analyzing information;
- Engaging in rigorous and relevant activities through hands-on, experiential learning;
- Being actively involved in the creation, design, planning, and evaluation of their learning;
- Enriching their school experience by studying high-interest topics and fields;

- Taking ownership of their educational programs.

There was plenty of push-back from colleagues and community members (*Why fix what isn't broken? How will we learn new teaching skills? Where will the time come from?*), and what emerged over the winter was the following idea: the high school would remain 90 percent traditional, but three times a year, the normal curriculum would stop for one or two weeks for Intensive Study Periods. During the ISPs, students and teachers would immerse themselves in an intensive study of a particular topic using very different classroom methods. These were the core beliefs behind the ISP program:

- The curriculum and evaluation rubrics would be planned and developed by students and teachers and focus on answering a "fertile question."
- ISP subject matter would be of high interest to students.
- Each ISP would involve hands-on, experiential learning.
- Students would be required to exhibit their work.

In the spring of 2008, students helped select the ISP topics for the coming school year. They included southwestern anthropology and archaeology, the art and science of cuisine, wilderness survival, engineering and design, snow and ice science, dramatic arts, and a rock band. From June through August, teachers planned their first round of ISPs with the support of externally funded professional time. After some additional planning and fine-tuning in September, including drafting outcome goals and an evaluation rubric, the first ISP took place in October of 2008.

How did it all go? Anonymous during-the-year surveys showed very positive reactions from students and teachers to the ISPs, including strong agreement that 21st-century skills were being learned; attendance improved during ISPs and "regular" time; overall school satisfaction improved; and (much to the relief of the staff) state test scores rose in seven of the eight reporting categories compared to the previous year.

"All in all," says Carter, "the journey we've begun has been rewarding and successful. Students have become more motivated and focused both during the ISPs and in their regular classes, and we've experienced no major implementation dip because of the time taken from regular classes. The students are more invested in school; look forward to the ISPs; and best of all, are being prepared for their futures."

"Finding Time for the Future" by Alex Carter in *Principal Leadership*, March 2010 (Vol. 10, #7, p. 34-38); Carter can be reached at acarter@telluride.k12.co.us.

Back to page one

4. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Combating the Myths

In this thoughtful article in *Teaching Tolerance* (featured in condensed form in *Education Digest*), Emory University professor Jacqueline Jordan Irvine describes six common myths about cultural competence that she says "result in awkward classroom moments, ineffective instructional practices, and counterproductive teacher-student and teacher-parent relationships."

• *Myth #1: Culturally competent pedagogy means including popular culture, ethnic holidays, and colloquial speech in the classroom*. For example, a white elementary teacher uses a CD titled *Multiplication Rap* with her African-American and Latino students. Instead of appreciating the hip-hop hand-clapping, repetition, and rhyme, students criticize the amateurish lyrics and audio quality and learn no mathematics from it. Better-chosen links can be helpful, says Irvine – for example, Jaime Escalante's analogy of digging and filling holes on a California beach to teach about negative numbers, and telling his mostly Latino students that Mayans independently invented the concept of zero. But Irvine believes there's a lot more to cultural competence than this.

• *Myth #2: Only teachers of color can be culturally relevant*. Not true, says Irvine. It's about knowing the curriculum content, being truly sensitive to students' culture, and finding ways to make connections – "to bridge the gap between the known (students' personal cultural knowledge) and the unknown (materials and concepts to be mastered)." The teacher who brought in the *Multiplication Rap* CD meant well and deserves professional development to fine-tune her skills. "Not superficial, one-day teacher workshops on diversity or multiculturalism," says Irvine. "These often do more to maintain stereotypes and biases about culturally diverse students and their families than to change them. Not a focus on international festivals and once-a-year programs honoring Black History Month or Cinco de Mayo. Teachers need to be encouraged to question the curriculum and the pedagogy."

• *Myth #3: Culturally relevant pedagogy is not appropriate for white students*. Nonsense, says Irvine; good pedagogy works for all students, as illustrated by this story. An inner-city teacher was struggling to teach her students how to write a business letter, and found the textbook's example unhelpful (having students write a letter to place an order for a Game Boy, which assumed that buying games was all students were interested in and used an anachronistic application of the business letter). Instead, she had her students interview relatives, neighbors, and church leaders and write letters to the mayor asking for changes they would like to see in their neighborhood. When they were finished, the class marched en masse to a mailbox and ceremoniously mailed their letters. Shortly afterwards, the mayor called the principal and arranged a visit to the class to discuss students' concerns. "The teacher's solution to this problem was truly culturally relevant because it drew on students' resources and experiences," says Irvine. "It worked extremely well for this group of students, and would work well in other communities, too."

• *Myth #4: Culturally relevant curriculum lacks academic rigor*. Not necessarily, says Irvine. Relevance isn't about lowering standards – but lack of cultural sensitivity can result in seemingly rigorous material not being learned. "I believe that many diverse students fail in schools not because their teachers don't know their content, but because their teachers haven't made the connections between the content and their students' existing mental schemes, prior knowledge and cultural perspectives," says Irvine.

• *Myth #5: The purpose of culturally relevant pedagogy is to help diverse students "feel good" about themselves*. "Culturally relevant teaching may indeed boost your students' self-esteem," says Irvine, "but that's not why you should adopt it. You should adopt it because it

will maximize student learning." Culture is a kind of road map that is passed down from one generation to another and guides and shapes behavior, she explains. "If new information is not relevant to those frameworks of culture and cognition, people will never remember it. If the information is relevant, they will never forget it."

• *Myth #6: Culturally relevant teachers should address African-American male students' need for kinesthetic activities and allow Asian-American students to work alone.* These are cultural stereotypes, says Irvine. Teachers need to see students as individuals and treat them as such. "The culturally relevant teacher probes the school, community and home environments searching for insights into diverse students' abilities, preferences and motivations," she says. "This type of reflection assists teachers in confronting their misunderstandings, prejudices and beliefs about race that impede the development of caring classroom climates, positive relationships with their students and families, and ultimately their students' academic success."

Culturally relevant teachers are action researchers, Irvine says. "Action research is inquiry conducted *by* teachers *for* teachers for the purpose of higher student achievement. Action research requires teachers to identify an area of concern, develop a plan for improvement, implement the plan, observe its effects, and reflect on the procedures and consequences."

Irvine concludes by saying that culturally competent teaching goes beyond higher test scores. "Culturally relevant teachers must also assist students to change the society, not simply to exist or survive in it," she says. "For some teachers, this can be very challenging. When teachers promote justice they directly confront inequities in society such as racism, sexism and classism. Far too many teachers appear to be not only colorblind, but also unable or unwilling to see, hear or speak about instances of individual or institutional racism in their personal and professional lives."

"Relevant: Beyond the Basics" by Jacqueline Jordan Irvine in *Teaching Tolerance*, Fall 2009 (Vol. 40, #44), http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/number-36-fall-2009/relevant-beyond-basics, (spotted in *Education Digest*, April 2010, Vol. 75, #8, p. 57-61)

Back to page one

5. Conditions for Successful Professional Learning Communities

In this *American Educational Research Journal* article, professors Ilana Seidel Horn and Judith Warren Little report on their study of the professional interactions in two high-school teacher teams, one English and the other math. Both groups were made up of "energetic, competent, committed, thoughtful teachers who took their professional obligations seriously," really wanted to improve, and were focused on student success, say Horn and Little. But the two groups functioned very differently, with a good deal more professional learning and progress taking place in the math than the English group. The math teachers were able to dive into specific discussions of classroom problems and work together to improve teaching and learning, whereas the English team, although smart and well-intentioned, accomplished much less. Horn and Little attribute this to three factors:

• *Shared frames of reference* – The math team had common concepts, principles, and terminology from previous professional development to structure their meetings, justify their decisions, and guide their interpretations of classroom-based problems of practice. In the English team, teachers had different views of their purpose and lacked a common vocabulary and outside PD experiences that could bind them together.

• *Common curriculum* – The math group all used the same curriculum resources that they had located, selected, revised, or designed over a period of years using agreed-upon criteria. When they discussed classroom problems, they were literally on the same page in terms of the curriculum and materials. By contrast, the English group was working toward vague goals (giving students metacognitive reading strategies and enhancing their confidence as readers of academic texts) and members were only beginning to find and develop lesson plans and materials.

• *Leadership* – The two co-chairs of the math group were able to expand on the successful community-building work of a former department chair and focused on maintaining an ethos of professional learning. They posed questions, got colleagues talking in specific terms about classroom practice, kept the focus on student and teacher learning, and encouraged initiative. The English group, on the other hand, decentralized decisions to each grade level and rarely probed team members to talk about their classroom dilemmas in detail.

"Attending to Problems of Practice: Routines and Resources for Professional Learning in Teachers' Workplace Interactions" by Ilana Seidel Horn and Judith Warren Little in *American Educational Research Journal*, March 2010 (Vol. 47, #1, p. 181-217), no e-link available

Back to page one

6. What Principals Should Do When Students Write About Violence

In this *Principal Leadership* article, teacher/lawyer Gretchen Oltman describes the impact the Columbine shootings had on her early years teaching English in a Nebraska high school. Because Columbine shooters Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris had written about violence in their English classes before they killed 15 people (including themselves) and wounded 34, Oltman felt torn between her desire to get students writing creatively and her obligation to flag writing that might presage violence. "I think the schools are very inconsistent with how they respond," says one Chicago attorney who represents students in disciplinary trouble. "In some cases, they actually set kids up to be creative and then turn around and clobber them if they express violent thoughts."

Oltman suggests the following guidelines for school principals as they try to protect student expression while maintaining school safety:

• *Certain kinds of student expression are not protected by the First Amendment*. Four U.S. Supreme Court decisions allow school administrators to regulate students' writing: (a) *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District* (1969), which allows restriction of expression if it's reasonable to predict that it will cause "substantial disruption or material interference with school activities;" (b) *Bethel School District v. Fraser* (1986), which said that student expression can be restricted if it is "vulgar and offensive in terms of public discourse"

and occurs when students are members in a captive audience; (c) *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier* (1988), which allows student speech to be restricted when it is school-sponsored and the rationale is "reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns;" and (d) *Morse v. Frederick* (2007), which allows student speech to be suppressed if it appears to promote illegal drug use. In addition, she notes that student writing that is a "true threat" is not constitutionally protected.

• *Restricting student writing may undermine good teaching practice*. "English teachers are taught in college that encouraging student creativity is an effective way to develop better writers," says Oltman. If principals restrict student expression, they are working against this.

• *Be aware of your English teachers' current practices*. Collecting syllabi and unit plans and regularly chatting with teachers about classroom assignments can prevent administrators from being blindsided by a student's violent writing.

• *Listen*. It's not enough to read a student's violent writing; administrators also need to interview the student, the teacher, other students, parents, and, if necessary, law enforcement personnel.

• *Promote an honest, respectful, and caring atmosphere*. "If school is a positive experience for students and reduces the isolation that many adolescents feel," says Oltman, "the likelihood that they will create truly threatening writing declines." Students also need to be explicitly taught about restrictions on free speech.

• *Avoid zero-tolerance policies with automatic penalties*. It's better to investigate violence-laced writing to find out if the student actually poses a threat. Use each incident as a teachable moment about appropriate communication.

• *Plan for the worst*. Administrators must have a plan for how to handle a real threat.

• *Keep accurate documentation*. "If you don't document it, it's like it never happened," a principal once told Oltman. It's vital to keep detailed records of any investigation of violent writing.

• *Act swiftly yet rationally*. Principals must move quickly to investigate and remove a truly threatening student from the school.

• *Stay up to date*. This includes legal developments and new forms of technology that students can use to express themselves.

"When Writing Predicts Violence" by Gretchen Oltman in *Principal Leadership*, March 2010 (Vol. 10, #7, p. 28-32); http://www.principals.org/Content/158/pl_mar10_oltman.pdf; the author can be reached at goltman@lps.org.

Back to page one

7. Twelve Ways to Make Information Stick in Students' Brains

"When information is presented to students, it goes into the working memory of their brain," says teacher/writer Bill Page in this *Teachers.Net/Gazette* article (featured in *Education Digest*). The information is likely to evaporate unless something moves it into long-term memory. How can teachers make that happen? Page shares 12 strategies:

• *Make it personal*. Pairing students, having them work in small groups, and orchestrating interactive activities all help to link new information to each student's prior knowledge and experiences.

• *Make it interesting*. "Teachers must find another way to teach those who did not learn the lesson the first time," says Page. The best way to do that is to hook students' interest.

• *Help students construct meaning*. "If new information does not connect or relate to existing knowledge, the brain will not accept it," says Page. Teachers need to listen carefully as students process new information and involve them in constructing their own meaning. "Students learn more by answering their own questions of 'why'," he says, "than by someone giving them reasons for 'why'."

• *Make it meaningful*. "The *why* is more important than the *what* in learning," says Page. New information has to make sense to students.

• *Have students apply new knowledge*. Students "use it or lose it," says Page. "Pairing and small-group discussions are crucial to learning."

• *Engage emotions*. "We learn in direct proportion to the strength of our feelings," says Page, "– especially our likes and dislikes… Emotions are why we remember the person who sat behind us in the 7th grade, but can't remember the name of someone we met yesterday."

• *Maximize the use of the senses*. The brain's neurons take in information from hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, and touching, says Page: "The more neurons that are affected by stimuli from different sources, the stronger and longer lasting the memory and recall ability will be."

• *Make it social*. "What we value in learning depends on what those around us are learning," says Page. "We learn from the company we keep."

• *Apply the laws of learning*. Teachers need to be savvy to predictable patterns of attention, memory, retrieval, and forgetting, says Page. One way is to make connections to children's interests, including sports and holidays.

• *Use associations*. "The brain works by linking things to other things," says Page. "Memory relies on patterns, concepts, meaningfulness, relevance, and associations." That's why using similes, metaphors, and well-chosen examples is so helpful.

• *Teach concepts*. Once students grasp a general concept, the facts related to it fall into place and are much easier to remember.

• *Climb Bloom's ladder*. About 95 percent of teaching and testing is at the lowest Bloom levels – knowledge and comprehension. Disconnected bits of knowledge are the easiest to "teach" (*Memorize the 50 state capitals*) but the hardest for students to commit to long-term memory. When teachers "put facts in meaningful groups or concepts," says Page, "they're more easily learned." And that means getting students applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating.

"12 Things Teachers Must Know About Learning" by Bill Page in *Teachers.Net/Gazette*, February 2010, http://teachers.net/gazette/wordpress/bill-page/12-things-teachers-must-know/ (spotted in *Education Digest*, April 2010, Vol. 75, #8, p. 54-56)

Back to page one

8. David Elkind Comments on Recess Coaches

"Recess is no longer child's play," says child development expert David Elkind in this *New York Times* op-ed article. He's commenting on recent reports of adults leading students in organized games instead of letting them play on their own (see last week's Memo item #4). Given his past writing, we might expect Elkind to be horrified by this development, but he's sympathetic. "Children today are growing up in a world vastly different from the one their parents knew," he says, quoting a 2009 study that found youngsters 6-11 years old spending 28 hours a week using computers, cell phones, TVs, and other electronics. Around the world, the "culture of childhood" is disappearing, he says – the games (hopscotch, marbles, hide and seek), songs, riddles, jibes, and incantations (*Step on a crack, break your mother's back*) that have been passed down through the generations.

"For children in past eras," says Elkind, "participating in the culture of childhood was a socializing process. They learned to settle their own quarrels, to make and break their own rules, and to respect the rights of others. They learned that friends could be mean as well as kind, and that life was not always fair." Without those free-form experiences, peer socialization has suffered, and Elkind believes this has contributed to the recent surge of bullying, teasing, and discrimination. A National Education Association study estimates that 160,000 children miss school every day because they feel intimidated by peers.

"I am not a Luddite," concludes Elkind. "We have to adapt to childhood as it is today, not as we knew it or would like it to be." He hopes that recess coaches can help students get more exercise, "form the age-old bonds of childhood… learn the real social world before they learn the virtual one… To the extent that the coaches focus on play, give children freedom of choice about what they want to do, and stay out of the way as much as possible, they are likely a good influence."

"Playtime Is Over" by David Elkind, *New York Times*, March 27, 2010 (p. A17)
http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/27/opinion/27elkind.html?scp=1&sq=Playtime%20Is%20Over&st=cse

Back to page one

Do you have feedback? Is anything missing?

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

About the Marshall Memo

Mission and focus:

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

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

Subscriptions:

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

Website:

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

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

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

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

Publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educator
American Journal of Education
American School Board Journal
ASCD, CEC SmartBriefs, Daily EdNews
Catalyst Chicago
Ed. Magazine
EDge
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher (TESOL)
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
JESPAR
Journal of Staff Development
Language Learner (NABE)
Middle Ground
Middle School Journal
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
Teacher Magazine (online)
Teachers College Record
The Atlantic Monthly
The Chronicle of Higher Education
The Language Educator
The New Yorker
The Reading Teacher
Theory Into Practice
Tools for Schools/The Learning Principal