Marshall Memo 168

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
January 15, 2007

In This Issue:

Quotes of the Week

"Math hasn't made any sense since fifth grade."

A middle-school student (see item #7)

"The traditional mathematics curriculum has served as a filter, sorting the privileged from the disenfranchised."

Robert Moses and Charles Cobb, Jr., quoted in "Using Text-Based Protocols to Explore Numeracy" in *Principal Leadership*, January 2007 (Vol. 7, #5, p. 52)

"The fact is that you really are not in control of anything. The only time I am in control is when I shut my door, and then I feel I am not doing the job I'm supposed to be doing, which is being with the people."

A new boss (see item #3)

"Winning in risky situations often requires being what you haven't been, thinking as you haven't thought, and acting as you haven't acted."

Kathleen Reardon (see item #2)

"Compliance does not equal commitment. If people aren't committed, they won't take the initiative. And if subordinates aren't taking the initiative, the manager can't delegate effectively."

Linda Hill (see item #3)

"Successful leaders have a nose for opportunity and a knack for knowing whom to tap to get things done."

Herminia Ibarra and Mark Hunter (see item #4)

1. Neutralizing "Stereotype Threat" in Middle-School Students

In this fascinating article in *Science* magazine, a group of social psychologists reports on two randomized, double-blind field experiments on stereotype threat. Here is how they define the problem: "Because people subjected to widely known negative stereotypes impugning the intelligence of their group are aware of these negative characterizations, they may worry that performing poorly could confirm the stereotype of their group. This situation can create chronic stress at school and work, by burdening people with an extra psychological threat not experienced by those outside the group. If too severe, stress can undermine performance." The researchers set out to see if there was a way to counteract these debilitating pressures in the classroom. Here is how the study unfolded:

• The researchers enlisted seventh-grade teachers in a middle- to lower-middle-class school whose population was roughly half black and half white. Students were divided into treatment and control groups, and teachers were not told which students were in which group and what hypothesis was being tested.

• Soon after the beginning of the fall term, teachers distributed sealed, personalized envelopes to their students and, as part of a regular class period, had them spend about 15 minutes working independently and silently to follow the directions in their packets.

• Students in the treatment group got a list of values (e.g., family, relationships with friends, being good at art) and were asked to (a) choose the one that was most important to them; (b) write a brief paragraph explaining why; and (c) indicate how strongly they agreed with statements about their chosen value (e.g., "I care about these values").

• Students in the control group got the same list of values and were asked to (a) choose the value that was *least* important to them; (b) write a brief paragraph about why this value might be important to someone else; and (c) indicate how strongly they agreed with statements about how others might feel about their selections (e.g., "Some people care about these values").

• When students were finished, they sealed all the materials in their own envelope and passed them in to their teachers, who continued with their regular lesson plans and later gave the envelopes to the researchers.

• A year later, the experiment was replicated with different classes. This time, treatment and control students were asked to identify and write about two or three values rather than one.

• Several months after the experiments, the same students were given a pencil-and-paper exercise in which they were asked to complete word fragments such as _ACE; the researchers looked to see if students came up with race-neutral words (like FACE) or race-conscious words (like RACE).

The researchers' hypothesis was that if African-American students, who are subject to stereotype threat in the "chronically evaluative" classroom setting, were given a chance to affirm values that were important to them, their feelings of self-worth would be boosted and stress would be reduced, buffering the effects of stereotype threat and improving their school performance. Here are the results of the two experiments (for technical details, see the link to the full article below):

- Black students in the treatment groups got higher fall-term grades than control-group students in the course where teachers handed out the envelopes. On a A = 4.0, B = 3.0… grading scale, treatment students scored .26 higher than control-group students in the first experiment and .34 higher in the second. The researchers say that the likelihood of this happening by chance is 1 in 5,000.
- White students in the treatment groups showed no change in their grades.
- The achievement gap between black and white students in this course was reduced by roughly 40% (.30 points).
- Nearly 70% of black students benefited from the treatment; the effect was strongest among students who were struggling and doing moderately well academically, less strong among black students who had been getting high grades.
- Only 9% of black students in the treatment group had grades of D or F that semester, compared to 20% of black control-group students (the control-group rate was typical of black students' performance in the course for the three previous years).
- Black students in the treatment group got better grades in other courses as well; white students in the treatment group showed no change in their grades in other courses.
- Looking at students' grades for the year, the researchers found that the intervention interrupted the downward academic trend of black students in the treatment group; the grades of black students in the control group steadily declined; so did the grades of white students, but the downward slope for them was not as steep.
- In the word-fragment study of students' race consciousness, black students in the treatment group were less likely to supply racially-charged words than black students in the control group; none of the white students wrote racially-oriented words.

What's astonishing about this study is that such a small intervention – students spending fifteen minutes in September jotting a paragraph about values that were important to them – could have such a significant impact on their academic performance and race-consciousness. The researchers themselves express surprise at the power of the intervention, and offer five hypotheses about why it made such a difference:

• Many black students are victims of a "negative recursive cycle," with psychological threat and poor performance feeding off one another and leading to a downward spiral. Thus, when black students get bad grades on homework, quizzes, and unit tests early in the semester,

stereotype threat is activated and they do worse and worse (in the study, this was not true of white students). The downward spiral depends on a continual feedback loop, and if the feedback-response cycle is interrupted by positive affirmation of values, students can pull out of the decline and begin to improve their performance.

• A small reduction in stereotype threat, say the researchers, can produce a ripple effect because it "can set off another recursive cycle by leading to a slight improvement in subsequent performance, which in turn can further lessen performance-inhibiting threat, etc., leading to sustained or improving performance over time."

• Small improvements can accumulate over the course of a semester by improving competence and confidence, snowballing into better performance than would seem implausible based on the small initial gains.

• Buffered by their affirmation of important values, black students in the treatment group were less sensitive to racially-charged thoughts, less likely to see bias around them, and less likely to interpret their successes and failures in ways that activated stereotype threat.

• The intervention released potential that was there all along. The necessary preconditions for academic success were present before the experiment (i.e., student ability and teacher skills and materials), but it took the right intervention to get them working properly. The researchers use this metaphor to explain: "The flicking of a switch viewed in isolation may seem a quick and minor physical movement, seemingly out of proportion with the effect of having a room or a city block flooded with light."

The team concludes by highlighting their provocative message: a sophisticated intervention, relatively brief and virtually cost-free, can interrupt a negative psychological dynamic and have a marked impact on the school achievement of African-American students – without harming other students. "Our results challenge conventional and scientific wisdom," they write, "by demonstrating that a psychological intervention, although brief, can help reduce what many view as an intractable disparity in real-world outcomes."

Spotted in *PEN Weekly NewsBlast*, December 22, 2006: "Reducing the Racial Achievement Gap: A Social-Psychological Intervention" by Geoffrey Cohen, Julio Garcia, Nancy Apfel, and Allison Master in *Science*, September 1, 2006 (Vol. 313, #5791, p. 1307-1310), available at: http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/313/5791/1307?ijkey=.NZOOGT9sRaq.&keytype=ref&siteid=sci. See Marshall Memos 145 and 40 for articles on this topic by Claude Steele and his colleagues.

2. Acting Courageously Without Being Foolish

U.S. Senator John McCain, who was a prisoner of war during the Vietnam War, once defined courage as "that rare moment of unity between conscience, fear, and action, when something deep within us strikes the flint of love, of honor, of duty, to make the spark that fires our resolve." Cool your jets! says U.S.C. business professor Kathleen Reardon in this *Harvard Business Review* article. She has found that people who demonstrate courage in the workplace (and live to tell the tale) usually engage in what she calls a *courage calculation* – "a method of making success more likely while avoiding rash, unproductive, or irrational behavior." Reardon lists six key elements:

• *Looking at outcomes* – You might ask yourself, What does success look like? Is it reasonably within reach, not a pie-in-the-sky ambition? And how does it relate to my personal, team, and organizational goals? An example: suppose a well-regarded co-worker was about to be fired, having been maligned by an employee scheming for her job – but the boss who will do the firing is a poor listener who tends to kill messengers. Given the politics, should you try to save your colleague?

• *Judging the goal's importance* – "Courage," says Reardon, "is not about squandering political capital on low-priority issues." So you might ask yourself, Just how important is it that you achieve your goal? If you don't do something, will your organization suffer? Will you be able to look at yourself in the mirror? Reardon suggests sorting courage dilemmas into three levels: (a) Issues about which you have an opinion but don't feel that strongly; (b) Issues where you have a strong view but where higher values are not involved; and (c) "Spear in the sand" issues that rest on morals or values for which you are willing to take a stand and fight. In this regard, it's important to have a list of the key values and outcomes you have for your job.

• *Judging the power balance* – Many people assume that if they don't have the power to make something happen, they shouldn't take a stand. But there have been plenty of situations where a low-level whistle-blower has tipped the power balance in ways that seemed impossible, or where respect, friendship, appreciation, or network affiliations gave someone lower in the status hierarchy surprising power to affect decisions.

• *Weighing risks and benefits* – You might ask yourself, Who stands to win and lose? What are the chances that my reputation will be damaged beyond repair? Will I lose respect – or my job? Decisions are particularly difficult if they involve "snitching" on a team member, which tends to incur the wrath of colleagues, or swallowing one's pride in the face of obnoxious behavior by a superior. Reardon tells the story of manager who was loudly chewed out by a vice president for misinformation that came from the VP's own assistant. The manager came close to sending an angry e-mail, but knew the impact this would have on his unit. Instead, he "sent a rose" in the form of a disarmingly professional memo praising the good relations they'd had in the past, regretting the error, mentioning its source in passing, and hoping for positive collaboration in the future. The memo worked like a charm: the vice president responded positively and collaborated well from then on.

• *Choosing the right time* – "Spear in the sand" issues would seem to demand immediate action, but Reardon says that real emergencies are rare and time may well be on your side. "My research indicates that those who act courageously in business settings have an instinct for opportunity," says Reardon. When emotions run high, she suggests that we ask ourselves, Why am I pursuing this now? Is this a considered action or an impulsive one? Do I need to be better prepared? Should I wait a day – or more? Can I take steps now that will lay the groundwork for a courageous move later? Am I emotionally and mentally prepared to take this risk? Do I have the expertise, communication skills, track record, and credibility to make this work?

• *Developing contingency plans* – "Faced with having to take a risk," writes Reardon, "most people make only one attempt: They ring the doorbell, and if a response is not

forthcoming, they give up and go away." This is not enough, she says. Successful people "try knocking at the back door, tapping at a window, or even returning a second time. Winning in risky situations often requires being what you haven't been, thinking as you haven't thought, and acting as you haven't acted… Contingency planning is really about resourcefulness. People who take bold risks and succeed are versatile thinkers; they ready themselves with alternative routes."

"Courage As A Skill" by Kathleen Reardon in *Harvard Business Review*, January 2007 (Vol. 85, #1, p. 58-64), no e-link available

3. Six Misconceptions That Trip Up New Managers

In this *Harvard Business Review* article, B-School professor Linda Hill writes about the scary challenge of becoming a boss for the first time. "As managers," she writes, "they are responsible for setting and implementing an agenda for a whole group, something for which their careers as individual performers haven't prepared them." New bosses, she says, need to beware of these common myths about management:

• *Misconception #1: Managers are powerful.* Newbies think they'll have the freedom to implement their ideas, but they're in for a rude awakening. "It's humbling that someone who works for me could get me fired," says one shocked manager. "The fact is that you really are not in control of anything," says another. "The only time I am in control is when I shut my door, and then I feel I am not doing the job I'm supposed to be doing, which is being with the people."

• *Misconception #2: Positional authority will get things done.* Not! "New managers soon learn… that when direct reports are told to do something, they don't necessarily respond," writes Hill. "In fact, the more talented the subordinate, the less likely she is to simply follow orders." Managers soon realize that their real authority comes from establishing credibility with subordinates, peers, and superiors. They need to demonstrate their *character* (the intention to do the right thing), their *competence* (knowing how to do the right thing), their willingness to shut up and *listen*, and their ability to wield influence and *get things done*.

• *Misconception #3: Managers must control their direct reports.* New managers tend to be insecure and demand compliance. Counterintuitively, says Hill, the more power managers are willing to give up to their subordinates, the more influence they command. "Compliance does not equal commitment. If people aren't committed, they won't take the initiative. And if subordinates aren't taking the initiative, the manager can't delegate effectively. The direct reports won't take the calculated risks that lead to the continuous change and improvement required by today's turbulent… environment." Hill cites the example of Winona Finch, a business leader. "Instead of relying on formal authority to get what she wanted," writes Hill, "she exercised influence by creating a culture of inquiry. The result was an organization in which people felt empowered, committed, and accountable for fulfilling the company's vision."

• *Misconception #4: It's important to be liked*. Productive personal relationships are important, says Hill, but ultimately a manager "must figure out how to harness the power of a team. Simply focusing on one-on-one relationships with members of the team can undermine that process." This is especially true when managers try to ingratiate themselves to a subordinate by doing a favor or making an exception; this often sparks jealousy and anger and undermines the functioning of the team.

• *Misconception #5: It's vital that things function smoothly*. The pressure to keep the trains running on time can make a manager forget that one of the most important leadership tasks is stepping back and initiating changes that will help the organization do even better in the long run.

• *Misconception #6: Keep your fears to yourself*. Although there's always the possibility that admitting weakness to a subordinate could be taken advantage of, new managers *should* confide in their bosses, who almost always appreciate the candor and become key mentors for long-term growth and improvement.

"Becoming the Boss" by Linda Hill in *Harvard Business Review*, January 2007 (Vol. 85, #1, p. 48-56), no e-link available

4. A Guide to Networking

"Successful leaders have a nose for opportunity and a knack for knowing whom to tap to get things done," write French business professors Herminia Ibarra and Mark Hunter in this *Harvard Business Review* article with direct application to school principals. Successful leaders, they say, are effective at three types of schmoozing:

• *Operational networking* – It's important for all managers to build close, positive working relationships with those who are vital to getting the job done. Knowing who these people are sounds quite straightforward – either you're linked to accomplishing the mission or you're not – but many managers have blind spots and fail to relate well to key people, to their ultimate sorrow. What this kind of networking doesn't cover is long-range thinking, a broader perspective that includes people and events outside the organization, and ways of anticipating the unexpected.

• *Personal networking* – Impatient, task-oriented managers sometimes neglect to cultivate personal relationships outside the organization, for example through professional and alumni organizations and social contacts. This is a mistake, say Ibarra and Hunter, because these contacts can produce important referrals, information, and support in the form of coaching and mentoring.

• *Strategic networking* – This involves reaching out to those inside and outside the organization to build support for long-range priorities and strategies. "What differentiates a leader from a manager, research tells us, is the ability to figure out where to go and to enlist the people and groups necessary to get there," write the authors. "The key to a good strategy network is leverage: the ability to marshal information, support, and resources from one sector of a network to achieve results in another. Strategic networkers use indirect influence,

convincing one person in the network to get someone else, who is not in the network, to take a needed action."

What keeps some leaders from doing enough networking, say Ibarra and Hunter, is an attitude problem: they think they're too busy with their day job, and also believe that networking is faintly unethical, relying on connections rather than competence. *Get over it*, they advise; networking is one of the most important kinds of work that successful leaders do. "The trick," they say, "is to leverage the elements from each domain of networking into the others – to seek out personal contacts who can be objective – strategic counselors, for example – or to transform colleagues in adjacent functions into a constituency." Here is their specific advice:

• *Work from the outside in*. One manager, for example, loved the theater and interacted with clients and mentors in this setting, sometimes buying blocks of tickets and booking a buffet at a downtown hotel.

• *Re-allocate your time*. Delegating basic operational tasks frees up time for high-level networking.

• *Ask and you shall receive*. Some managers have an extensive Rolodex, but then don't pick up the phone and call people. "A network lives and thrives only when it is used," say Ibarra and Hunter. "A good way to begin is to make a simple request or take the initiative to connect two people who would benefit from meeting each other. Doing something – anything – gets the ball rolling and builds confidence that one does, in fact, have something to contribute."

• *Stick to it*. Deriving the maximum potential from networking takes time. Be patient and persistent!

"How Leaders Create and Use Networks" by Herminia Ibarra and Mark Hunter in *Harvard Business Review*, January 2007 (Vol. 85, #1, p. 40-47), no e-link available

5. Improving High-School Science Labs

Most high-school teachers, says this *Education Week* article, start by lecturing about the content and then giving students procedure-focused lab assignments. But others prefer the "ABC" approach – activity before content. They start a curriculum unit in the lab with students observing, investigating, and interpreting data using hands-on materials – so the science content presented later will have greater meaning. "It's a truer model of scientific thinking," says Matthew Anthes-Washburn, a teacher at West Roxbury Education Complex in Boston. "In the field of science, if you're in a lab, you don't have a fixed outcome." In a unit on refraction, for example, Anthes-Washburn gets his students shining a laser-beam through blocks of acrylic and glass rods and recording the path of beams of light on graph paper.

This approach is applauded by a recent National Research Council committee of scientists, which made these recommendations for improving science labs:

• Teachers should clearly spell out the purpose of an activity to students.

• Lab activities should be explicitly linked to the content presented in class, not presented in isolation.

• Teachers should blend content and process, emphasizing both scientific knowledge and the processes used by scientists as they work.

• Students should be prodded to discuss and reflect on the overall scientific meaning of activities (the "big ideas") rather than just following procedures and confirming ideas the teacher presented.

The *Education Week* article also discusses Active Physics, a commercial program being used by Boston high schools in ninth grade. Marilyn Decker, Boston's science director, praises the program for getting younger students involved in concepts previously reserved for high-achieving juniors and seniors. A 2005 Thomas B. Fordham Foundation study criticized "inquiry-based" science programs like Active Physics, but the program was staunchly defended by several educators quoted in the article – with the proviso that teachers should provide firm guidance and high expectations throughout hands-on activities. "You need to teach science," said Paul Gross, a University of Virginia professor emeritus. "The teacher is not [just a] facilitator. The teacher is a resource and an example."

"Science Labs: Beyond Isolationism" by Sean Cavanagh in *Education Week*, January 10, 2007 (Vol. 26, #18, p. 24-26), no free e-link available

6. Using Writing in the Math Classroom

In this article in *Principal Leadership*, math experts Andrew and Evelyn Rothstein make a strong case for getting students writing in math classes. Teachers who successfully combine literacy and math, they say:

- Gain insight into their students' mathematical thinking;
- Get diagnostic information on students' misconceptions;
- Assess students' study habits and attitudes;
- Get insights into the effectiveness of their own teaching techniques;
- Improve their students' math achievement.

Despite these benefits, say the Rothsteins, it's difficult to get teachers to assign writing in math classes. The main barriers are the "silo mentality", especially among middle- and high-school math teachers, and a number of other teacher concerns: How will I have the time? How can I integrate literacy activities in a "hard science?" What are the genres of math writing? How will this mesh with the writing that students are being asked to do in other subject areas?

The Rothsteins have created a list of ten strategies for introducing writing into math classes, all of which target NCTM standards:

- Composing with key words
- Metacognition
- Defining format
- Morphology and etymology
- Profiles and frames
- Reasons, procedures, and results
- Who's who

- Where in the world
- Personification and interactions
- Taxonomies

"These writing strategies," say the Rothsteins, "help students apply their knowledge, gain proficiency in solving word problems, state reasons with proof, make connections between two mathematical ideas or concepts, explain their math representations and develop an interest in the big picture of mathematics and mathematics history."

A sidebar in the article is a fictional letter from Zero D. Cipher, the Director of Indian/Arabic Mathematics in Calcutta, to Dr. Portia Romano, the Director of Numbers in Rome, politely explaining the advantages of the Arabic number system in performing calculations. The Rothsteins suggest that the letter might be a good attention-grabber at the beginning of an algebra unit.

"Writing In Mathematics: An Exponential Combination" by Andrew Rothstein and Evelyn Rothstein in *Principal Leadership*, January 2007 (Vol. 7, #5, p. 21-25), no e-link available

7. A Definition of Math Literacy

"Math hasn't made any sense since fifth grade," says a middle-school student in this article in *Principal Leadership*. The author, veteran math teacher Hope Martin, says we have to do a better job getting students past unfortunate maxims like *Yours is not to reason why, just invert and multiply*. "Just as knowing the definitions of words does not make a person literate," writes Martin, "knowing rules and algorithms to solve mathematics problems does not make a person mathematically literate."

Real mathematical literacy, she continues, means that a person "is able to reason, analyze, formulate, and solve problems in a real-world setting. Mathematically literate individuals are informed citizens and intelligent consumers. They have the ability to interpret and analyze the vast amount of information they are inundated with daily in newspapers, on television, and on the Internet."

Martin goes on to quote the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2002 report on improving math teaching. The report suggests the following five steps that students should go through when solving math problems:

- Start with a real-world problem.
- Organize the information and data according to mathematical concepts.
- Transform a real-world, concrete application to an abstract problem whose roots are situated in mathematics.
- Solve the mathematical problem.
- Reflect back from the math solution to the real-world situation to determine whether the answer makes sense.

"Mathematical Literacy" by Hope Martin in *Principal Leadership*, January 2007 (Vol. 7, #5, p. 28-31), no e-link available

8. If You Need a Friend, Get a Dog

This was Harry Truman's advice to emotionally needy politicians in Washington, but it took on new meaning in an article in last week's *New York Times*. It describes Massachusetts teacher Eileen Brennan's struggle to improve the reading proficiency of one of her third-grade students. The boy was way behind his peers, painfully slow at decoding basic words, and intensely embarrassed about reading aloud. Brennan had the boy checked for hearing and vision problems and learning disabilities and none were found. She contacted his parents and they were not much help. What to do?

Brennan decided that the boy's problem was threefold: (a) he wasn't getting enough practice reading, which was preventing him from mastering basic words and learning new ones; (b) because he wasn't practicing, he wasn't improving, and this was undermining his self-confidence – which made him so worried about sounding stupid in front of other people that he decided not to try; and (c) he was strong-willed and stubborn and wouldn't budge from this no-win position.

In early October, Brennan started a daily 30-minute silent reading time for the class and gave students a choice of where they wanted to sit or lie. Noticing that the boy wasn't that engaged in even the easiest books, she decided to give him first dibs at sitting next to her dog, Barnaby, who spent every day in the classroom. She also suggested that he read aloud to the dog.

Every day for the next six months, the boy went to the bookshelf, got a copy of *Go Dog Go* by P.D. Eastman, sat down next to Barnaby, and read the book to him, pointing at the words and looking at the pictures as he did so. By June, the boy was reading a wide variety of picture books and was reading smoothly and fluently to the dog – and to his teacher.

"For a Boy Stumbling Over Words, A Dog Is the Ideal Reading Partner" by Susan Engel in the *New York Times*, January 10, 2007, p. A15: http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/10/education/10lessons.html?_r=1&oref=slogin. If you have a teaching dilemma you'd like to share, you can e-mail Engel at e-edu@nytimes.com.

9. Short Items:

a. Teaching and learning website – This repository of school-related resources from all parts of the federal government has just been redesigned and is considerably more user-friendly than it used to be. It has material on U.S. and world history, social studies, science, math, health and physical education, language, music, and the arts: http://free.ed.gov. Be sure to click on the subject map in the top left-hand corner.

Spotted in *PEN Weekly NewsBlast*, January 12, 2007

b. NEH summer program – This *Kappan* article sings the praises of the National Endowment for the Humanities summer program for teachers. For more information, go to: http://neh.gov/projects/si-school.html

"Summer Programs Offer Great Ideas for Teachers" by Travis Pantin in *Phi Delta Kappan*, January 2007 (Vol. 88, #5, p. 374-376)

c. High-school math on the Web and TV – Texas Instruments, CBS, and NCTM have teamed up to design We All Use Math Every Day, a weekly web-based set of classroom activities that mesh with upcoming episodes of the television show NUMB3RS. For more information, check out http://www.weallusematheveryday.com.

"Tech Showcase" in *Principal Leadership*, January 2007 (Vol. 7, #5, p. 56)

d. Online lesson planning – This website helps teachers plan lessons from scratch or using templates created by other teachers. Lessons can be saved online and reviewed by others, with comments saved online: http://www.echalk.com.

"Tech Showcase" in *Principal Leadership*, January 2007 (Vol. 7, #5, p. 56)

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 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 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 (with occasional breaks; there are about 50 issues a year).

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Publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educator
American School Board Journal
ASCD, CEC SmartBriefs
Atlantic Monthly
Catalyst Chicago
CommonWealth Magazine
Daily EdNews
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
NASSP Bulletin
New York Times
New Yorker
Newsweek
PEN Weekly NewsBlast
Phi Delta Kappan
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Principal's Research Review
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
Teacher Magazine
Teachers College Record
TESOL Quarterly
Theory Into Practice
Times Educational Supplement, Magazine