

Marshall Memo 425

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

February 27, 2012

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Quotes of the Week

"It's possible to have good standards and low achievement (look at California and D.C.) and it's possible to have weak standards and pretty good achievement (Connecticut and Vermont are good examples on this front). *But*, other things being equal, it's far better to set a destination worth reaching than to embark on a random journey, and it's far more helpful to those who will do the curriculum-building, the assessment-creating, and the classroom-instructing."

Chester Finn, Jr. in *The Education Gadfly*, Feb. 23, 2012, <http://bit.ly/yhhOIP>

"When others are complaining, you're imagining solutions."

Marsha Ratzel on how teacher leaders think (see item #7)

"When a significant minority of Americans reject evolution and global warming out of hand, the desire to find the truth rather than 'truthiness' cannot be taken for granted."

Barry Schwartz and Kenneth Sharpe (see item #6)

"Wisdom is what enables us to find the balance between timidity and recklessness, between carelessness and obsessiveness, between flightiness and stubbornness, between speaking up and listening up, between trust and skepticism, between empathy and detachment."

Barry Schwartz and Kenneth Sharpe (*ibid.*)

"The need to act on the problems confronting black and Latino males is apparent, but no research supports the notion that separating young men is the best way to meet their academic and social needs."

Pedro Noguera (see item #3)

1. New York City Releases Teachers' "Value-Added" Ratings

In this *New York Times* story, Fernanda Santos and Robert Gebeloff report on the value-added ratings of 18,000 grade 4-8 New York City reading and math teachers, released after a lengthy court battle in response to a Freedom of Information request by the *Times* and other news organizations. The ratings (which don't yet include charter and District 75 schools) were based on three years of student test scores, ending in 2010. They measure whether a teacher's students outperformed or underperformed projections based on income, race, gender, and previous performance. Among the conclusions:

- Teachers with the highest value-added scores were working in both the poorest and the most affluent schools of the city.
- High-scoring and low-scoring teachers were present in similar proportions *within* high-achieving and low-achieving schools – for example, one elementary school in Brooklyn had seven fourth-grade English teachers ranging from the 12th to the 99th percentile.
- With some exceptions, teachers' ratings correlated with the city's A-B-C-D-F school evaluations, with high-scoring teachers teaching in high-scoring schools. For example, last year, 79 percent of high-scoring math teachers worked in schools rated A or B.
- Teachers tended to keep the same value-added score from year to year – for example, 68 percent of math teachers in the top or the bottom quarter stayed in the same category.

Federal, state, and city officials had mixed reactions to the ratings. "Silence is not an option," said Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education. "I believe the teachers will be right in feeling assaulted and compromised here, and I just think, from every perspective, it sets the wrong tone moving forward," said Merryl Tisch, the chancellor of the State Board of Regents. "The purpose of these reports is not to look at any individual score in isolation, ever," said Shael Polakow-Suransky, New York's chief academic officer. "No principal would ever make a decision on this score alone, and we would never invite anyone – parents, reporters, principals, teachers – to draw a conclusion based on this score alone."

Commentators and the reporters pointed out some limitations in value-added ratings of teachers:

- The margin of error is wide due to statistical fluctuations from year to year: the average confidence interval around each rating is 35 percentile points in math and 53 in English.
- A number of students are taught reading and math by several different teachers, and it's impossible to factor in the contribution of other teachers to achievement.

- Because of the difficulty of gathering year-to-year data in a mobile student population, some teachers were judged on the performance of as few as ten students.
- The test scores on which the ratings are mainly based were somewhat discredited when the state decided that scores were inflated and they were recalibrated two years ago.
- The ratings were statistically distributed on a curve, with 50 percent of teachers rated “average”, 20 percent “above average”, 20 percent “below average”, 5 percent “high”, and 5 percent “low.”
- The ratings include some errors, including a teacher scored for a semester when she was on maternity leave and a teacher who was scored on the wrong subject.

“City’s Ratings of 18,000 Teachers Indicate That Quality Is Widely Diffused” by Fernanda Santos and Robert Gebeloff in *The New York Times*, Feb. 25, 2012 <http://nyti.ms/z4iBDq>

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2. Bill Gates on Public Release of Teacher Ratings

In this strongly-worded *New York Times* Op Ed piece, Microsoft founder Bill Gates calls the release of teachers’ test-score ratings by New York City “a big mistake.” Gates says he has been a strong advocate for measuring teachers’ effectiveness and has poured millions from his foundation into improving the teacher-evaluation process. “But publicly ranking teachers by name will not help them get better at their jobs or improve student learning,” he says. “On the contrary, it will make it a lot harder to implement teacher evaluation systems that work.”

Why? Because public rankings don’t give teachers specific feedback, he says, and the test scores on which value-added analysis are based “aren’t a sensitive enough measure to gauge effective teaching, nor are they diagnostic enough to identify areas of improvement.” Gates believes that teachers’ performance should be judged on students’ feedback and classroom observations by highly trained peer observers and principals as well as students’ learning gains. He points to the Hillsborough County Public Schools in Florida as an exemplar of a collaborative approach that uses peer observers, gets principals into classrooms more frequently, and energizes teacher improvement through student input and detailed and thoughtful feedback to each teacher.

“Teaching is multifaceted, complex work,” Gates concludes. “Putting sophisticated personnel systems in place is going to take a serious commitment. Those who believe we can do it on the cheap – by doing things like making individual teachers’ performance reports public – are underestimating the level of resources needed to spur real improvement.”

“Shame Is Not the Solution” by Bill Gates in *The New York Times*, Feb. 23, 2012, <http://nyti.ms/A6u1RB>

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3. What Works – and What Doesn't – Educating Male Students of Color

In this *Kappan* article, NYU professor Pedro Noguera reviews the discouraging statistics on African-American and Latino male students: they are less likely to be placed in programs for high achievers, more likely to be classified as learning disabled or mentally retarded and placed in special education; they have the highest suspension and expulsion rates, well over half drop out; and they are the least likely to enroll in or graduate from college. Even those from middle- and upper-income families lag significantly behind other students. Nationwide, there is a 31-point gap between the high-school graduation rate of white and black males (78% versus 47%). The states with the highest black-white male graduation gaps are Nebraska (43%), New York (43%), Wisconsin (42%), Ohio (37%), and Illinois (36%). On the flip side, four states graduate a higher percentage of black than white male students: Maine (98% versus 81%), North Dakota (93% versus 86%), New Hampshire (83% versus 78%), and Vermont (83% versus 77%).

Are single-gender classrooms and schools the answer, as some believe? “The need to act on the problems confronting black and Latino males is apparent,” says Noguera, “but no research supports the notion that separating young men is the best way to meet their academic and social needs... Clearly, there is no magic to be found in merely separating boys of color from their peers.” The all-male classroom idea is based on what he calls “highly questionable research” that boys learn differently than girls; in fact, neurologists have not found this to be true. Isolated success stories notwithstanding, researchers in the U.S. and abroad haven't found positive benefits from all-boy classrooms.

“Most of these initiatives,” says Noguera, “are being carried out by individuals who are sincere and well-meaning about their desire to ‘save’ young men of color, but, in many cases, they lack an clear sense of how to approach their work... Many single-sex schools have been created without a clear sense of instructional supports that the students they serve will need. They also haven't created a learning climate conducive to academic success and positive youth development. Not surprisingly, these schools are foundering, and the students they serve are not thriving.”

Noguera then reports on his research in New York City, where he and his colleagues have found more than 20 high schools that consistently graduate over 80% of their black and Latino males – schools like Frederick Douglass Academy and Thurgood Marshall Academy in Harlem and Eagle Academy in the South Bronx. Some of these successful schools are all-male, but others aren't, which suggests that sex segregation is not the key variable. In fact, at Thurgood Marshall, ninth-grade boys are paired with high-achieving 12th-grade girls for mentoring.

What is driving these schools' impressive results? Strong, positive relationships between teachers and students, personalized learning with mentors, counseling, and other supports that intervene early and effectively when problems arise, and strong, effective, non-authoritarian principals who are regarded as big brothers and father figures. “These are safe schools where students feel as though they can be themselves,” says Noguera, “where the peer

culture reinforces the value of learning, and where character, ethics, and moral development are far more important than rigid discipline policies.”

“Saving Black and Latino Boys: What Schools Can Do to Make a Difference” by Pedro Noguera in *Phi Delta Kappan*, February 2012 (Vol. 93, #5, p. 8-12), <http://www.kappanmagazine.org/content/93/5/8.full>; Noguera can be reached at pedro.noguera@nyu.edu.

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4. “Reality Pedagogy” to Engage Black Male Students

“To address the low achievement of black males,” says Teachers College Columbia professor Christopher Emdin in this *Kappan* article, “schools must be willing to accept that there are ways of looking at the world, modes of communication, and approaches to teaching and learning that are unique to black males. At the same time, educators must also acknowledge that these unique ways of being are just as complex as those of other students. The tie that binds all students is the desire to be academically successful.”

It’s not racist to point out differences in black males, says Emdin. These differences aren’t genetic or developmental, but are “social and psychological baggage” that these young people bring to the classroom. “A wide variety of black male images in media – music, movies, and television programs – take characteristics of black culture, tie them to anti-school identities, violence, and misogyny, and use them as forms of entertainment. This means the world is inundated with scenarios that leave a false perception of black males that these youths must deal with when they enter classrooms... [B]lack males are being socially typecast and face a constant internal dilemma of fitting into expectations embodying these false characteristics or finding spaces where they can engage in practices that are counter to the perceptions.”

The struggle to figure out who they should be in the classroom prevents many black male students from engaging in learning and often manifests itself in rudeness and disruption – this from boys who, says Emdin, are quiet and attentive in church or community events “where their true selves are welcome.” The “cool pose” of disinterest in academics may be at war with their true selves, but many students are trapped by perceptions, especially if they have played a certain classroom role for years.

Emdin has developed the “five Cs of reality pedagogy” – tools for teaching black males that he says have produced positive results:

- *Cogenerative dialogues* – Voluntary, academically mixed groups of 4-6 black male students talk with their teacher (before or after school or during lunch) about how the teacher can better meet their specific academic needs – in a climate that allows them to “present their true selves to the teacher.” Ground rules ensure that all participants have an equal chance to speak, that all discourse is respectful of other participants, and that an action plan is generated.

- *Co-teaching* – The teacher preps a black male student to teach a class, observes him teaching it, asks questions as a “student” during instruction, debriefs afterward, and uses techniques from the student’s lesson in his or her own classes.

- *Cosmopolitanism* – By this, Emdin means getting all students to take on roles that make them responsible for each other and help the class run smoothly. Making black male students part of this process and shifting roles periodically during the year helps them become an integral part of the classroom culture.

- *Context* – Teachers integrate artifacts from black male culture into their lessons – for example, creating rap songs about academic content, using pictures from local parks to explain science concepts, and using pop culture magazines to enhance English lessons. “There must be a willingness to visit their neighborhoods, watch the television programs that they watch, and listen to the music that they like,” says Emdin.

- *Content* – This involves teachers encouraging black male students to pose questions about academic content and being willing to say, “I don’t know” and “That’s a good question.” “Acknowledging that education isn’t about a completed body of knowledge and that the teacher does not have all the answers expands student perceptions about the nature of learning,” says Emdin. “When black males understand that they aren’t merely being expected to memorize material from an accepted body of information, they become more willing to behave differently in this new classroom environment.”

“Yes, Black Males Are Different, but Different Is Not Deficient” by Christopher Emdin in *Phi Delta Kappan*, February 2012 (Vol. 93, #5, p. 13-16), <http://www.kappanmagazine.org/content/93/5/13.full>; Emdin can be reached at ce21650@columbia.edu.

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5. The Role of School Libraries in Closing the Racial Achievement Gap

“School librarians are natural partners in the effort to improve the education, social, and employment outcomes of black males,” say North Carolina library/media experts Sandra Hughes-Hassell, Casey Rawson, Lisa McCracken, Mary Gray Leonard, Heather Cunningham, Katy Vance, and Jennifer Boone in this *Kappan* article. The key is connecting students with meaningful texts that relate to their lives. Alfred Tatum of the University of Chicago coined the term *enabling texts*, which have the following characteristics:

- They promote a healthy psyche;
- They reflect an awareness of the real world;
- They focus on the collective struggle of African Americans;
- They serve as a road map for being, doing, thinking, and acting.

Some examples: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845, 2005), *Sit In: How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down* by Andrea Davis Pinkney (2010), and *We Could be Brothers* by Derrick Barnes (2010) (see the link below for a full list). It’s crucial that students have the chance to talk about enabling texts with teachers, librarians, and other adults.

Here are strategies for getting the right books into the hands of black male students. More information on Durham’s gap-closing initiative: <http://rftldurhamcounty.pbworks.com>.

- *Strategy #1: Collect, display, and recommend.* Librarians should scrutinize the books on their shelves, maximize enabling texts, and eliminate disabling texts – books that reinforce

stereotypes of black males as hoopsters, fatherless sons, and gang recruits. Of course it's not enough to have lots of enabling texts – they need to be recommended to black male students and followed up with discussion and reflection.

- *Strategy #2: Let kids select.* Librarians in Durham gave black male students a role in selecting and ordering books, and put the books in students' hands the moment they arrive.

- *Strategy #3: Mediate enabling texts.* Durham librarians recruited groups of students to read and discuss enabling texts, and they eagerly made connections to their lives, identified concepts, themes, and issues from multiple perspectives, and talked about issues and concepts in school and society. Tatum's theory was confirmed: enabling texts provided a forum for young black males to define themselves, become resilient, engage others, and build capacity. Students reported that the "guys-only focus" was helpful.

- *Strategy #4: Students carry the discussion.* Librarians helped students organize weekly book clubs, teaching them how to select books, establish ground rules, and lead discussions.

- *Strategy #5: Connect with the community.* Durham's school librarians reached out to public libraries in students' communities and were surprised to find that many students didn't have library cards and were unaware of important civil rights events in North Carolina. They campaigned for students to fill these gaps, and also reached out to parents, businesses, and universities.

- *Strategy #6: Provide professional development.* Teachers can benefit from workshops on creating culturally responsive classrooms in which students are constantly engaging with enabling texts.

"Librarians Form a Bridge of Books to Advance Literacy" by Sandra Hughes-Hassell, Casey Rawson, Lisa McCracken, Mary Gray Leonard, Heather Cunningham, Katy Vance, and Jennifer Boone in *Phi Delta Kappan*, February 2012 (Vol. 93, #5, p. 17-22), <http://www.kappanmagazine.org/content/93/5/17.full> ; Hughes-Hassell can be reached at smhughes@email.unc.edu.

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6. Five Virtues That Schools Should Model and Teach

In this *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, Swarthmore College professors Barry Schwartz and Kenneth Sharpe say colleges and K-12 schools need to go beyond teaching knowledge, academic skills, and critical and analytical thinking and instill certain *intellectual virtues*. Here is their list, which they say is exemplified in KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) schools and Harvard Medical School's third-year program in a Cambridge, Massachusetts hospital:

- *The love of truth* – "When a significant minority of Americans reject evolution and global warming out of hand, the desire to find the truth rather than 'truthiness' cannot be taken for granted," say Schwartz and Sharpe.

- *Honesty* – "Students need to be honest because it enables them to face the limits of what they themselves know, encourages them to confront their mistakes, and helps them

acknowledge uncongenial truths about the world,” say the authors. This goes beyond refraining from plagiarism and cheating; it means facing up to ignorance and error and accepting reality.

- *Courage* – This is standing up for what one believes is true even when other people disagree – including those in authority.

- *Fairness* – Students need to evaluate the arguments of others fair-mindedly. “They need humility to face up to their own limitations and mistakes,” say Schwartz and Sharpe. “They need perseverance, since little that is worth knowing comes easily. They need to be good listeners because students can’t learn from others, or from us, without it.”

- *Wisdom* – This, say Schwartz and Sharpe, “is what enables us to find the balance between timidity and recklessness, between carelessness and obsessiveness, between flightiness and stubbornness, between speaking up and listening up, between trust and skepticism, between empathy and detachment. And wisdom is also what enables us to make difficult decisions among intellectual virtues that may conflict. Being fair and open-minded often rubs up against fidelity to the truth.”

How do we teach these virtues? Primarily by example, say Schwartz and Sharpe – in how teachers ask questions, how we pursue a dialogue, when and how we interrupt, how carefully we listen, and how often we admit that we don’t know something. “We are always modeling,” say the authors, “and the students are always watching.”

“Colleges Should Teach Intellectual Virtues” by Barry Schwartz and Kenneth Sharpe in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb. 24, 2012 (Vol. LVIII #25, p. A72),

<http://chronicle.com/article/Colleges-Should-Teach/130868/>

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7. How to Spot a Blossoming Teacher Leader

In this *Education Week Quality Counts* article, Kansas middle-school teacher Marsha Ratzel lists five tell-tale signs of becoming a teacher leader:

- *You wish you had an impact beyond your own classroom.* This might progress from sharing a lesson plan with a teacher down the hall, to unpacking the Common Core standards with your department, to offering to lead a workshop on bullying, to blogging about how your students are using iPads for letter recognition, to sharing ideas in topic-focused Twitter chats, to submitting an article to your favorite professional journal.

- *Colleagues often ask you for advice.* Fellow teachers start to turn to you (yes, YOU!) for ideas on how to handle difficult situations.

- *You “think big” about problems.* “When others are complaining, you’re imagining solutions,” says Ratzel. “You can see ways that the system can change to help you and your colleagues to better serve students – whether at the school, district, state, or national level.” This might manifest itself in talking about ideas with your principal, working through the union, acting as a spokesperson for your grade level at a school board meeting, or working on a district leadership committee.

- *You want to take new teachers under your wing.* This could start with offering a newbie the kind of advice you wish you’d had when you first started, and progress to serving

on “learning walk” teams, taking on an official mentoring role in which you observe teachers and offer follow-up suggestions, and getting involved in training new teachers.

- *You always want to know more.* You’re curious about research and effective pedagogy and read a lot. Perhaps you want to pursue National Board Certification.

Ratzel suggests the Teacher Leader Model Standards as a further reference for teachers who show some of these signs: <http://www.teacherleaderstandards.org/>

“5 Tell-Tale Signs You’re Becoming a Teacher Leader” by Marsha Ratzel in *Education Week Quality Counts 2012*, Feb. 21, 2012, <http://bit.ly/z2ki5U>

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8. The Right Questions for a Candidate to Ask an Interview Committee

In this *Chronicle of Higher Education* article with K-12 implications, Georgia Perimeter College professor Rob Jenkins says that in his experience, the most awkward moment in academic job interviews is often when the committee asks candidates if they have any questions. The worst thing is to have no questions, he says, but coming up with a good question is more difficult than it appears. Ideally, says Jenkins, your question shows that you’re truly interested in the job, embrace the school’s mission, have done your homework, are genuinely curious about a specific issue – and are not an idiot. Here are his suggestions:

- Don’t ask questions that you could find the answers to by doing a good search of the website – for example, vacation times, class size, school facilities, lab space, classroom support, etc.

- Some questions should be asked outside the interview format – for example, the salary level or whether the school will pay travel expenses.

- The way you ask a question is important. For example, rather than asking, “How much extra money can I make by teaching in the summer?”, ask “Are there opportunities for new faculty members to teach in the summer?”

- Don’t ask questions that convey a sense of entitlement or superiority about the institution (Jenkins says this comes up frequently in interviews at community colleges).

Here are some model questions: (a) At my last institution, about 35 percent of our students began in developmental courses. Do you have a similar percentage here, and would I have the opportunity to teach some of those courses? (b) I see from your class schedule that you offer a large number of online sections. I’ve taught online in the past and really enjoyed it. Is that something I might have the opportunity to do here as well? (c) I read in your catalog that you have a number of student organizations on campus. That’s something I’ve always been interested in. Are there opportunities for faculty members to be involved in sponsoring those organizations?

“In the end,” says Jenkins, “what you ask the committee may be nearly as important as what they ask you... The overriding principles here are that, first, you should go into your campus interview prepared to ask at least one or two relevant questions, and second, those questions should help your candidacy, not hurt it.”

“What to Ask – and Not to Ask – in Your Interview” by Rob Jenkins in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb. 24, 2012 (Vol. LVIII #25, p. A34),

<http://chronicle.com/article/What-to-Ask-and-Not-to/130837/>

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9. Making Students’ Oral Language Central to Instruction

“Let them talk!” urge Harvard Ed School lecturer Pamela Mason and doctoral student Emily Phillips Galloway in this *Reading Today* article. Many disadvantaged students enter school with strong oral language skills, they say, only to be stifled by too much teacher talk and teacher control. “When seen from a strength-based perspective,” say Mason and Galloway, “these children are competent communicators in their families and in their communities where language is a medium to form social connections and to communicate needs, wants, and hopes.” The key is to respect the language and dialect of the home, allow students plenty of opportunities to express themselves in class, continuously add academic vocabulary, synonyms, and imagery to their repertoires, and help them learn when and where to use different registers.

“Central to developing classroom contexts where rich oral language development occurs,” say Mason and Galloway, “is the establishment of a norm that promotes listening.” Modeling and thinking aloud are all well and good, but there are times when it’s best for teachers to hold their peace and listen as students ask for clarification, respond to their peers, summarize what they’ve learned, explain a process, and respond to a piece of literature. “This is not an ‘add on’, but it is an essential component of every effective lesson,” they conclude. “Rich discussions will engage students in their learning, provide them with opportunities to try out ideas and to receive feedback from their peers and teachers, and expand their existing oral language skills to include those used in academic contexts.”

“Let Them Talk!” by Pamela Mason and Emily Phillips Galloway in *Reading Today*, February/March 2012 (Vol. 29, #4, p. 29-30); the authors can be reached at pamela_mason@gse.harvard.edu and ecp450@mail.harvard.edu.

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10. Preparing Students for Unfilled Technical Jobs

In the *Education Gadfly* article, Chester Finn points to recent data suggesting that there are many jobs in the U.S. requiring technical training short of a college degree. “In particular,” says Finn, “companies say they need engineers with more than high school, but not necessarily a bachelor’s degree... As such reports make plain, somewhere along the education continuum, America in 2012 needs to prepare thousands more people for jobs that do exist... Somewhere between the dead-end of old-style vocational high schools and the fashionable but ill-advised ‘college for everyone’ campaign is a course of action that will actually equip young Americans for both successful citizenship and the real economy that they will inhabit.”

“21st-Century VocEd Could Be Key to Future Economic Prosperity” by Chester Finn, Jr. in *The Education Gadfly*, Feb. 23, 2012,

11. Six Book Recommendations

In this *Reading Today* feature, former junior-high teacher David Richardson recommends these high-interest, high-quality children's books:

- *Perfect Square* by Michael Hall (Greenwillow, 2011), ages 3 and up – Hall takes a simple square, changes it, and shows how the square uses the changes to make itself into something new and wonderful.

- *How to Be a Good Cat* by Gail Page (Bloomsbury, 2011), ages 4 and up – Bobo the dog enlists a cat to teach a naughty kitten to behave.

- *Dead End in Norvelt* by Jack Gantos (FSG, 2011), ages 9 and up – Gantos takes a humorous look at his own youth, introducing quirky characters, deaths in a small town, and a history lesson. “Too good to miss,” says Richardson.

- *The Boy Project: Notes and Observations of Kara McAllister* by Kami Kinard (Scholastic 2012), ages 10 and up – Eighth grader Kara McAllister has never had a boyfriend and sets about using the scientific method to study boys, complete with note cards, graphs, and charts.

- *Cinder* by Marissa Meyer (Feiwel and Friends, 2012), ages 12 and up – Meyer takes the Cinderella story and tells a new story in a future sci-fi world, including a plague decimating Earth, imminent war with the colonized moon, and fixing the Emperor's favorite cyborg.

- *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green (Dutton, 2012), ages 14 and up – A poignant young adult love story involving teens with cancer. “A must read,” says Richardson.

“How Did I Miss That One?” by David Richardson in *Reading Today*, February/March 2012 (Vol. 29, #4, p. 40-41)

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12. Online Learning for Kansas Fourth Graders

In this *Reading Today* article, Emporia State University professor Elizabeth Dobler describes how fourth-grade teacher Jan Wells uses these free, secure websites to enliven the curriculum and give her students a global reach:

- Edmodo – <http://www.edmodo.com> - allows students to interact with children around the world and store ideas, resources, and a record of their learning;

- Spelling City – <http://www.spellingcity.com> - gives students a variety of games and activities with vocabulary they're studying;

- Global Reading Aloud Project – <http://globalreadaloud.wikispaces.com> - allows students in different locations to read and interact with a single book through blogging, video conferencing, and online discussions. This link involves *Flat Stanley* and *Tuck Everlasting*.

“Flattening Classroom Walls: Edmodo Takes Teaching and Learning Across the Globe” by Elizabeth Dobler in *Reading Today*, February/March 2012 (Vol. 29, #4, p. 12-13); Dobler can be reached at bdobler@cox.net.

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13. Websites:

a. Teachable moment website – The Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility has created the Teachable Moment website with timely teaching ideas to encourage critical thinking about issues of the day: <http://www.TeachableMoment.org>.

“News to Use” in *Middle Ground*, February 2012 (Vol. 15, #3, p. 6)

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b. Integrating LGBT issues into the curriculum – The Anti-Defamation League, the Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network (GLSEN), and StoryCorps recently released *Unheard Voices*, a middle- and high-school resource to support the integration of LGBT people and events into the curriculum: <http://glsen.org/unheardvoices>.

“News to Use” in *Middle Ground*, February 2012 (Vol. 15, #3, p. 6)

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c. Anti-bullying toolkit – Common Sense Media just released a new toolkit to support students standing up to cyberbullying: <http://www.common sense media.org>.

“News to Use” in *Middle Ground*, February 2012 (Vol. 15, #3, p. 6)

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d. Online story-writing tool – This *Middle Ground* article on storytelling by University of Alberta/Edmonton instructor Brenda Dyck recommends Story Jumper, a free online tool that helps students to write and illustrate stories: <http://www.storyjumper.com>.

“Click Here: Storytelling: The Grand Mediator” by Brenda Dyck in *Middle Ground*, February 2012 (Vol. 15, #3, p. 40-41); Dyck can be reached at dyckba@shaw.ca.

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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).

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- 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